

STAMPS FULL OF ACTION

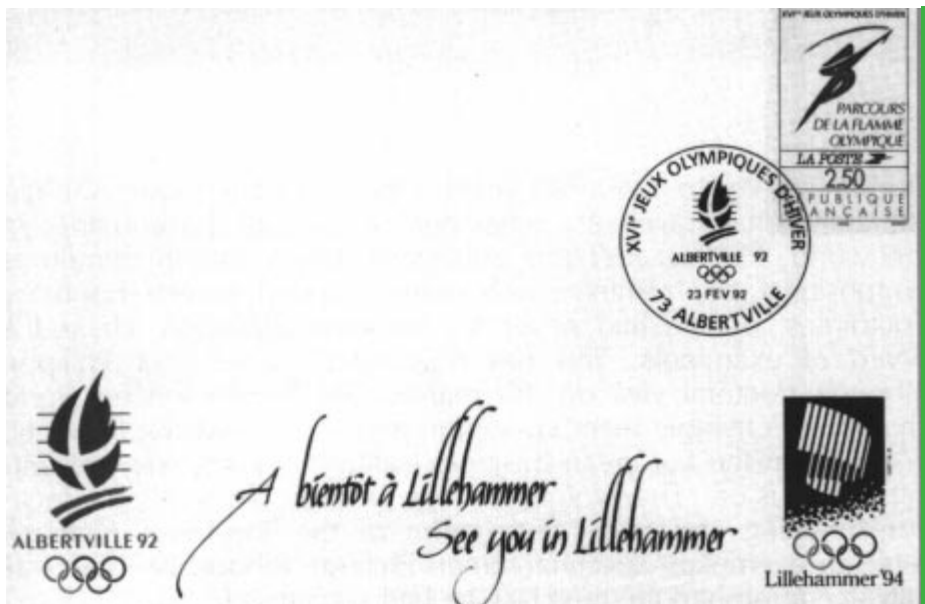


As *Le Monde des Philatélistes* points out, Olympic philately has progressed in leaps and bounds. In 1924 in Chamonix, the Games had the honour of a local mechanical publicity cancellation mark. For Albertville '92, eleven stamps were issued and, at the time of the Games, La Poste (the French Post Office) had a few nice surprises up its sleeve for keen collectors.

First of all, to celebrate the opening of the Games, La Poste, official partner of the Games in Albertville, placed on sale on 8th February a sort of retrospective in the form of a block sheet of ten stamps of a total value of 27 FF. This block, designed by Charles Bridoux and engraved by Pierre Becquet, is printed in line engraving for the stamps and offset for the central label. It reproduces the ten stamps illustrating venues and disciplines issued since 8th February 1990, with the names of the venues and sports retained. The logo of the Games appears in a central label which has no value. Each of the stamps has a face value of 2.50 FF + 0.20 FF. This adds to the interest of the sheet, in view of the fact that the first six stamps were initially issued at a price of 2.30 FF. The 0.20 FF surcharge was earmarked for the Red Cross, which provided medical facilities at the Games. During the competitions, each venue had a souvenir cancellation, as did each stage of the Olympic flame relay, organized by La Poste. Five provisional offices were open during the Games, in Albertville itself, at the Olympic villages, Brides and Les Saisies, and at the media centres at La Léchère and Moutiers.

A WATERMARK FOR LILLEHAMMER

One last surprise. On the day of the closing ceremony, a first day cover was issued bearing the inscription "See you in Lillehammer" and with the stamp of the flame relay. Finally, *Le Monde philatélique* notes that foreign postal administrations, too, did their bit. Stamps were issued in Paraguay back in 1989, followed by Nicaragua, Cuba, Laos, Cambodia, The Congo, Bolivia, Bulgaria, Liechtenstein, Hungary, the USA, Germany, The Netherlands, Andorra and Monaco.



Popular souvenirs that are much sought-after.