

Innsbruck 1976 in retrospect

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The XIth Winter Games-Innsbruck 1976 are over. Looking back, it can be said that they were a success. A success mainly because they were free from attacks from the outside or scandals and negative sensations from the inside. A success, too, because about 1½ million on-the-spot spectators and over 600 million television viewers all over the world were shown superb Winter Games in a wonderful mountain setting. The Organising Committee's wish to place the athlete and his performance at the centre of events was fulfilled. In Innsbruck there were encounters between great sporting personalities and there was admiration for magnificent performances. It is the Organising Committee's opinion that the demand for simple Games was also met: any measures or investments not absolutely vital for the sporting events were forgone, the organisers restricting themselves to those essentials laid down by the IOC Rules for Olympic competitions.

I. 1,500,000 visitors

The unexpectedly high attendance figures were to provide the biggest surprise of the XIth Winter Games-Innsbruck 1976. In spite of total television transmission on a scale hitherto unknown, about 1½ million people chose to inhale the Olympic aura on the spot for themselves as visitors to the Olympic events. This stream of visitors presented the organisers with their biggest problems. Most of the Olympic competitions take place outdoors, many of them in the mountains. The approach routes are mountain roads and access is usually of an Alpine character. Exact traffic planning nevertheless made it possible to transport spectators to and from awkwardly located events—the Alpine contests in the Axamer Lizum, for instance—without any difficulty and without entailing undue delays. The entire traffic concept proved its worth and this applies to organisation traffic, too.

The IOC and the official guests were most satisfied with the treatment given them by the Organising Committee. The hostesses were well trained, friendly and helpful. The accommodation difficulties were finally solved to the satisfaction of the guests; in fact, the question of guests of honour presented the most difficult task of the Games. The stands for such guests were small, in keeping with simple Games, so that it was difficult or practically impossible to maintain the order of precedence for the IOC and for guests from abroad and from Austria. However, any annoyances or complaints arising from this were finally smoothed out by the Organising Committee, as far as we know.

II. Exemplary competitions

There were scarcely any problems, however, in connection with the athletes' accommodation in the Olympic village; everyone was most enthusiastic about the excellent catering service and the superbly organised recreation centre. This enabled the athletes to forget that from the outside the Olympic village resembled an encampment under siege, due to the necessary security precautions. In the Olympic village, too, the friendliness of the Organising Committee employees helped to solve any minor problems which occurred.

The sporting competitions are intended as the very core of Olympic Games and proved to be such in Innsbruck. They were free from scandal or from organisational problems and can, in fact, be regarded as exemplary. A considerable factor here was the Organising Committee's aim to place special importance on observing all safety precautions and this was realised to the full. There were few injuries in relation to the number of participants, and none of a really serious nature. This was due in no small degree to the perfect preparation of all competition venues. Numerous athletes and nearly all the

delegation leaders declared after the Games that the athletes had been given the best possible opportunities with regard to accommodation, catering, transport and the sports events.

The question of security, examined so thoroughly in the period preceding the Games, was solved in the best possible way by the Austrian security services in collaboration with the Organising Committee. The radical security measures were absolutely essential and scarcely aroused any criticism. The Games remained, in fact, free from any incidents, although there were threats and dangerous situations enough.

Collaboration with sponsor firms and commerce was excellent and there were no serious advertising offences during the Games. The official services worked smoothly and perfectly fulfilled the tasks set them.

The organisers realise that the marvellous weather played a considerable part in the success of the events. Just enough snow, sunshine in abundance and clear roads all played their part in the smooth running of the sports events.

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The ceremonies held in accordance with the Olympic protocol were most impressive. The Olympic flame's journey through Austria enabled large sections of the population to take part in the pre-Olympic festivities.

The strict protocol prescribed for the Olympic opening and closing ceremonies was relieved by means of folklore and local insertions. The use of the eidophor apparatus at the daily victory ceremonies proved to be most successful. Here the athlete as such was placed particularly in the foreground—in accordance with the organisers' principles—when the decisive phases of the winner's sporting performance were shown.

III. Acknowledgements

The press, too, were with few exceptions satisfied with the facilities available to them. This was expressed in many thousands of very favourably disposed reports throughout the world on the subject of the XIIth Winter Games-Innsbruck 1976. Television did excellent work and here we must mention both the ORF, which provided the colour video signal at all events and made the international sound available to the whole world, and the American television company, ABC, which transmitted television reports on the Winter Olympics—specially edited for America—to the United States of America and to several Central and Southern American countries. For the first time winter sports events on a large scale were shown in countries like Venezuela, Mexico, Iran and the Sultanate of Oman. Collaboration between the ORF and the international television companies was excellent, despite many difficult problems.

Filming work for the official film was greatly favoured by the superb weather. Completion work on sound, cutting, etc., for this film is now in progress in London. Worldmark Productions and Samuelson Film Service hope to hold the film's world premiere at the Olympic Games in Montreal.

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May I close this report with a word of thanks to the IOC for its great kindness and understanding. I would also like to thank the International Federations, the National Olympic Committees, the delegation leaders and chefs de mission and especially the many congenial sportswomen and sportsmen from all over the world. They, above all, upheld the XIIth Winter Games-Innsbruck 1976.

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