

The Winter Games on Television

An audience of almost two thousand million viewers enjoyed the broadcast (complete or partial) of the great spectacle of the Winter Games which were a stunning exercise in international, technological cooperation. Fifty nine television companies from the five Continents invaded Sarajevo's new International Radio and Television Centre which had been completed for the occasion. All the European States : the members of EUR (Eurovision) and of OIRT (Intervision), including Morocco, Turkey for the first time. Asia was represented by the Japanese networks NHK. Hong Kong's HK-BC: Oceania by Seven 'Network from Australia, New-Zealand's BCNZ, the Americas by the Mexican chain, Televisa, the Canadian companies CTV, TVA, and CBC, and ABC for the United States and Puerto-Rico.

For the first time twenty-one non-aligned African countries from the Near and Middle East were able to see the most spectacular competitions of these Games, thanks to hour-long video cassettes prepared for their use by Yugoslav television.

In total, the sale of broadcasting rights will produce 102.4 million dollars, that is an 880 % increase in relation to the 1976 Games in Innsbruck. This growth demonstrates in itself the ever-increasing appeal of winter sports.

The Wages of Experience

The Company ABC Sports, having alone invested 91.5 million dollars, was once again guaranteed exclusivity for the United States. Since Innsbruck, with the exception of Sapporo, where the rights were acquired by the NBC network, it can be said that ABC Sports which professes to be the largest American Sports network, has gained the reputation of a specialist in this domain. Over 900 people were sent to work on the spot, 250 journalists, 350 technicians, with an impressive load of equipment: 89 cameras, 250 kilometres of cable, a studio which could be dismantled, equipped with 70 monitors and 40 videos. In this ultra modern studio which will come back into use for Los Angeles, some seventy-three hours thirty minutes of broadcasts (18 % more

than for the 1980 Games in Lake Placid) were produced by dint of technical innovation. The men's downhill was broadcast in its entirety from the top to the bottom of the slope thanks to eleven cameras placed over the run; microscopic cameras, fixed on toboggans, bobsleighs, on skiers' helmets and even on Scott Hamilton's pullover provided startling pictures, not to mention the panoramic views of hockey matches taken above the competition arena. Such televised spectacles have become a necessity in order to retain the interest of the American viewer who is becoming progressively more difficult to confine to his television screen. The network itself admits that the time difference (6 hours), the delaying of events because of unfavourable weather conditions, the lack of medals during the first evenings of the Games and the profusion of political news meant that the anticipated viewing figures were not reached (36 %), making the cost of advertisement slots fall by 22 %, but the gold medals for alpine skiing and Hamilton's award put things back on the right track.

International Cooperation

One thousand six hundred envoys from fifty five countries, of which around 600 were specialist journalists, one hundred more than for Lake Placid, worked at the competition sites ; those journalists who were not accompanied by a production team enjoyed the support of technicians and the whole Yugoslav television crew.

By the expedient of satellite transmission (there were 900 hours, 400 of which were destined for America), all viewers were able to benefit from the suspense of live transmission. Broadcasting hours for each television unit were very varied and difficult to state precisely. For Europe which did not get to use the satellite, UER and OIRT broadcast all events, that is between 150 and 200 hours of broadcasting time, each affiliated television company choosing those competitions preferred by its nationals. Thus, the Hungarians were able to see sixty-five hours of programmes, broadcast live, centred mainly on



skating, hockey and alpine skiing ; the German Democratic Republic transmitted one hundred and twenty hours of live and pre-recorded programmes. These choices explain why certain national victories missed being broadcast live, thus, in spite of the five hours a day devoted to coverage of the competitions by RAI, Italy was not present for Paul Hildgartner's victory on his luge. On the other hand, those broadcasts planned for the USSR were followed in spite of the mourning in which the country was plunged.

Former Olympic medallists, such as Peggy Fleming, figure skating Champion in Grenoble in 1968, Dick Button, Eric Heiden, five times gold medallist for speed skating at Lake Placid, or the skier, Jean-Claude Killy, gave the commentaries for those events broadcast live.

Numerous television biographies introduced viewers to the new Olympic heroes. Finally, thanks to this coverage the Town of Sarajevo has acquired a new-found fame which is by no means about to diminish.

Denis Echard

The ABC in Sarajevo

Total number of ABC personnel	927
ENG technicians (352 from the USA, 123 from Europe)	475
Production : producers, script-writers	95
Direction	70
Commentators	25
Maintenance staff	124
Special programmes :	
ABC Radio	66
TV News	32
ABC / Affiliated networks cs Good Morning America s)	19 21
ABC recruited 447 chauffeurs and interpreters locally.	