



FEDERAL REPUBLIC
OF GERMANY

At the end of 1989, the National Olympic Committee for Germany entrusted the German Olympic Association (DOG) with the organization of the Olympic Day run, a task it was happy to perform.

OLYMPIC DAY IN ESSEN

The section of the DOG responsible for Essen organized the run with the help of an Olympic Day working group set up in the city for the purpose. It was joined by the representatives of the region's gymnastics section, the Essen fitness club, the Olympic training centre for the western Ruhr, the Federal Army's sport promotion group and the German Sports Marketing Association.

Two press conferences were held to promote the run, held on 16th June 1990, among the inhabitants of Rhineland-Westphalia and beyond. Top-level athletes made the trip to help publicize the event, for instance Willi Wülbeck, 800m world champion and ten times German champion, Monika Bunke and Kartrin Borchert of the then GDR, several times world canoeing champions, Jörg Rosskopf and Steffen Fetzner, world table tennis champions, Michael Keck, German badminton champion, footballers Sturm, Reinhardt, Witeczek and Lippens, handball players Bezdicek and Peterson and the boxer Schnieders.

All the schools (270) and sports and gymnastics associations (575) in Essen were contacted and informed of the event. The media coverage was excellent.

After possible traffic problems had been looked into with the police, the Olympic Day run was able to start as planned early on a fine June Saturday afternoon. A police brass band and the Grendplatz jazz club set the musical tempo for an atmosphere of good spirits before the starting shot was fired by the Mayor of Essen, Mrs Annette Jäger.

The organizers had arranged several running events, 15, 30, 60 and 90 minutes, and a sport for all programme in thirty stages. The runners obtained 1 point for participating in each stage and any one with at least 15 points received the IOC diploma signed by the President. Participants with over 25 points were able to take part in the tombola with very sporting prizes, bicycles and gymnastics apparatus to make the most fanatical sportsman's heart beat faster.

But the run was not the only popular attraction. Every half hour, the sports clubs of Essen staged demonstrations - trampoline, fencing, karate and aero wheel - to give the crowd of youngsters some good ideas for their sports activities. By the time the lots were about to be drawn in the tombola, nearly all those who had made the trip had been able to take part in some kind of sport. The 1500m, which attracted athletes from all over Germany and from neighbouring countries, was the focal point of this day's activity, with the exceptional participation of marathon runner Herbert Cuntz, who did his laps of the stadium in the afternoon.

Finally, the arrival of the last runners, well after the tombola was over, was greeted by a marvellous sunset. The five thousand participants had received their diplomas and all that remained was the thought of next year's run.