

MEDIA WELCOME IN ALBERTVILLE



THE ROLE AND ACTIVITIES OF ORTO 92

All the venues have room for the cameras.

The media have become a major component of the Olympic Games. The diversity of the competitions and the number of venues at which they take place call for the tightest possible organization and operational plans. How will the television and radio network teams be received at Albertville next February? François Lemoine, Chairman of the "Organisme de radio télévision olympique Albertville 92" (ORTO 92), the host-broadcaster, gives us the answer.

Under the terms of its contract with the IOC, one of COJO's duties is to choose a host broadcaster to direct and produce all the television and radio broadcasts of the Olympic events and ceremonies and to provide all rights-holding broadcasters with the services they need for their radio and television coverage. In summer 1988, COJO put the assignment out to ten-

der on the basis of a detailed remit, and, the following winter, it chose as host broadcaster a group of French television and radio stations: *Antenne 2*, FR3 and *Radio France*. The limited company they formed became, after signature of a contract with COJO covering all the technical, financial and legal aspects of the arrangement, "ORTO 92" : "Organisme de radiodiffusion

By François Lemoine



télévision olympique d'Albertville 1992". In December 1996, when ORTO increased its capital, the company Télédiffusion de France (TDF) joined the group.

COMPLEX TASK

The host broadcaster's task during the Olympic Games is, as you know, to produce and make available to rights-holders all the international television and sound signals that make up the basic *feed*, and to provide certain additional services. In this

spectacle that highlights the beauty of athletic movement in its vast diversity, the ongoing search for perfection and the thrilling wait for the results, in the exceptional setting of the venues, with the universal spirit that unites the entire Olympic family. Attainment of this objective through radio and television takes a combination of professionalism, experience, production systems and technologies, both the most modern and those best suited to each event.

The host broadcaster's second task is to supply the broadcasting companies which have acquired the broadcasting rights in the various parts of the world with the means and services, often specific, they need to operate on their networks the programmes they produce during this event.

COJO, RADIO-TV AND SUPPLIERS

It was apparent from the outset that we would have to work - simultaneously but in a coordinated manner - with the COJO, our principal, the rights-holding broadcasters, our clients, and the six main contractors, our suppliers.

As an agent of COJO, Orto 92 takes on the commitments and obligations in the realm of radio and TV entered into by the COJO vis-à-vis the IOC and the rights-holding companies. Trust has gradually been built up between the two bodies. As the countdown progresses, there has been an ongoing need to verify the arrangements made and to resolve problems as they arise. This implies working in constant dialogue with the general management of COJO and that of the media, sports and equipment sections; this co-operation will culminate in February, but in the meantime there is no shortage of work.

The American network CBS, the EBU for western Europe and the OIRT for the former Socialist states, Canada (the English language public network CBC and the French language one SRC), the Japanese network NHK, Australia, New Zealand and others have progressively acquired broad-



Television in Les Saisies for biathlon.

way, the host-broadcaster does all the conceptual and operational work throughout the Games. This somewhat bald statement calls for some clarifications. Firstly, the aim is to translate through sound and image the reality of the Olympic Games, in accordance with one of the principles of the "Olympic Charter", namely "to ensure the fullest news coverage by the different media and widest possible audience for the Olympic Games". The broadcasts of this international sports event must constitute a

casting rights, the price of which accounts for approximately one third of COJO's receipts, a large sum for everyone. It is therefore only natural that these broadcasters' requirements should be considerable and numerous: quality of production, flexibility of arrangements for live and recorded broadcasting, depending on the use they intend to make of them, availability of the resources they need, etc.

These professionals, accustomed to finding at events of this nature the best facilities and all amenities, want and demand ever more and ever better !

To identify problems and resolve them between now and the 1992 Games, Orto 92 also has regular contacts with various bodies such as the IOC Radio and Television Commission, the "Commission olympique des radiodiffuseurs d'Albertville" (CODA), the sports group of EBU and the various sports federations at the international competitions being held in the region prior to the Games.

Orto 92 will carry out the production and engineering work for which it is responsible with the assistance of six major contractors, four at the venues, one for the International Broadcasting Centre and another for links.

At the venues, the Société française de production (SFP) is looking after all the competitions and ceremonies in Albertville, those at Val d'Isère and skiing at Meribel; the television company FR3 will be broadcasting hockey at Meribel and Courchevel; the EBU, under the terms of the contract it has signed with the IOC and COJO, supplies one third of its rights payment in the form of technical services under the direction of Orto 92; the Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian television companies will cover the venue of Les Saisies (nordic skiing and biathlon); German television will cover bob and luge at La Plagne; Italy, Yugoslavia and Switzerland will cover alpine downhill at Les Arcs, freestyle skiing in Tignes and curling at Pralognan. These three venues will be hosting demonstration events with the exception of the moguls at Tignes, which will be an Olympic discipline for the first time. Finally, Radio France will be

installing and running the five hundred to five hundred and fifty commentary boxes, a crucially strategic service because it affects the journalists who will be speaking live to 2.2 thousand million viewers.

THE IBC AND LINKS

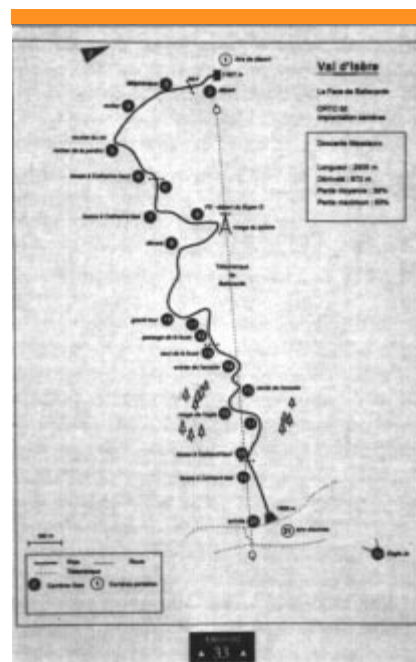
TDF is responsible for the design, installation and continuous running of the International Broadcasting Centre, which will operate round the clock. All the optical, radio and satellite links will be provided by the national communications company France-Telecom, which will supply permanent links for conveyance of signals. These consist of two permanent earth links (optic fibre and/or radio waves), one for the international feed and the other, available by reservation, for private links. There is also a back-up satellite link for the international feed. Commentary sound will be conveyed to the IBC on digital circuits. The undoubted quality of these bodies, taken as a whole, is a huge asset for Orto 92 and ultimately for the quality of the Games. Nevertheless, once these contracts have been signed, the main thing is still to ensure that all these companies, with their corporate cultures and even marked particularities, work together in concert. From this point of view, indispensable elements of flexibility have been introduced to cope with the inevitable hitches.

HI-TECH WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Opposite the station at Motitiers, at the geographical heart of Olympic Savoy, the International Broadcasting Centre covers an area of twenty thousand square metres on two levels of a building crowned with six four-storey office blocks. This site, which will house the radio and television organizations, is the nerve centre of Olympic audio-visual communication. The American network CBS, the Canadian CBC and SRD and the Japanese NHK will share the seven thousand square metres of the ground floor. The European broadcasting unions (EBU and OIRT), the Australian



Finding the right spot to film a breathtaking descent.





The media centre in Moûtiers,

Channel 9, France Télécom, COJO and Orto 92 will be housed in the upper storeys. The broadcasters will also have recreation and service areas which will provide them with a quality environment. The technical infrastructures are also made available to them on the basis of their needs and the working conditions they require to operate the programmes they produce on their networks, i.e. all over the globe. The operations office, the “brain” of the IBC, run by groups from COJO, Orto 92 and France Télécom, manages the logis-

tics and all requests for technical services. TDF has been entrusted with the job of setting up and running the IBC’s technical facilities for receiving images and sound from the venues and distributing them to the broadcasters. Orto 92, responsible for recording, duplication and archiving of the international feed, also offers broadcasters post-production sets for viewing, montage and mixing, and will compile for them twenty-minute highlights of the day’s most outstanding sports events, broadcast twice a day.

QUALITY THAT COUNTS

All these resources make sense only if they are put to good use.

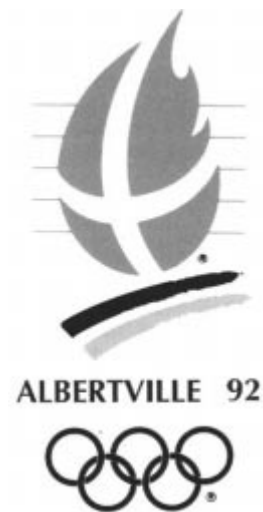
The main objective is the quality of the programmes produced. The idea of quality implies flexibility in the arrangements, which have to respond to special requirements. This type of quality depends on seasoned directors and production teams, an in-depth study of broadcasts of international events held in recent years and contacts and associations with foreign professionals of international repute : Messrs. Quido from Canada for hockey, Lindenberg from the Netherlands for speedskating, Uusivori from Finland for nordic skiing, to name but a few. At the same time, highly detailed work is being done on graphics, timing displays and the other finishing

touches, which were put to the test with the COJO's media and sports section, its partner IBM, Swiss Timing, Chyron and the SFP at the test events held at the competition venues over 1990.

The constant search for perfection, results that are beyond reproach - the stated objective of Jean-Claude Killy -, this pursuit of quality, is not always synonymous with overexpenditure, although it is certainly has its price.

Now that we are so close to the launching of the Olympic Games in Albertville, Orto 92 is - hardly big news - on schedule, but let us make no mistake about it - we do not have a single day to lose !

F. L.



Games broadcast all over the world by the best technology.