

Memories of Innsbruck

Friedl Wolfgang's Miracle

Some months have now passed since the day when the Olympic flame was extinguished on the Berg Isel and at the entrance to the Innsbruck stadium. These IX Winter Games, which the organizers had named in advance *The Simple Games*, were in effect *The Perfect Games*. To carry out such an undertaking virtually without snow was a prodigious task and the miracle was due above all to Professor Friedl Wolfgang, the great specialist in the art of preparing and maintaining ski runs. In dealing with every branch of these very diverse competitions, he knew how to surround himself with men who were both capable and efficient. The worst enemy to be feared was the 'föhn', that warm South wind, which in less time than it takes to write the word, clears the snow from the slopes. A shortage of snow was feared, and although this was difficult to believe, there was indeed a shortage. Friedl Wolfgang had, however, foreseen every eventuality — even that catastrophe, without losing his nerve for a moment, he realized what nobody else believed possible. We in Lausanne, who were in almost daily touch with him in Innsbruck by telephone, were unable to understand the reason for his unshakable calm. On the eve of the Games, he said once more : 'Everything is all right: The runs are in perfect condition and could not be better. The real catastrophe would be if it started to snow !' The Gods overheard. Snow began to fall on the day after the ending of the Games. All the events had taken place normally and in perfect order, both Alpine and Nordic Skiing as well as

the Rob and Luge events. It was a remarkable technical success. This gigantic effort was rewarded by the wonderful results which are now well-known. Our warmest thanks and congratulations go to Friedl Wolfgang and his associates.

The Spectators

The IX Winter Olympic Games attracted the greatest number of spectators of all time. They were directed, seated, pushed around a little perhaps by the marshalls, who were described as rather rough, because they possibly obeyed their instructors to the letter, but nevertheless the spectators were somewhat deprived of human warmth, that quality which had made the Games at St. Moritz, Oslo, Cortina and Squaw Valley so successful. The people came to see the skiers and without reservation it can be said that Skiing was King at Innsbruck. According to figures hastily compiled after the Games, the following table gives an idea of the number of spectators at the Games. It far surpasses the most optimistic forecasts.

Alpine Skiing	281,000	
Nordic Skiing	113,000 (at Seefeld)	
Special Jumping	60,000 (at Berg Isel)	
	<i>Total for the Skiing:</i>	454,000
Ice Hockey		196,000
Speed Skating	75,000	
Figure Skating	30,000	
	<i>Total for the Skating:</i>	105,000
Bobsleigh and Luge		85,000
Opening and Closing Ceremonies		70,000
Training		26,000
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	<i>Total :</i>	936,000

The transport of this mass of spectators, without counting the competitors and journalists, was a remarkable achievement from every point of view and should be noted. It is true, however, that the complete absence of snow on the roads leading to Lizum or Seefeld considerably simplified the problem. Each one of the 220 coaches and 368 VW vans covered between 2,000 to 3,000 kilometres during the Games. It must also be noted that the calculation and transmission of results was amazingly rapid, thanks to the I.B.M. electronic calculators, which organization had transported 150 people and all its material.

The foregoing, however briefly told, will give some small idea of what *The Perfect Games* were like.

At Grenoble in 1968, it will be difficult to do better. To reach the Innsbruck level will be all that is needed, and to that end we

have confidence in our French friends in the capital of Dauphiné.

Two fatal accidents

*before the opening of the Games
at Innsbruck*

It was the decree of fate. So danger whatever was apparent at the spot where they were killed. They had come to the Innsbruck Games *to take part in them*, without any pretensions. The British luger, Kay Skrzykecki, 50 years old, and the 19-year-old Australian Ross Milne, a skier, were true amateurs. They sacrificed their all to sport, even their lives. We pay homage to these two sportsmen and offer our deep sympathy to their families.