

OLYMPIC NEWS

from wire service, newspaper, and magazine reports

○ According to London Bookmakers, Sydney is now a 4-5 favorite to be awarded the Olympics for the year 2000. The next choices are Beijing (6-4), and Manchester and Istanbul (8-1). The choice will be made at the 101st IOC Session at Monte Carlo on 21-24 September 1993. Berlin's bid has been sidetracked by numerous anti-Olympics groups (termed NOlympics) protesting the possibility of the Games being awarded to the German city. Brasilia is given only a slim chance of being selected. Tashkent (Uzbekistan) withdrew late in 1992, while Milan withdrew in early March, caught up in a storm of political corruption currently shaking Italy. That leaves only the above six (6) cities in the running. Beijing has been trying to buff up its human rights image, one example being that they have recently stopped shadowing foreign reporters. Milan's withdrawal is thought by some to possibly strengthen the bid of the two other European cities, Manchester and Berlin.

○ Human rights groups have been placing pressure on the IOC because of their choice of possible sites for the 2000 Olympics. Brasilia, Beijing, and Istanbul have been the victims of their attacks, because of the poor records attributed to Brazil, China, and Turkey in the field of human rights. Notably, chairman of Beijing's bid committee is Chen Xitong, who was the mayor of Beijing who authorized the formal declaration of martial law which led to the massacres at Tiananmen Square on 3-4 June 1989. President Juan Antonio Samaranch was quoted as saying that he thinks human rights considerations will be important in the future when the IOC selects Olympic sites. With Berlin's anti-Olympics groups, that would leave only Sydney and Manchester with no serious opposition to their city's selection.

○ The IOC is apparently placing some pressure on the International Baseball Association to allow American major league baseball players to compete in the Olympics, clearing the way for a "Dream Team" in baseball at the Olympics. There was apparently some concern about the poor showing by the United States in baseball at Barcelona, and President Samaranch has expressed a desire for the U.S. to be very competitive in Atlanta. The U.S. Baseball Federation and Major League Baseball have reached a four-year marketing agreement in anticipation of working more closely together. At this point, however, final decisions on professional eligibility have not been decided.

○ Despite the efforts to include baseball pros in the Olympics, the National Hockey League of Canada and the United States will not be duplicating the NBA's "Dream Team" concept at the Lillehammer Olympics. Although this was widely considered a possibility, the biggest problem is that the Lillehammer Games occur in the midst of the NHL year, which would necessitate a complete re-scheduling of the season. There is a possibility that the NHL will consider the option of Dream Teams for the 1998 Olympic Winter Games in Nagano.

○ Speaking of Olympic Winter Games venues, *The European* reported recently that both Albertville and Sarajevo have come on hard times lately. The problems in Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, are far more severe and have been well documented with the civil war that has erupted in the former Yugoslavia. Albertville, however, hoping to bask in the tourist overflow from the 1992 Winter Olympics, has cash problems, with a huge capital deficit left over from those Games. Jean-Claude Killy commented that the deficit "was caused by the ski jumps and bobsleigh which overran by Ffr 200m." Expected bonuses in increased tourist income this year has not materialized for Albertville but, strangely, neighboring towns

such as Courcheval and Val d'Isere have benefited by the improved road and rail links which have brought in many more tourists.

- Because of the civil war, Bosnia's Olympic hopefuls have been asking other countries to provide them with training sites. Germany, Turkey, and the United States have agreed to help. Most of the sports facilities around Sarajevo have been demolished or torn down by the war.

- Barcelona is also apparently having some post-Olympic blues. Employment is reportedly down with inflation up. In addition, the regional and city government still has a \$2 billion construction debt to pay off.

- *The European* also reported that Lillehammer's public relations efforts are noted for their scrupulous honesty. They reported that one of the Lillehammer press releases stated, "Welcome, but remember, we are promising neither low prices nor perfection."

- Another release from Lillehammer reveals the innovative way the torch will be brought into the stadium in 1994. In the past it has been brought in at the Olympic Winter Games by runners, by alpine skiers, by nordic skiers, and by speed skaters. At Lillehammer the torchbearer will soar in from the 90-metre ski jump!

- Although golf has not been approved for the 1996 Atlanta Olympic program (see related story herein), it appears possible that women's football (soccer) will become a new medal sport in Atlanta. FIFA is interested in bringing women's football to the Olympics and the United States would be an apt choice because of the media impact. Women's football (soccer) is fairly popular in the U.S.A., and the United States' women won the inaugural women's World Cup in 1991. At the recent joint meeting of the IOC Executive Board and the Association of Summer International Federations (ASOIF), the possibility of women's soccer joining the 1996 program was tabled.

- Women's individual and team épée has been added to the fencing program scheduled for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. Women gained another event when a 4 x 200 metre freestyle relay was added to the swimming program.

- In rowing, a major shake-up of events has occurred. The men's coxed pairs and fours have been eliminated from the Olympic program to be replaced by lightweight double sculls and coxless fours. Women's coxless pairs has been eliminated in favor of the lightweight double sculls.

- Professionals will be permitted to compete in cycling at the 1996 Olympics, possibly paving the way for Greg LeMond to compete 16 years after he was boycotted out of his chance at the Moscow Olympics, although he will be past his prime by 1996. Italy's Gianni Bugno and Claudio Chiappucci, and Spain's Miguel Indurain will also be eligible to compete, should they choose to do so. This may necessitate changing the character of the individual road race, as professional cyclists are used to a longer, hillier course for their races. The International Cycling Union (UCI) has reunified the two separate federations, the International Amateur Cycling Federation and the International Professional Cyclist's Federation. The world record list also took a drastic hit. The UCI will no longer recognize separate amateur and professional world records, nor will it recognize separate marks for sea level and altitude-aided races (over 600 metres), nor will it recognize separate marks for indoor and outdoor velodromes.

- Figure skating has already allowed professionals to return to the Olympics,

although they must apply for reinstatement for the period surrounding the Olympic Winter Games. Brian Boitano, Viktor Petrenko, and Katarina Witt have applied for reinstatement and will attempt to compete. Witt's former coach, Jutta Müller, said, "It's very clear [Witt] has to learn more triple jumps. At this point Katarina is not among the favorites." Kristi Yamaguchi was actually considering competing again in pairs skating - she competed until 1990 in pairs with Rudy Galindo - but recently announced that she will remain a professional and not compete in Lillehammer in 1994. The last two pairs champions from the former Soviet Union (all from Russia) have apparently applied to compete - Yekaterina Gordeyeva/Sergey Grinkov [1988], and Natalya Mishkutyonok/Artur Dmitriyev [1992]. Jayne Torvill and Christopher Dean, Britain's stunning ice dance team which won the 1984 gold, are also pondering a return to the Olympic platform. Could Dorothy Hamill be next? Unlikely, although in early-March it was announced that she, her husband, Dr. Ken Forsythe, and another investor had bought the financially troubled ice show, the Ice Capades.

- Blood testing for doping will apparently become a reality at Lillehammer. The IOC has recommended that blood testing for drugs be done with the responsibility of the FIS (Ski Federation) under the supervision of the IOC. IOC Medical Commission Chairman Alexandre de Merode cautioned, "Too many people wrongly imagine that blood tests will solve everything, whereas in fact the operation carried out by the FIS does not enable the detection of an autologous blood transfusion. It can only detect a transfusion of heterologous blood. It is not a panacea."

- The Oslo newspaper *Arbeiderbladet* recently reported that New York-based and IOC-affiliated Grey Advertising was lobbying on behalf of the IOC in an attempt to have the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize awarded to the IOC. Robert Helmick, ousted U.S.O.C. President and former IOC Member, stated that the Peace Prize was a frequent topic at executive committee meetings. The IOC denied the report. IOC vice-president Richard Pound of Canada stated, "No, it was an occasional topic. After President Samaranch won a peace award in Seoul, someone wondered about the Nobel prize. Anyone would like to win it. But we'd never campaign and we'd be embarrassed to be thought of doing it."

- In a rather pathetic story, Canada's Ben Johnson tested positive for testosterone at a January 17 indoor meet in Montreal. Johnson had served a highly publicized two-year ban after testing positive for Winstrol (stanozolol) at the Seoul Olympics. The IAAF recently announced a lifetime ban of the sprinter and Johnson stated that he would not contest the ban and is retiring. There are rumors that Johnson has been offered a tryout with the Hamilton (Ontario) Tiger-Cats of the Canadian Football League.

- The Atlanta Olympic Committee has recently had some problems with the designs and plans for the main Olympic Stadium. Tentative plans had the stadium being used after the 1996 Olympics by baseball's Atlanta Braves. Protests in Atlanta have arisen because of the presumed "sweetheart deal" which was given the Braves, also over the lack of minority representation on the planning committee, and also because of concerns that taxpayer money would eventually be used to finance the stadium. In mid-March, however, the plans for the stadium were finalized and also given the approval of the various protest groups and the Atlanta commission which oversees the organizing committee. Atlanta Braves president Stan Kasten commented, "The Braves signed a 20-year lease for a stadium we expect to be playing in for 40 years. And during the next 40 years, our expectation is that not one cent of taxpayer money will ever get spent."

- At the IOC Executive Board meeting in Atlanta in March, ACOG (Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games) told the IOC that they were on course to meet their budget projections for the 1996 Olympics. This is despite some concerns that the selling of

sponsorship agreements is behind schedule. ACOG President Billy Payne stated, "We have brought in more money in terms of percentage of total budget than any organizing committee before us." Richard Pound (CAN), chairman of the IOC's New Sources of Financing Commission, commented, "To me, it looks do-able. Yes, the numbers are big, bigger than they've ever been at the national (Olympic) level. So it takes longer. Plus, the [U.S.] economy is bad. It is really unheard of for an organizing committee to have most of its revenues until after the Games."

- Television contracts for the 1996 Atlanta Games have not yet been signed with a U.S. Television network, historically the largest source of financing for an organizing committee. Richard Pound and Billy Payne have stated that they expect the networks will need to far surpass the figures given to Barcelona (\$401 million in 1988 dollars). This is because of the U.S. audience and the East Coast location of Atlanta which puts many of the most marketable events in excellent location to be televised in "prime time" (7-11 PM at night). U.S. networks are balking, since rights fees for recent sporting events have actually been going down, mainly because of the U.S. economy and the fact that they have lost a lot of money in the last decade on many of these events. This imbroglio has caused the negotiations for the U.S. TV contract to be delayed until late in 1993. The European Broadcasting Union did sign a contract for \$250 million (US), which is a significant increase. In 1988, Barcelona negotiated television contracts totalling about \$219 million US dollars from non-U.S. sources. However, only \$90 million of that was from Europe.

- At a Chicago conference on the future of the Olympics, communications professor Nancy Rivenburgh from the University of Washington presented an analysis of international response to the Atlanta mascot, "Whatizit." "Whatizit" is a computer-generated animated model that is best described by its name. Rivenburgh pointed out that foreign broadcasters were unable to explain the mascot adequately in other languages. China decided the mascot represented "a good luck sign." EuroSport said the creature must have come from "Walt Disney out of Stephen King somehow." Greek broadcasters thought it represented an astronaut, while Indonesian and Korean broadcasters were entirely perplexed. Rivenburgh predicted the mascot will be embraced by generations of children raised as "Nintendo-heads" yet cautioned that the Atlanta organizers should carefully consider how symbols and cultural nuances are perceived outside of the United States.

- Because of the many recent legal problems besetting the IOC and many International Federations, highlighted by the Butch Reynolds suit against the IAAF, the IOC has announced plans to create a World Court of Sport which would settle disputes via an arbitration board. The plan is that all prospective Olympic athletes must agree and sign a contract stating that they will allow any legal disputes concerning sport to be settled in this manner and not via individual, local courts. IOC Executive Board Member Richard Pound (CAN) was quoted as saying, "Fine. Don't sign. And buy yourself a nice, big color TV set, because that's where you're going to be watching [the Olympics]." The IOC Athlete's Commission endorsed the idea. Their chairman, Peter Tallberg (FIN), former Olympic yachtsman, said, "If he [the athlete] doesn't sign, he needn't take part, and no civil rights will be in danger."

- A recent article by William Oscar Johnson in *Sports Illustrated* (USA) focused on the efforts by the Lillehammer Olympic Organizing Committee (LOOC) and their plans for the 1994 Olympic Winter Games. Ivar Ødegaard, executive editor of *Gudbrandsdølen Lillehammer Tilskuer*, the town newspaper, was quoted as saying that when the games were awarded to Lillehammer, "The people were a little bit proud and a little bit curious, but above all they were very, very frightened." Johnson concludes that the people of Lillehammer have very little to be frightened about anymore. The LOOC appears to be on schedule and under

budget for the 1994 Games. Almost all the facilities are built already. Also of significance is that the Lillehammer Olympic construction has been held to strict environmental standards that the IOC is considering adopting for future host cities. Among these are ski jumps which are built into the side of a mountain rather than appearing out of nowhere as a skyscraper. The most impressive environmental triumph is Mountain Hall in the town of Gjøvik, 25 miles southwest of Lillehammer. The hall, which will be used for 16 preliminary ice hockey games, has been built inside a hill, essentially carved out of a mountain. Except for the entrance, the hall is basically invisible. It is now almost finished, four months ahead of schedule. The only problem mentioned in the article is that the women alpine skiers have complained that their proposed downhill course is too easy.

- Several small cities around Lillehammer have recently been reported to have some difficulties in being able to provide adequate housing for visitors to the 1994 Lillehammer Olympics. Wire-service reports mentioned that the towns are not all certain if building more hotels is a good idea because they may not be used after the Olympic Winter Games have passed. Several travel groups promoting tours are housing their guests in Oslo and having them commute daily to Lillehammer.

- Lillehammer has announced the medal designs for the 1994 Olympic Winter Games. They will be made primarily of Norwegian granite and will likely be quite heavy. They will be inlaid with enough gold (silver gilt), silver, and bronze to satisfy the rules of the Olympic Charter. The medals will have a design based on a 4,000-year-old rock carving which most experts believe represents an ancient skier. The granite was chosen because it represents the mountainous nature of Norway. A spokesman for the organizing committee noted, "China has its jade, Brazil has its amethyst, Italy its marble, and Norway has granite."

- Because of the problems with anabolic steroids in weightlifting, the IWF (International Weightlifting Federation) has re-aligned all the weight classes and eliminated all world records as of 1 January 1993. New records will have to be set in the new weight classes. The new classes are as follows (old weight limits in brackets): 54 [52] kg., 59 [56] kg., 64 [60] kg., 70 [67½] kg., 76 [75] kg., 83 [82½] kg., 91 [90] kg., 99 [100] kg., 108 [110] kg., and 108+ [110+] kg. Germany's track & field federation made a similar purging, but of national records in track & field. Because of the drug rumors surrounding former records from the old GDR, all national track & field records in Germany will be required to be re-set starting in 1993.

- Derek Redmond of Great Britain, who failed to finish the 400 metre semi-finals at Barcelona, but hobbled to the finish line assisted by his father, has been awarded an ESPY by ESPN, the U.S. sports programming television network. The ESPY is the year-end award for televised sports and Redmond received it for the televised inspirational performance.

- Dave Maggard, who competed in the shot put for the United States at the 1968 Olympics in Mexico City, was recently named by the Atlanta Olympic Organizing Committee as Sports Director for the 1996 Olympic Games. He replaces Dr. LeRoy Walker, who resigned to take over the presidency of the United States Olympic Committee. Maggard was most recently athletic director at the University of Miami.

- On Monday, 3 May, Billy Payne, chairman of the Atlanta Olympic Organizing Committee, underwent coronary artery bypass grafting (CABG). This was the second such surgery for Payne, who is only in his 40's but has a strong family history of heart problems. He came through the surgery well and was doing well in the weeks after surgery, being discharged from the hospital within five days. It was recommended to him by his surgeons that he take at least one month off from his Olympic duties.