

OLYMPIC NEWS

from various sources, newspapers, wire services, magazines

International Olympic Committee

- IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch announced on 17 January 1995 that the IOC will help rebuild sports facilities in Sarajevo which have been destroyed by the fighting there. "The IOC is ready to help reconstruction of sports facilities in Sarajevo," Samaranch announced at a press conference in Zagreb, Croatia, "We are waiting for the budget and projects . . . We will help with deeds, not words."
- On 17 January 1995, Samaranch also announced that the IOC would discuss a plea from a European womens' group to consider banning nations from the Olympic Games which practised discrimination against women. The group, called Atlanta Plus, and including members from France, Belgium, Germany, and Sweden, has charged the Muslim countries with discrimination against women in defiance of the Olympic Charter and has demanded that nations barring women from their delegations should be excluded from the 1996 Olympic Games. Samaranch announced in Zagreb, "The problem will be discussed. They are mentioning religion, tradition, and so on. We have to be very cautious and discuss it inside the IOC."
- The IOC and the Autonomous University of Barcelona have formed a mixed commission responsible for implementing a cooperative agreement between the two groups. The commission includes Fernando Riba and Pere Miró from the IOC and Miguel de Moragas i Spà (ISOH Member) and Manuel Parés from the University. The agreement calls for, among other items, creation of an "International Chair for Olympism." Administration for the new chair will be the responsibility of the Barcelona Olympic Studies and Sports Centre headed by their professor of communications, Miguel de Moragas i Spà.
- Four IOC members have reached the age limit for ordinary membership and have become honorary IOC members as at 1 January 1995, as follows: Maurice Herzog (FRA), Virgilio E. de Leon (PAN), Kevin O'Flanagan (IRL), and Pedro Ramírez Vázquez (MEX).
- IOC President Samaranch is apparently making moves to seek re-election in 1997. He has mailed a letter to his colleagues on the IOC to explore the possibility of raising the mandatory retirement age for IOC Members, which is currently 75. Samaranch is also, coincidentally, 75.

Centenary Olympic Congress

- The Organizing Committee of the Centenary Olympic Congress met for the last time on 31 January 1995 and presented the 800 page, two-volume, Official Report of the Congress, along with the final financial report to the IOC. The meeting was chaired by Olympic Congress Chairman Nelson Paillou.

National Olympic Committees

- The IOC Executive Board has given provisional recognition to the Olympic Committee of Guinea-Bissau, subject to ratification by the 104th IOC Session in Budapest in June 1995.
- Five NOCs of the former Soviet Union - Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tadjikistan, Turkmenistan, and Kazakhstan - announced plans to hold the first Central Asian Games. The Games are planned for 9 - 15 September 1995 in the Uzbek capital of Tashkent with 12 sports on the tentative program.

International Federations

- The IOC Executive Board has given provisional recognition to the International Federations governing ballroom dancing (dance sport) and surfing.
- President of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), René Fasel, and Gary Bettman, Commissioner of the National Hockey League (NHL), have recently held further meetings and reaffirmed their commitments to have NHL players participate in the ice hockey tournament at the 1998 Olympic Winter Games.
- The Fédération Internationale d'Éscrime (FIE) has announced that fencers will begin using cordless foils this year at a tournament in Berlin. The FIE is seeking to have this innovation introduced for the 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta. In addition, the dimensions of the fencing area have been changed from the traditional 16 x 2 metres to a square of 6 x 6 metres. This is to allow more freedom of movement and make the sport more exciting to spectators.
- The Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI) has announced several changes to the Olympic program to take effect in 1996. The dressage program will consist of a grand prix, a special grand prix, and a freestyle test. The three-day event will be two separate events - one for teams and one for individuals. In the dressage event at the 1996 Olympics, music will be used to accompany the horse and riders. This will be tried out at the 1995 European Championships.
- The Association Internationale de Boxe Amateur (AIBA) has announced several rules changes at its Congress in November 1994. First of all, gloves will now be standardized to 10 oz. (284 gm.) for all weight classes. Previously, boxers in the lighter weight classes (67 kg. and less) wore 8 oz. (227 gm.) gloves, while boxers weighing more than 67 kg. wore 10 oz. (284 gm.) gloves. The upper age limit for boxers has been extended from 32 to 34 years. Women's boxing was narrowly recognized as an official sport. Beginning 1 January 1997, all international amateur competitions will consist of five rounds of two minutes each, a change from the current limits of three rounds of three minutes each.
- At the Congress of the Fédération Internationale Basketball Amateur (FIBA) in Toronto, several rules changes to international play were also approved. The game may now be separated into four periods of 12 minutes each, at the discretion of the local ruling division of FIBA. The one-and-one rule on free throws has been eliminated. "Alley-oops" are now permitted in that an offensive player may catch a ball above the level of the rim and dunk it in the same motion.

1996 Olympic Games

- Savannah will remain the sailing venue for the Atlanta Olympic Games, per an announcement from ACOG. ACOG also announced plans to improve the site. Paul Henderson, President of the International Yacht Racing Union, said he was satisfied with the announcement, although he thought that preparations should be expedited to atone for lost time. He later stated that he was satisfied with the sports facilities in Savannah.
- ACOG has announced that the Olympic Flame will burn on American soil for 100 days. The Hellenic Olympic Committee will light the Olympic Flame at the Altis in Olympia, Greece in the spring of 1996. They will organize a relay to take the Flame to Athens, where they will hand it over to ACOG. The Olympic Flame will be relayed in the United States for 84 days prior to the start of the Olympics, arriving in Los Angeles (site of the Games of the XXIIIrd Olympiad) on 27 April, before arriving at the Olympic Stadium in Atlanta for the Opening Ceremonies on 19 July 1996. It will then burn for the 16 days of the Games, thus having burned for 100 consecutive days on American soil (27 April -- > 4 August 1996).
- Officials of the Georgia International Horse Park (GIHP) have noted their great concern for the health of the horses in Atlanta. Elric Pinckney, President of the GIHP, noted, "Every single possible precaution is being taken to ensure the health of the horses." The GIHP has been designed especially for the Olympics and state-of-the-art horse competition. Much of the design was done with the health of the horses in mind, and allows the Olympic equestrian officials great flexibility in the design of the courses.
- The 16 places for the 1996 Olympic men's football tournament will be allocated as follows: Europe [5], Africa [3], South America [2], North and Central America [2], Asia [2], and the United States [host country]. The 16th team will be determined in a play-off between the 3rd ranked team in Asia and the 1st ranked team in Oceania.
- The qualifying for the 1996 baseball tournament will be based on rankings at three 1995 continental competitions: The European Championships (7-17 July, Haarlem, The Netherlands); The America's Challenge (2-13 August in Edmonton, Canada); and The Asian Championships (17-28 September in Japan).

1998 Olympic Winter Games

- The International Skating Union announced that the 500 metre speedskating events will be contested in two heats over two days at Nagano in 1998.
- Nagano apparently sustained no major damage during the earthquake which struck Japan, primarily Kobe and Osaka, on 17 January 1995. President Samaranch reported in a news release, "We are in contact with Nagano. I got a final report and nothing happened in Nagano." President Samaranch also sent a message of sympathy to the President of the Japanese Olympic Committee and the two IOC Members in Japan, expressing regret for the devastating earthquake and offering help to rebuild the city's sports installations. He also stated that the Olympic Movement would unite to help to repair the damage.

Nagano is on the main Japanese island of Honshū, slightly north and west (about 180 kilometres) of the Tokyo-Yokohama metropolis. It is 340 kilometres north and east of Kobe/Osaka. The previous Olympic Winter Games held in Japan, in Sapporo in 1972, were conducted on the northernmost island of Hokkaido.

- The European Broadcasting Union (EBU) has paid \$72 million (US) for the exclusive rights to broadcast the 1998 Olympic Winter Games to Europe and much of the Middle East. This is three times the rights fee paid by the EBU for the Lillehammer Winter Olympics.
- Qualifying for the curling events in Nagano in 1998 will be based on the results of teams placing in the top ten at the World Championships of 1995, 1996, and 1997. The 1998 Olympic curling tournaments will comprise eight men's teams and eight women's teams. Points at the World Championships will be allocated as follows: 12 for 1st, 10 for 2nd, and from 8 to 1 point for 3rd through 10th place.

2000 Olympic Games

- The triathlon will be held at the 2000 Olympic Games for the first time on the Olympic Program. The competition will consist of the "so-called" Olympic distances of 1,500 metres swimming, 40 km. cycling, and a 10 km. run. There will be 100 competitors allowed to compete - 50 men and 50 women.

2002 Olympic Winter Games

- The IOC Selection Commission met on 23-24 January to choose the four finalists among the nine (9) bidding cities. for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games. The Commission was chaired by IOC Vice-President Kim Un-Yong (KOR). Other Commission members were Prince Alexandre de Merode (BEL), and Executive Board members Pál Schmitt (HUN), Ashwini Kumar (IND), Judge Kéba M'Baye (SEN), He Zhen-Liang (CHN), the IOC Doyen, HRH Grand Duke Jean (LUX), Evaluation Commission Chairman Thomas Bach (GER), Anders Bessenberg (UIPMB), representing the IFs, and Henri Sérandour (FRA), representing the NOCs.
- The four cities selected by the Selection Commission were Salt Lake City, Utah, United States; Québec City, Québec, Canada; Ostersund, Sweden; and Sion, Switzerland. These were the four favorites who had been the expected choices prior to the selection. The decision was announced by President Samaranch at a televised ceremony at the Olympic Museum, attended by the Mayor of Lausanne, Yvette Jaggi. The final decision will be made at the 104th IOC Session in Budapest on 16 June.
- The change in the selection process, with a preliminary cutdown to fewer cities, appears to have been very successful, and the IOC is apparently very happy with its outcome. It could possibly be adopted for future bidding for candidate cities.

2004 Olympic Games

- To date, fourteen cities have expressed interest in submitting a bid for the 2004 Olympic Games. Four of these have had their candidature confirmed by their NOCs, as follows: Cape Town (RSA), Istanbul (TUR), San Juan (PUR), and Seville (ESP). The other ten who have expressed interest are: Beijing (CHN), Brussels (BEL), Buenos

Aires (ARG), Osaka (JPN), Paris or Rhône-Alpes/Lille (FRA), Rio de Janeiro (BRA), Rome (ITA), Stockholm (SWE), St. Petersburg (RUS), and “a United States” city, either Boston or Chicago. Also see the item below under the 2008 Olympic Games concerning the Hellenic Olympic Committee and concerning Rio de Janeiro. St. Petersburg has officially submitted its candidature.

- On 1 June 1995 the IOC will officially invite NOCs to submit candidate cities. Cities must apply to the IOC by 10 January 1996. The decision for choosing the host city for the Games of the 28th Olympiad will then be taken at the 106th IOC session to be held September 1997 in Lausanne.
- Because of the number of cities potentially bidding for the 2004 Olympic Games, the IOC Executive Board has suggested that the system used for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games, in which a pre-selection to a specified number of finalists, could be used for the 2004 Olympic Games as well.

2006 Olympic Winter Games

- The city of Changchun, capital of the Chinese province of Zhilin, has expressed interest in bidding to host the 2006 Olympic Winter Games.

2008 Olympic Games

- The Hellenic Olympic Committee has announced that it is exploring the possibility of bidding for the Olympic Games of 2008. They are also considering bidding for 2004.
- Osaka, Japan is also preparing a bid for the 2008 Olympic Games, according to the mayor of the Japanese city, Masaya Nishio. This was announced prior to the major earthquake which savaged the Japanese cities of Osaka and Kobe on 17 January 1995. It is not known if the earthquake will affect that proposed bid.
- Edson Arantes do Nascimento, the Brazilian sports minister, much better known as the footballer Pelé, announced that Rio de Janeiro would make a bid for the 2004 and 2008 Olympic Games. He also stated that he expected the 2008 Olympic bid to be the more serious one.
- The Canadian city of Halifax, Nova Scotia is considering making a bid for the 2008 Olympic Games.

2012 Olympic Games

- The Polish Olympic Committee has expressed interest in a long-term plan to bring the 2012 Olympic Games to Warsaw.