

RENOVATION OF USOC'S OLYMPIC TRAINING CENTER



View of the Training Center in Colorado Springs, with the newly renovated multisports rooms on the right.

As a writer and broadcaster, my primary interests have involved world sport, particularly as they have applied to Olympism, the Olympic movement and the Olympic Games. Therefore, in my semi-retirement, I have established my home in Colorado Springs, the home of the United States Olympic Committee and its Olympic Training Center.

The Training Center has provided me with a cornucopia of sport, a veritable feast. Yesterday I spent the morning at the velodrome watching road and track cyclists from more than forty nations prepare for the Junior World Championships. Later that afternoon I attended a weightlifting competition and in the evening I observed a training camp involving gymnasts. And within the last month I've reported on a football

match between Haiti and the United States and I've covered a week-long team handball tournament involving five nations.

I have interviewed almost two hundred athletes involved with twenty-five sports. I believe that except for the Olympic Games more world-class athletes will come to Colorado Springs and the USOC Training Camp than any other place on this planet.

By Herb Weinberg

NATIONAL COMMITTEES

Some come to compete; more to train; and others come to learn from the sports sciences programs that are available for both American and foreign athletes: taekwondo players from Tahiti; judokas from Mexico; swimmers from Germany; and field hockey players from Cuba and Canada.

I believe there are few sights more beautiful than to watch joggers on the Center's track or cyclists in the velodrome in the shadow of Pikes Peak, part of the Front Range of the magnificent Rocky Mountains.

The Olympic Training Center was created in 1977 on the site of an abandoned United States Air Force facility which

Renovation has started on much of the Training Center, which will provide better training for even more athletes.

The USOC has a tradition of filling every spot available on an Olympic team, competing in every discipline, in every event, in every sport in which they are eligible to compete. For example, in 1988, at the Seoul Olympic Games the USOC presented 389 male and 222 female athletes, the total of 611 representing the largest national team. They competed in all twenty-three medal sports and in all the demonstration and exhibition sports. The only national team not represented there was their men's field hockey team which had not qualified for the Olympic tournament.

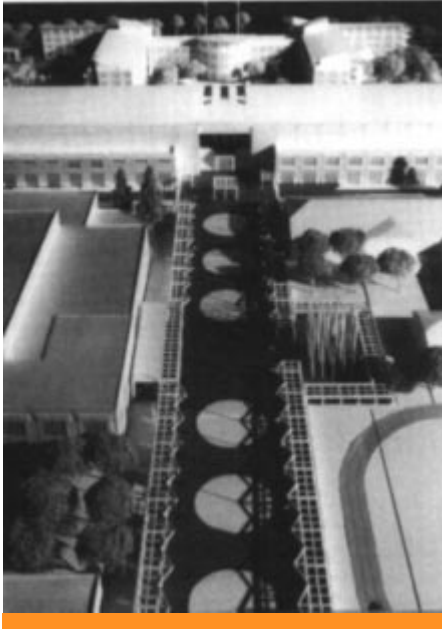
Of course, the USOC could have greatly reduced its training and Olympic expenditures by not sending to Seoul those athletes who clearly would not contend for an Olympic medal. However, that is against USOC policy; their policy being that it is worth the time, money and effort to give as many athletes as is possible an Olympic experience. While studying USOC finances several years ago, I asked Committee members if it would be wiser to eliminate certain athletes in order to have more funding available to give to those with a better chance of winning Olympic medals - and more than a few seemed offended by the question. They believed there was more value in the worthy struggle as opposed to the value of an Olympic medal. If possible, every position on an Olympic team should be filled. Again, as many athletes as possible should be able to have an Olympic experience. That's part of what sport is all about.

And that's why the USOC is striving to improve its Training Center: to provide the best it can in the way of training, competition and clinics for its world-class athletes and for coaches and trainers. That's why new facilities are necessary. There are specific and general objectives to the new construction ; Specifically : in addition to the one that exists, a new gymnasium will be constructed with approximately 20,000 feet of floor space that will serve almost



The entrance and living area for the athletes.

had been ceded to the USOC by the federal government. Since that time the Committee has improved the site with such permanent buildings as a large gymnasium and a shooting center funded by their national shooting federation. But other facilities are lacking, such as an Olympic-sized pool - a weakness that is about to be corrected, among others.



every summer Olympic sport. A new swimming pool, 50-meters by 25-meters, will serve all the water sports except platform diving and will have limited seating. There will be new living and dining quarters for the 12,000 athletes who come through the Center each year, a small portion of which are permanent residents.

New dormitories will provide rooms of two and four beds for a total of 304 beds, and the dining area, open 16 hours each day, will provide 300 indoor and 250 outdoor seats. There will also be a library and recreational facilities in addition to medical, vision and nutritional clinics next to a training room and rehabilitation facilities.

In a later phase of the project a 400-meter track and warm-up area will be created. Completion is expected in late 1992 or early 1993.

Generally: much of the new construction will reflect a debt to the community of Colorado Springs and to the nation. A chain-link fence that now surrounds the facility, a leftover from the site's Air Force days will be removed. The destruction of the fence and the creation of a new entrance to the Center are designed with the purpose of inviting the public into the Olympic complex to visit the facilities by oneself or by means of tours provided by the Center. The USOC takes pride in its non-governmental support of amateur and Olympic programs and has always adopted an attitude that the public should have access to what it has historically supported. There will also be new parking areas.

All within an atmosphere of a grassy, tree-lined, attractive campus. Harvey Schiller, the USOC's Executive Director, said "With this project we're totally committed to the Training Center being here into the next century",...a tribute to Colorado Springs.

A green campus bordered with trees.

Currently nineteen NGBs are headquartered in Colorado Springs: fifteen of them at the Olympic Training Center, all of which will be served by new meeting rooms and audiovisual facilities and the new library. The Washington architectural firm of Lehman, Smith and Wiseman is responsible for the project's design and direction. The estimated cost of 18 million dollars will be funded by the sale of 1992 USA Olympic coins.

Although all the thousands of athletes who train at the USOC Olympic Training Center have the potential to become Olympians, obviously most will not make an Olympic team. But at least the construction now taking place will contribute toward giving them as near an Olympic experience as can be had.

H.W.