

OLYMPIC NEWS

from magazines, newspapers, and wire services

○ The official Olympic flame for the Lillehammer Olympic Winter Games was lit in Olympia, Greece on 16 January 1994. Actress Maria Pambouki led the ceremony along with 21 other young Greek women in the Altis of the ancient Olympic site. As always the flame was lit by the rays of the Greek sun prior to beginning its transport to Norway.

○ Reports in British newspapers mentioned some early rumors that the Sydney organizers are considering snooker as an exhibition sport for the 2000 Olympics. There are no longer official demonstration sports held at the Olympics. Although snooker is popular in the United Kingdom, even the British papers were less than warm to the idea.

○ Once again, discussions about golf returning to the Olympics are underway. John Coates, president of the Australian Olympic Committee, noted that the International Olympic Committee is to review the sports included in the 2000 Games. "While the program has been settled for Atlanta," he said, "I think there is every chance some new sports will be incorporated for 2000 and some existing sports may go." Coates stated that the three sports with the best chance of being included are golf, triathlon, and taekwondo. Various Sydney golf courses are already lining up. Gordon Gower, who is secretary-manager of the Concord Golf Club, near Homebush Bay, contends that his course would be the logical choice for the event. "We were advised by the Australian Olympic Committee that no consideration would be given as to the venue until golf had been accepted into Olympic arena. [But] we've shown through hosting the Australian PGA Championship that we are more than capable of hosting a top-line international event." David Harris of the New South Wales Golf Club also believes his course would be ideal, "NSW should get it because it would come up better on television, it has a great aspect and because of its historical location."

○ In January the IOC announced the Candidate Cities for the Olympic Winter Games of 2002. Ten cities made official bids. They are as follows: Alma Ata, Kazakhstan; Graz, Austria (home of ISOH Honorary President Erich Kamper); Jaca, Spain; Östersund, Sweden; Poprad-Tatry, Slovakia; Québec City, Québec, Canada; Salt Lake City, Utah, USA; Sion, Switzerland; Sochi, Russia; and Tarvisio, Italy. The selection of the host city will be made in June 1995. While the IOC initially noted that the ten candidates confirmed the appeal of holding the Winter Games in separate years from the Olympic Games, they later noted that they will look for ways to limit the number of candidate cities because of excessive costs.

This idea was later enacted. An Electoral College has been appointed to limit the number of finalists to four which will then be voted upon at the 104th IOC Session in Budapest on 16 June 1995. "It is our duty to limit expenditure," declared Dr. Jacques Rogge, IOC Member in Belgium and AENOC President. Only the Evaluation Commission members will visit the ten cities, with the four chosen cities to then be visited by other IOC members. The Electoral College will consist of members of the IOC Executive Board, saving those members of countries in contention, the Doyen of the IOC (currently the Grand Duke of Luxembourg), one representative from the IFs and one representative from the NOCs, along with members of the Evaluation Commission, whose members will be increased to 12.

The ten (10) cities was a record for a single Winter Games, although the 1932 Olympic Winter Games had nine cities making bids. Most newspaper articles announced the 10 bidding cities as a record for any Olympic Games but it is not. In 1936 and 1940, 13 cities

made bids; in 1952, 11 cities made bids; and in 1956, 10 cities also made bids. It should be noted that prior to World War II and the era of television, that many bids were much more ephemeral than they are today and were often not carried to their conclusion.

- Several cities have expressed interest in hosting the 2004 Olympic Games, as follows: Beijing, China; St. Petersburg, Russia (formerly Leningrad, USSR); Buenos Aires, Argentina; Brasília, Brazil; Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Stockholm, Sweden; Seville, Spain; San Juan, Puerto Rico; a joint bid from Cape Town, Johannesburg, and Durban, South Africa; and a joint bid from Dusseldorf and Aachen, Germany. In mid-March, it was announced that Cape Town had been selected by South Africa as their bid city for 2004. President Samaranch also gave tacit approval to the bid when he noted that it was time for an African city to host the Olympic Games. Bids for the 2004 Olympics must be submitted by 1 June 1995.

- On 2 February 1994, the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games (ACOG) released its updated financial forecast for the 1996 Olympics. The projected revenues were \$1,580,671,000 with expenses of \$1,520,672,000 plus a contingency fund of \$60,000,000 (all US dollars). One year ago the contingency fund was listed as \$100 million. ACOG Chairman Billy Payne commented, "Quite simply, as the unknowns have become fewer and fewer, some of the contingency dollars have moved into operating expenses. With fewer unknowns left, we do not need as much of a contingency to ensure we live up to our commitment of not spending more to stage the Games than we can expect to raise in revenues."

- Former Olympic Stadia have had a rough time of late. Well known are the horrors which occurred in the many stadia in and around Sarajevo, but also recently damaged was the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum, site of the 1932 and 1984 Olympics, The L.A. Coliseum was damaged by the earthquake which struck Los Angeles in late January 1994 and sustained an estimated \$35 million worth of damage.

- On 19 January 1994, CBS Television signed an agreement with the Nagano Organizing Committee and the IOC giving it exclusive U.S. television rights to the 1998 Olympic Winter Games. The rights fee paid by CBS was \$375 million (US). This is an increase of 27% over the \$295 million CBS paid for the rights to Lillehammer, but adjusted for inflation, the increase is about 12%.

- IOC and ISOH Member Richard Pound discussed the success of television for the Lillehammer Olympics at the recent IOC Session. The total rights for Lillehammer came to \$350 million dollars, an increase of \$55 million more than Albertville. Pound commented that a better balance needs to be struck, however, between American, European, and Japanese television, as over 80% of the rights fees came from American television.

- The IOC and its Medical Commission, along with pharmaceutical company Parke-Davis, has announced plans for the Olympic Prize for Sport Science. This will be awarded to a person or organization performing original, significant work in the field of sports medicine or sports sciences. The 250,000 prize, with a diploma and commemorative medal, will be awarded for the first time at Atlanta, and then every two years, at each Olympic Games and Olympic Winter Games.

- Gerda Weißensteiner of Italy, who won the women's luge event at Lillehammer, returned home to tragedy. Shortly after the Olympics, her brother was killed in a motorcycle accident. While attending his funeral, her home in Bolzano, Italy, was robbed and the thieves took her gold medal. The Lillehammer Olympic Organizing Committee is planning on issuing her a replacement.

- The British Olympic Association has conducted numerous tests on the effects of heat and humidity on horses in preparation for the Atlanta Olympic Games. The horses, which were first trained to peak fitness, were then tested under artificially hot and humid conditions. The horses all became significantly hot and tired on the cross-country phase. Their temperatures rose to dangerous levels, making most of them unfit to compete. The BOA is negotiating to lease a training center in North Carolina which will simulate Atlanta conditions, and allow horses to be sent there several months in advance of the Olympics to allow heat acclimatization. This would also necessitate that the riders come to the U.S. several months in advance to continue training. A “scientific” three-day event is planned for Atlanta in the summer of 1994 to test the conditions and its effects on horses. Also being considered are similar effects on humans during long-distance events such as the marathon and cycling. It should be noted that Atlanta is significantly hotter and more humid in August than was Barcelona.

- In a recent interview with Iain Macleod, Juan Antonio Samaranch noted how important he feels it is to involve more of the international federations within the IOC. There are currently 28 NOC presidents on the IOC and only seven from the IFs. “The IOC cannot be an organization of NOCs. We have to find a way to have a minimum of 10-15 IF presidents. We are strong because we are united, but to remain so we have to treat the three parts (NOCs, IFs, and the IOC itself) in a fair way.. I know the problem but I don’t have a Samaranch also discussed increasing the size of the Evaluation Commission, which provides the technical analysis on candidate cities, from 10 to 14-15 members. He also discussed judgmental sports and judging inequities. In discussing his visit to Sarajevo during Lillehammer, he notes that the visit was symbolic rather than political - the IOC also brought in 1,500 kg. of food. Regarding the personal danger, “When you have a position like mine you have to take some risks.” Samaranch was also quoted as having a vision in which the ICO Executive Board would make all the key decisions including the choice of IOC host city, “That is the way everybody is going,” he says of the executive nature of global organizations whose structures he is familiar with. “But I know it is quite impossible.”

[*Editor’s Note:* It is true that only 28 NOC presidents and 7 IF presidents are members of the IOC. However, there are 194 NOCs and only 31 IFs of recognized Olympic sports. Thus 14% of the NOC presidents are IOC members, while 23% of the IF presidents are IOC members currently.]

- The International Baseball Association plans a Congress on 29-30 May at the Olympic Museum in Lausanne. One of the items on the agenda is modification of the eligibility statutes to allow professional players to compete in the Olympics. The Executive Committee of the IBA has twice voted against this in the past.

- At Atlanta, the FIE expects 220 fencers, with a maximum of three per country by arm in the individual events. Twelve teams will be selected by arm for the team events. Both team and individual events will be held by direct elimination with no *répêchage* pools held.

- Modern Pentathlon continues to modify its program. From 1994-1996, the shooting contest will consist of air pistols on standing targets from 10 metres.

- Another voice has been heard against the possibility of a “Dream Team” for ice hockey at Nagano. This is from Günther Sabetzki, President of the International Ice Hockey Federation, who thought that such a team from Canada and/or the United States, would not be fair to smaller countries wishing to compete in Olympic ice hockey.