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SPECIAL EDITION

SPORT ACCORD

APRIL 2011

INSIDE

The Big Interview:
Hein Verbruggen

From the Top:
Federation Leaders on
Why Sport Matters

Countdown to London:
Testing Time

Out of Many, Few Will Bid:
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From the
mountains



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CONTENTS

- 4**
 - A Note from the Publisher & Editor
- 6**
 - The Big Interview: Hein Verbruggen
- 8**
 - From the Top – Federation Leaders on Why Sport Matters
- 14**
 - London 2012 Sports Team Makes Pieces Fit the Puzzle
- 20**
 - Countdown to London: Testing Time
- 22 | 26**
 - London's Changing Scene
 - Quebec City for 2012
- 28 | 32**
 - Olympic Bid Power Index: Down to the Wire for 2018
 - Candidates for 2020
- 34**
 - FIFA Women's World Cup CEO



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A Note from the Publisher and the Editor

The numbers tell a story: the ninth year for SportAccord ... and the ninth consecutive year Around the Rings has been on the scene to showcase news from this vital gathering of world sport:



SHEILA SCOTT HULA
Publisher
sheila@aroundtherings.com

▲ Our eighth special edition magazine for SportAccord, better than ever.

▲ The seventh year Around the Rings has been one of SportAccord's select media partners.

But the number we are most excited about is 20, because it tells the story of our success.

Next month marks the 20th year Around the Rings has published original, authoritative news about the Olympic Movement. No other publication can match ATR's undisputed reign as *The* #1 publication for news about the Olympics.

But being "first" has something of a habit for us ever since 1992, when ATR was distributed by snail mail and then by fax. In 1996, ATR was one of the first publications to have a website. In 1998, it became the first Internet publication accredited to

cover the Olympic Games. In 1999, it became one of the first publications to be distributed via email.

In between, we've been first in our coverage of IOC meetings, world championships, and conferences, -- and

getting to know the people and issues like no other publication.

In 2009, we built on ATR's success and launched World Football Insider, which adheres to the same high standards ATR is known for. INSIDER – the first internet publication to focus on the business of football – is recognized as the leader in its field, as well.

This month we announce another "first" – the launch of our mobile app for Around the Rings, developed for the Android smart phone. No other publication about the Olympics can provide this kind of immediacy – news you need, delivered to your mobile device – *as soon as it happens*. The Around the Rings Olympic News mobile app is available in the Android Marketplace.

Of course, it's not always about what's "new". On-going programs and relationships are key to our success. We are pleased to continue our partnership with London event experts The Concerto Group – watch for more news soon about our next series of Newsmaker Breakfasts. In the meantime, I hope you will stop by our reception area at the Atlantic Cove in the London Aquarium during SportAccord's closing party Thursday night. A big thanks to our friends at Concerto for making this possible.

Regardless of how you get your Olympic news, there is no substitute for what makes ATR the best in its field: the quality of our content. It's a responsibility we take seriously: information that is accurate, contextual and immediate.

That's why The Guardian (UK) says ATR "has long been the most influential internet presence on the Olympics." (Feb. 4, 2010)

Or as we like to say: #1 in news about the Olympics for 20 years. Accept no less than the best. ■



ED HULA
Editor
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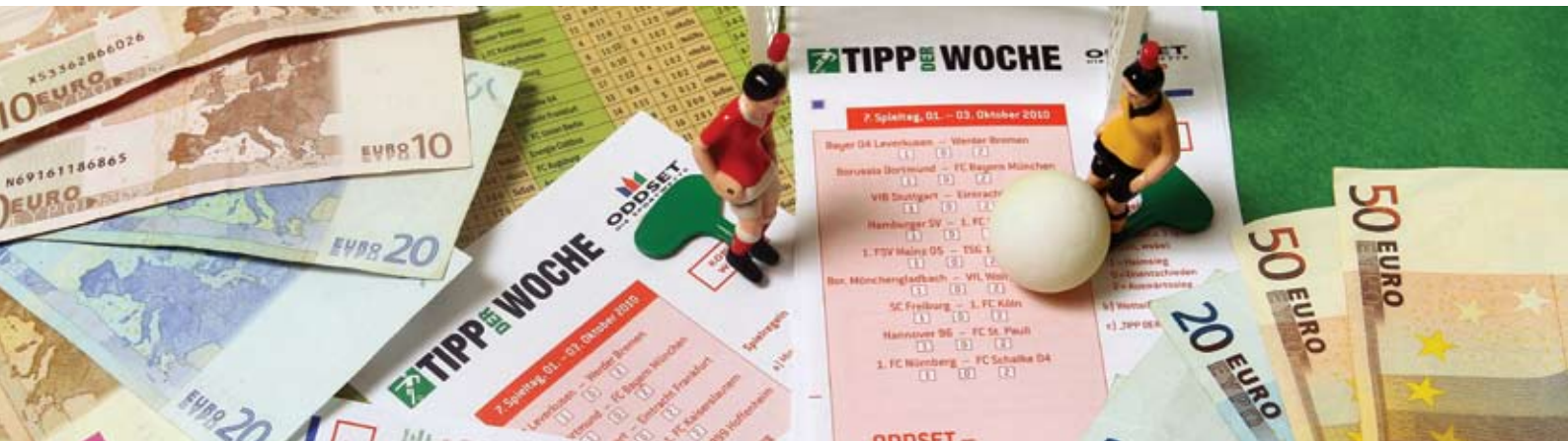
plan will bring together snow sports, ice sports and culture as well as being fully integrated with local life. And Anney will combine tradition and innovation to support the sustainable, long-term growth of winter sport and mountain economies, worldwide.

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The Big Interview: Hein Verbruggen



Illegal Betting, Expanded Multi-sport Events Top the Agenda

By Mark Bisson

SportAccord president Hein Verbruggen says the umbrella association for international sports federations will tackle the threat of irregular and illegal betting head-on in the build-up to the London 2012 Olympics.



“We have potentially a big problem with match-fixing and illegal betting. SportAccord has developed norms and standards. We have got a lot of knowhow from certain federations that we can transfer to other federations,” he told ATR.

“The International Cricket Council is very active in fighting match-fixing, so they are helping us set standards to create a transfer of knowledge.”

The ICC’s Anti-Corruption and Security Unit, set-up in 2000 following a corruption scandal, is tasked with pursuing the three objectives of investigation, education, and prevention. Last autumn, the unit investigated the Pakistani spot-fixing scandal that led to bans for three players.

An IOC-coordinated task force was launched last February to combat illegal and irregular sports betting. It came in the wake of a Lausanne summit featuring a handful of sports ministers, leaders from the international federations and representatives from a number of NOCs.

While the Olympics have yet to suffer a betting scandal, Verbruggen believes the 89 member IFs of SportAccord and 15 associate members must not be complacent but work together to implement preventive measures to ensure the integrity of their sports.

Verbruggen says this year’s SportAccord Convention at the heart of London is an exciting moment for the summer and winter Olympic international federations in the build-up to 2012.

For the non-Olympic federations, the gathering is an opportunity “to have a little smell of the Olympics” with various Games-related events and venue tours for delegates.

Verbruggen -- the former president of the international cycling federation (UCI) -- says the 2012 velodrome is a must-see.

“I’ve heard from the UCI and IOC that it’s an unbelievably magnificent piece of work and I’m looking forward to seeing it,” he says.

Expansion of Multisport Games

Expansion of Multisport Games

The Dutchman, who is also chairman of the SportAccord International Convention, says the IFs body continues to thrive through the support and services it offers to members.

Delighted with the success of the first SportAccord Combat Games in Beijing last year, the organization of multisport events for his member federations is high on the agenda for the next few years.

In December, the first World Mind Games will take place in Beijing.

Around 170 elite players will compete in the five sports on the program -- chess, bridge, draughts, go and xiang qi. With more than 500 million registered mind sports players globally, Verbruggen expects huge interest.

He’s quick to emphasize that it’s not so much a major sports event -- “much more of a festival” -- with a mix of sport-related and social events running alongside the main competition.

“There are so many sports events in the world. We don’t want to imitate these games, we are trying to create a new concept. How can we link the outside world to these kinds of things?”

A similar approach will be taken to the first SportAccord Beach Games at the end of 2012 or start of 2013. The host city is not yet decided, but Verbruggen says there has been “very positive” interest from several cities in Central and South America. After that, the next Combat Games will be staged in Russia in 2013.

SportAccord’s new online video platform for federations known as the ‘Sports Hub’ will become a major promotional tool for these multisport events, he says. Launched last year, it offers IFs, particularly smaller federations, the opportunity to broaden their global fan base via the online resource.

“We need to attract people and use our Sports Hub on You Tube to say that this city in 2013 is proud to be the combat sports capital,” he says by way of example. “We want to be different, to build these events up and say we will go two or three times to the same city.” ■



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From the Top – Federation Leaders

Long after the finish line's been crossed, the medals awarded and the stadium lights shut down, a question lingers: why?

Why race the competition? Why televise that race? Why sponsor that coverage? Why broker that sponsorship? Why hire that broker?



Jizhong Wei ■ President, FIVB

“Sport must continue to thrive because it provides hope and opportunity to many. Not only to the stars you see on our television screens but more importantly, the people who need it most at the grassroots level. Sport is an excellent tool to build comradeship, team spirit, work ethic and most importantly happiness, and this can only be achieved via participation. Today we measure volleyball not on the global exposure we receive via our mass media but by the many lives that have changed for the better thanks to a development course or Volley All Festival. Participation provides inspiration. Volleyball is a non-contact sport with a low injury rate, offering an excellent opportunity to experience the benefit of sport.”



C.K. Wu ■ President, AIBA

“Boxing is a great illustration of why sport matters. We see many boxers from disadvantaged backgrounds who admit that boxing helped to get them off the streets. Without strong grassroots programs, without a cohesive organization to govern the sport at international level and look after its athletes, and without the Olympic dream, boxing – or indeed any other Olympic sport – would not have such a powerful attraction.”



Ottavio Cinquanta ■ President, ISU

“Competitive sport, in my opinion, is the fifth activity for a human being because I repeat the other four: religion, job, education and family. Allow me to add sport, competitive sport. Competitive is important because when you have somebody crying with a tear on the face, he's crying because he's been defeated or he's crying because he has won. Sport is a good lesson.”



Pat McQuaid ■ President, UCI

“Part of the Olympic Games since 1896, cycling is an Olympic discipline par excellence. It is a popular universal sport with strong traditions but also a forward-looking spirit. The success of its leading events grows from year to year. Cycling's different disciplines – road, track, mountain bike and BMX, to name just the Olympic specialties – draw together riders and spectators from the five continents, of all ages and from all backgrounds. In addition, it is an environmentally-friendly endurance sport that plays an important social role in the promotion of eco-responsible mobility and health issues.”



Ivo Ferriani ■ President, FIBT

“Sport for me has so many social aspects – it easily teaches all important things you need in life, and I am not saying that you need to be a top-class athlete to find out.

If you are a kid in school, sport teaches you all important things that you can adapt for your school life too. Not by sitting in a class which sometimes is not so easy for kids, but by exploring yourself: if you train you improve, you have to show respect for people and for other things in order to understand it. If you are playing in a team all together, the whole team gets better.

You need to play fair in order to be respected, and last but not least you stay healthy, and as we all know: mens sana in corpora sano [‘a sound mind in a sound body’].”

on Why Sport Matters

The organizers of SportAccord must have had that same thought when they selected “Why Sport Matters” as the conference theme, and we couldn’t agree more.

Around the Rings asked a number of federation leaders for their thoughts on why sport matters to them personally and why their sport matters to the Olympic Movement.

Kelly Fairweather ■ CEO, FIH



“Imagine a world without sports. Where there were no games for children to play on the playground. Where water cooler talk was limited to the weather. Where there was no reason to push yourself to bike a little faster, run a little longer, swim a little harder or ski a little better. Imagine a childhood without heroes to inspire you with their indescribable feats of athleticism. Where dreams had no outlet. Where lessons like fair play and friendship aren’t learned. Where there were no teams to instill pride and a sense of community in major cities and small towns. Imagine your own world without sports and you will quickly find just why sports matter.”

Don Porter ■ President, ISF



“Softball is truly a sport for all. It unifies people no matter their gender, age, race, religion, or even athletic ability level. Perhaps no greater example exists than the coed (slow pitch) discipline, but to be sure we are touching all audiences, the sport has been developed in numerous forms and, to the point where it can not only be played in a non-traditional setting such as indoors, but even on playing fields designed for other sports.

Softball is important to international sport because it is one of the only team sports that enable its participants to engage in five different skill sets: pitching, hitting, running, throwing, and catching. Such activity is a healthy means for combating today’s common obesity problems, and softball is a model citizen on the sports fitness landscape thanks to four Olympic competitions (1996, 2000, 2004, and 2008) without a single positive doping test.

Thus, its importance can be measured by the smiles on the faces of the millions of participants in the sport worldwide.”

Kuno Ritschard ■ President, IWWF



“Most of us know that water occupies 70% of our planet’s surface. Many major city population areas are also located close to water. So, it is no surprise that there are over 30 million active waterskiers and wakeboarders in the world today!

Few sports cover all ages, cultures and sexes. Whoever saw a 90-year-old footballer or three-year-old golfer ! The fact is that both Waterski and Wakeboard are almost unique. Mothers compete with sons, daughters with fathers and grandfathers with grandchildren! In the coming World Waterski Championships in Russia, a 42 year-old father will compete with his 13-year-old son. The son may win!

As the IOC-recognized organizing body of towed watersports, the IWWF is unusual. Its target audience ranges from three-year-olds to grandparents. Those who reach the top of the 30 million skill-pyramid are extreme professional athletes. Their exploits can be followed at <http://www.WaterskiandWakeboardWorldcup.com> and on major international sports TV Networks. For those who head out to the water each weekend with the family, all they have to do is select which part of the planet’s 70% surface they wish to enjoy!”

Kate Gaithness ■ President, WCF



“Sport breaks down barriers, and it doesn’t end at competitiveness. It certainly brings together people from all walks of life and creates lasting friendships, and it’s accessible to all. This is something we place great emphasis on. For us, sport’s really about breaking down barriers. Curling encompasses people from all walks of life regardless of where they are or if they’re wealthy or not. It’s for everybody. It should encompass everyone.”

continued on page 10

From the Top – Federation Leaders on Why Sport Matters

continued from page 9



Josef Fendt ■ President, FIL

“Sport matters very much because it’s an important component of our society, and I think it is very important for most people all over the world.

I am the president of the International Luge Federation. Therefore, I am convinced that the sport of luge has every right to be part of the Olympic program, and it’s a great part of the Olympic program. We have a very long tradition in history. In 2014, we will celebrate the 50-year anniversary of luge as an Olympic sport. The sport of luge has much more than 100 years of tradition and history.”



Lamine Diack ■ President, IAAF

“I believe that the sport of athletics is now more professional, more commercially and financially aware than ever before, and that we have enhanced our worldwide appeal. Since the creation of the Athletics World Plan in 2003 we have driven forward reform in all areas of our sport as we approach our Centenary in 2012.

We have established a specific Schools and Youth Commission and created a “Kids Athletics” grassroots program which introduces youngsters to our sport in a fun and modern way.

The IAAF is also now keen to offer direct support to federations (Administration and Competition grants – new tracks etc) and a new Continental sponsorship program has already raised \$12 million from adidas and Samsung to be invested directly into the IAAF’s Area Associations.

One of the reasons I am standing for reelection as IAAF President in August 2011 is because my mission is not yet complete. I want to ensure greater efficiency and future prosperity by cutting IAAF central costs, without reducing support to our federations or the athletes.



Chung-won Choue ■ President, WTF

Taekwondo’s practical and mental disciplines have caused it to sweep across the world in just a half a century. The variety of medal winners since its debut as an Olympic sport gives evidence that this sport has reached beyond its heritage.

Furthermore, taekwondo has taken the initiative to availing itself to a transparent and fair judging system that utilizes enhanced body protectors for electronic scoring and instant video replay so that the interests of the athletes competing are held paramount. Referees also undergo intensive training in the rules of competition and the ideals of Olympism.

The World Taekwondo Federation has successfully sought out to offer peace and development to the world through its unprecedented WTF Taekwondo Peace Corps. Taekwondo instructors are dispatched to countries in need to offer development and, most importantly, hope to the youth of the world.



HRH Princess Haya ■ President, FEI

“The FEI celebrates its 90th birthday this year and London 2012 will mark the 100th anniversary of equestrian sports in the Olympic movement.

The history and tradition of mankind’s partnership with horses, and the fact that equestrianism is the only sport underpinned by the agricultural industry, gives us a unique significance. Our sport has the power to attract and embrace people of all ages, both as competitors and spectators. Equestrianism is one of the only sports where men and women compete on equal terms.

The highly dynamic international sporting scene, which is constantly growing, sits on a bedrock of adding huge value to societies in economic terms. Horse sport also has a very direct impact within rural development policy areas concerning land management, quality of life and economic diversification, which is a key factor to fighting climate change and helping our environment.”

continued on page 12



WORLD TAEKWONDO FEDERATION

WORLD TAEKWONDO FEDERATION

A stylized world map is shown in the background, with various colored dots (black, orange, red) scattered across the continents, representing member nations or global reach.

World Peace
through
Taekwondo



From the Top – Federation Leaders on Why Sport Matters

continued from page 10



Marisol Casado ■ President, ITU

The IOC's enhanced relationship with the United Nations shows that roles of international sport communities are becoming more crucial in society. The power of sport is also being more recognized in addressing global concerns and bringing about social changes into our lives. I believe the sport of triathlon can play a part in that and has already showcased some of these qualities over years.

With the dynamic race action of three different segments, triathlon is one of the most magnetic sports to inspire youth around the world. It is no longer a sport only perfected by the superhuman. Rather, it is a true lifestyle sport that can be practiced regardless of age, gender or disability.

ITU is also committed to developing the sport in every corner of the world. Junior training camps and the Team ITU, a unique program for promising athletes from developing National Federations, are some of the examples. As the governing body of triathlon, ITU welcomed seven new National Federations last year. The number of affiliated federations is now over 120, which was achieved only 20 years after the foundation. I took up triathlon and competed in the first-ever triathlon race in Spain, and since then, the sport has brought great values, inspirations, friends and humanity into my life. The same opportunity should be given to people in every corner of the world, and I am committed to dedicating my efforts to deliver it through the power of sport.



Denis Oswald ■ President, FISA

“Sport is a fundamental component of our Society. It contributes to bringing people together as well as mutual understanding, social integration, respect and education of peoples’ character, among other things. It is therefore vital to promote sport even more and protect its integrity by fighting against different threats like doping, cheating and other manipulations of that type. Rowing is a sport which has been able to keep itself out of most scourges which affect sport nowadays. It is probably the sport representing and applying what a majority of people would consider the true and core values of sport.”



Rene Fasel ■ President, IIHF

“Three words: Respect, friendship, excellence. I cannot think of any better way than sport to teach young people important values for life – and this universally, regardless of language, race and religion. From my years as a hockey player and referee, I took away so many experiences, which have become the cornerstone of philosophy for my later private and professional life. I am very grateful I could learn those lessons through a sport I love.”



Göran Petersson ■ President, ISAF

“Sailing goes beyond its importance as a sport alone; it is a globally unifying lifestyle sport. Sailing helps to positively define and shape an individual’s character and instills strong family values. It is a genuine lifetime sport for all ages bringing together young and old and is not limited by physique. The skills to sail a boat cross over to everyday life. It requires endurance, skill, independence and logical and free thinking. It is a balance of science, physicality and creativity in tune with the natural environment. So, in my view sailing adds an important dimension and diversity within the family of international sport.” ■



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London 2012 Sports Team Makes Pieces Fit the Puzzle



The Aquatic Center at London Olympic Park as seen last July on two years to go to the Games. (ODA)

Organize a world championship in 26 different sports, in the same city, within a two-week timeframe – and make everyone happy – whether athlete, federation or spectator.

Reported by Adrian Hill in London



▲
Debbie Jevans joined London 2012 during the bid for the Games.

For the London Olympics, that's the monumental assignment facing director of sport Debbie Jevans and her team of 26 competition directors.

"It's complex, but exciting," she says. "We did not have a blank piece of paper. We looked closely at the Sydney schedule, added Athens into the mix and then overlaid Beijing."

Jevans had to deliver an indicative schedule as part of the bid for the Games back in 2004. Then, after London won the right to host in July 2005, she delegated the task of fine-tuning the roster to Pete Ambrose, a member of her team who spent three years drawing up the detailed dates and timings for each sport. As Jevans explains, it was an exhaustive process.

"We talked to the international federations for each of the sports. We wanted to know both what worked in the past, and what didn't.

"For the timings of the finals, we sought feedback from broadcasters from every region of the world. It is really important to maximise TV viewership, and these are some of the key times in the schedule.

"However, we have the busiest city in the world and we have to keep the city moving. We have talked at length

with the various authorities in London and I now have a deep understanding of the traffic flow around key locations, such as Hyde Park where triathlon will be staged."

"It's a giant jigsaw which everyone has signed off. There was obviously some compromise required but the one thing that is fundamental is that the athletes are at the heart of it. The schedule had to take this into account.

"If an event starts at 10am, we were aware that the athletes would have been up since 5am. We're very mindful of their preparations – this is the culmination of four years of hard work and it has to be fair to them."

Some federations, such as UCI (cycling), insist on one event per day. There were geographical considerations not just within London but also in scheduling at venues outside London, such as football matches or sailing. There will be activity in at least one of the 10 venues outside London on every one of the 16 main days of competition.

The "watch-for-free" events on the roads in and around the British capital, such as the marathon and cycling road races, had to be separated out to avoid plunging London into gridlock. Weather data from the last five years was pored over for details such as the best times to avoid cross-winds at rowing venue Eton Dorney.

There was also global scheduling to take into account. The prime audience markets for sports such as badminton and taekwondo are different from those of swimming and rowing.

"Some sports want to time their events to suit Asia, others to the East Coast of the States. We have adhered to this as much as possible but we didn't want 26 gold

continued on page 16



VERO is celebrating

Born out of London's successful 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games bid, for the last five years VERO has been building successful campaigns, standout brands and developing compelling narratives.

VERO helped Rio 2016 bring the Olympic and Paralympic Games to South America and Qatar 2022 the FIFA World Cup to the Middle East, both for the first time. VERO worked with the International Rugby Board to secure Rugby a place on the Olympic programme and has advised many clients in the business of sport on how best to communicate to their target audiences.

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London 2012 Sports Team Makes Pieces Fit the Puzzle

continued from page 14

Horse Guards Parade, site for Beach Volleyball. (ATR)

medals being decided at the same time. We have spread the medals through different times of the day and I'm pretty proud of this spread," adds Jevans.

With pictures beamed to every corner of the world, the success of the Games relies on full stadiums. The image of Beijing 2008 suffered from the sight of masses of empty seats at certain venues. London is determined to avoid that situation with a strategic decision to increase the number of sessions by 62 (to 631) to avoid no-shows and spectator apathy.

"We noticed that in Beijing the sessions were too long, so we have shortened and added sessions," reveals Jevans.

"No matter how much you love watching beach volleyball, sitting there for eight or nine hours could be a

long haul. And with the hockey we have split the semi-finals into different sessions ... We want a full stadium twice, rather than half-full once."

With the ultra-precise schedule in place, the task of setting the stage rests with the 26 competition managers on Jevans' team. These are the men and women responsible for the planning, organization and management of their respective sports at the Games.

"I'm incredibly happy to be dealing with such a variety of individual sports within aquatics," says competition manager Charlotte O'Neill.



Aquatics competition manager Charlotte O'Neill. (LOCOG)

Volleyball competition manager Bob Clarke. (LOCOG)



"From the aesthetics of synchro, to the tough team sport of water polo, to the endurance of open water," she says.

O'Neill served a similar role for British Swimming at the 2008 World Short Course Championships in Manchester. She will oversee operations at some of London's most distinctive venues in 2012 – the striking Aquatics Centre and historic Hyde Park as well as a Water Polo Arena.

"Much of my work is done prior to the Games. I liaise closely with FINA. It's their competition and they have been world-class innovators in sports presentation. It's about putting on a show and seeing it as theatre."

O'Neill will have an army of 600 volunteers and up to 30 staff at Games time – and nothing is being left to chance with superstars Ian Thorpe and Michael Phelps among the glittering cast on parade. She is proud that for the first time there will be five aquatics training venues under one roof within the Olympic Park.

"I have miles and miles of spread sheets covering every aspect," she adds.

"Our team are ensuring that everything is in place for the athletes, so they have the best possible facilities."

The beauty of any Olympic Games is its variety, and while the athletes also may be wearing swimming costumes,

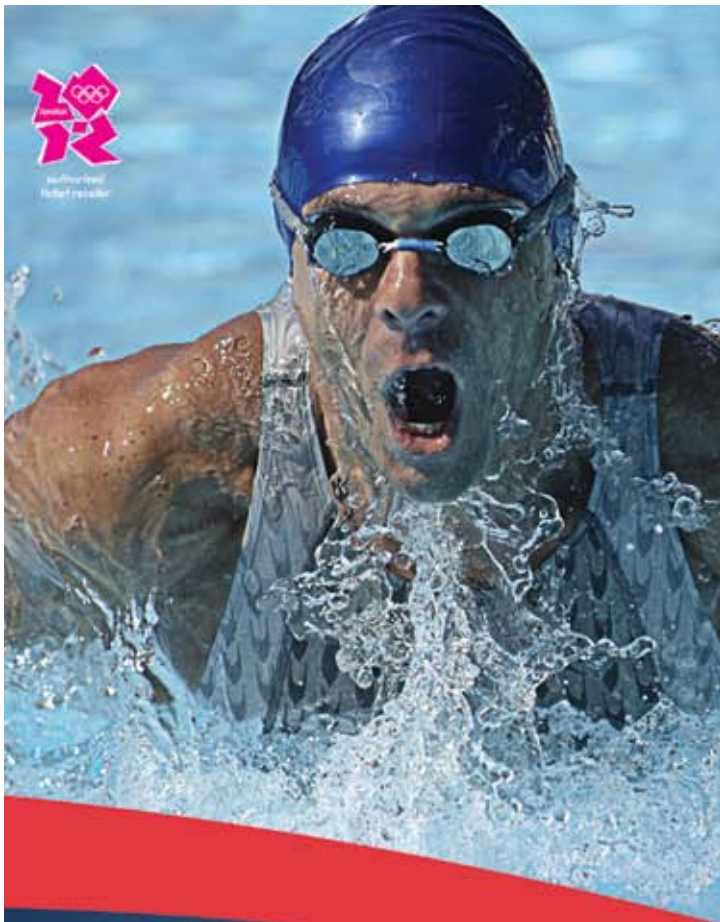
O'Neill's colleague Bob Clarke has a very different event to manage – beach volleyball.

London 2012 will not be just another beach volleyball tournament, due to the decision to locate it at Horse Guards Parade, an iconic setting in the historic center of London.

"I think we will have the No.1 profile venue," says Clarke, who's from the U.S. and now working on his seventh Olympic Games.

"It's not the first time sport has been staged at Horse Guards Parade – Henry VIII held jousting there – but this will be special. We work very closely with the FIVB and they are very excited about the project."

A 15,000-seat temporary arena will surround a court made of imported sand on top of the most famous military parade ground in the world. The 18th Century Household Cavalry Museum is nearby, while the British Prime Minister can follow the action simply looking out the window overlooking Horse Guards Parade. ■



BE IN LONDON AS HISTORY IS MADE.

BE SO CLOSE TO THE SPECTACLE, THE GLORY,
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Testing Time for ASOIF Members

Lessons from London 2012 test events and cutting costs are the key challenges for the 26 Olympic sports federations ahead of next year's Games.

Written by Mark Bisson



Andrew Ryan and Denis Oswald (ATR)

“We are down to the nitty gritty,” says Andrew Ryan, director of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF). “The huge headline issues for federations are solved.”

“The pressures that exist are entirely concerns to save any kind of expenses which are not necessary and to cut costs,” he adds.

Federations are spending the coming months crunching numbers on hotel rooms, ticketing

allocations and travel costs for IF chiefs and their technical officials “to make sure there is no waste of money or surplus expenditure”.

For instance, he says some IFs had been forced to rethink their budgets due to London's high hotel costs, but others are pleased with the accommodation deals they are getting.

Ryan and ASOIF president Denis Oswald identify the slew of test events this year and next before the 2012 Games as the main area of focus for federation leaders.

London 2012 sailing venue at Weymouth

2012 canoe slalom venue

“Test events will throw up a whole range of issues for each sport. We are focusing on the venue level and individual federation issues.”

Inevitably, London 2012 preparations for the 26 sports on the program have been a little smoother than for Beijing 2008 where Chinese ways of working and the language barrier sometimes made it difficult to resolve problems on site.

“It's maybe easier for London because of the attitudes and regime,” he admits. “One of the good things in London... they [2012 organizers] have been pretty innovative at doing things at a high standard.”

ASOIF hopes to have its shared data platform operating at a test level during London 2012. The concept, which has been in the works for some time, is set for approval at the association's general assembly at SportAccord.

The central source of data would include athlete biographies and results for those athletes competing at the highest level - at world championships, the Olympics and Youth Olympic Games.

Ryan says collating the data on one technological platform will be a huge boost for ASOIF members. It will raise the quality and accuracy of information supplied for IFs; the system also will reduce costs for those IFs that currently rely on third parties to supply athletes and results data. ■



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London's Changing Scene

On April 1, the responsibility for promoting London as the world's premier visitor destination was taken over by a brand new agency, London and Partners Ltd.

The agency is supported by the Mayor of London. It also will take on the responsibility of promoting London as a destination for both foreign inward investment and for overseas. It is the first time London has had a single promotional body

Mayor Boris Johnson has charged the new organization with making sure the city is recognized worldwide

as "the best big city on earth to visit, invest and study in."

Iain Edmondson, who was head of events for Visit London, will function as head of London & Partners Major Events Team. Around the Rings Publisher Sheila Scott Hula spoke with him shortly before SportAccord kicked off. As



Iain Edmondson

a member of the 2012 bid team, he knows where the city has been – and where his team wants to take it next year and beyond.

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Around the Rings: What's different from other Olympic cities, such as Athens or Beijing?

Edmondson: One of the big differences is that London was one of most visited cities in the world already. It has a lot of attractions. It's a great place, and things are centrally located, relatively speaking.

ATR: If you were talking to someone who was last in London in 2005, when it won the bid, what is different? How has the landscape changed?

Edmondson: New stations, new train lines put in place. Space getting on and off the trains has been improved. King's Cross and St. Pancras right next to it are a completely different experience from when it was quite crowded. It's much easier to get around. Victoria Station (will be ready) later this year. We also have event spaces for a hundred people to thousands of people. London has always been a great place to hold events (and we're finding new ways to use existing spaces) -- places like Battersea Power Station (on the South Bank). It was derelict. It's now being used as an event space, where they hold things like the Red Bull Motocross event. People are finding ways to utilize space in London in creative ways.

ATR: I'm glad to hear about the stations. London can be a difficult city to get around.

Edmondson: That's something both the current mayor and the former mayor recognized. There is a dedicated team within the mayor's office to find ways of helping improve people's experience. There is obviously this big initiative to make sure all improvements will be the best possible fit for wheelchair users to get on and off the Underground. Jubilee Line was sort of the first example of that. The mayor's office is working on an online information portal to help people understand how to get around the city.

Visit London has some information online about accessible rooms – specifically adaptable rooms in hotels with hoists in them, for example, specialist care, personal assistants available to support them.

continued on page 24



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London's Changing Scene

continued from page 22

ATR: How has winning the Games affected London and your ability to attract events?

Edmondson: London has a funny reputation in some respects about where it is in sport. When it comes to some of the minority sports and Olympic sports, there's been a perception London doesn't do much for those sports. (But) there's a huge sporting heritage here. Virtually every codeified sport is played here in one form or another. We have 148 parks – people are out playing things all the time. Some of those sports are not as commercially viable and rely more on taxpayer money and support. They sort of get drowned out a bit and don't have as big a profile terms of raising their profile in the city when there is so much going on. I think the thing we have been able to do in the last couple of years and of course leading up to the Games is a "sports moment", and what we can do now is capitalize on our profile now without spending a lot of taxpayer money – things like the World Championship Series of Triathlon. London is on the calendar for that. We bid for world badminton

championships back in 2007. (It's) an unofficial test event held at same venue used for the Games.

ATR: Every host city is different, but have you asked advice or learned lessons from other cities?

Edmondson: We do look at other cities, but the lessons learned aren't always the relevant ones. We want to avoid mistakes, but we can't always find the right answers from other cities.

ATR: Many cities say they want to grow tourism because of the Games, but the reality is that for whatever reason they miss the opportunities. What is London doing?

Edmondson: The most important thing is timing and focusing on making sure we know what next step is now, so that we don't wake up in 2013 and start planning for the activity. We know what that is going to be the moment we close the doors for the Paralympic Games. We've done some research. People want more interesting things – sport events, festivals in the

city. So, ok – how do we grow those and make those happen?

ATR: You're already booking events. Tell me how you'll deliver the legacy.

Edmondson: One particular opportunity is people's perception of sports tourism, for example – people traveling to see sport. That was a great success for Barcelona. People already do it for London but there's more we can do. That legacy of having a greater emphasis on sport tourism over the next five to 10 years, and the role the Olympic Park will play in that, is a particular focus for us.

The reasons why people travel to different cities are sometimes to visit friends, sometimes to see places, but actually to attend major events is a surprisingly high number – at least one-third. So if you've got that one in three people, wherever they are that you can potentially appeal to, if you've got the right major event that will appeal to them, and they know this is a place they can come and do that, then that will have an effect. ■

SEE & DO

From now until the Olympic flame is lit next year, Around the Rings will highlight museums and attractions that celebrate Britain's unique role in the development of sport, with recommendations from a new website - sportcloseup.co.uk.

When you are in London, see the sights. Not just Big Ben but "Big Mac" -- the 'ghost' of John McEnroe is one of the big draws at the Wimbledon Lawn Tennis Museum. The 2012 tennis venue houses one of the city's five sports museums and is one of 11 football, rugby, cricket and tennis stadiums you can tour. One of the world's biggest is Wembley, where everything is giant-sized ^ such as the 315m arch that weighs as much as 10 jumbo jets. Get a close up view of the Olympic Stadium on walking tours run by London's famous Blue Badge guides. They don't stop for rain, snow, or even Christmas.

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OLYMPIC COUNTDOWN TO EQUESTRIAN CENTENARY

London 2012 will mark the 100th anniversary of equestrian sports in the Olympic movement with a riveting 14-day showcase set against the stunning backdrop of Greenwich Park.

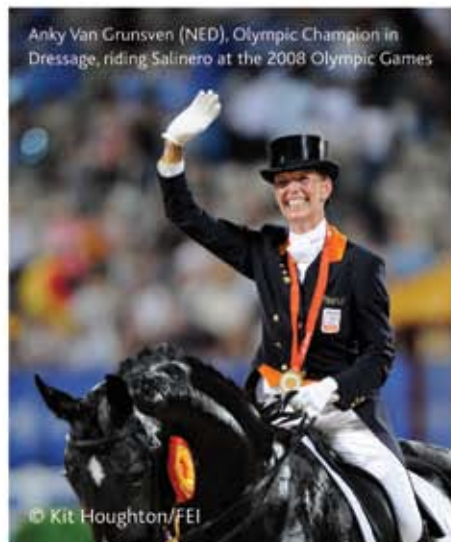
The world's best athletes and their horses will step into the global spotlight, engaging youngsters and older generations and providing a key opportunity for the Fédération Equestre Internationale (FEI), the governing body of horse sport, to further develop equestrianism worldwide.

THE LONDON 2012 COUNTDOWN

Host nation Great Britain is automatically qualified in the three Olympic equestrian disciplines of Jumping, Dressage and Eventing. A further nine countries have also secured Olympic qualification in one or even two of the three Olympic equestrian disciplines following successful performances at the Alltech FEI World Equestrian Games™ in Kentucky last August. These are: Australia, Brazil, Belgium, Canada, France, Germany, New Zealand, The Netherlands and USA.

Over the coming months there will be opportunities at venues around the world for other Olympic hopefuls to secure a spot in London.

From 27 July to 12 August 2012, 200 equestrian athletes will compete for team and individual medals in the three equestrian disciplines.



Anky Van Grunsven (NED), Olympic Champion in Dressage, riding Salinero at the 2008 Olympic Games

© Kit Houghton/FEI



The gold medal winning German Eventing team at the 2008 Olympic Games

© Kit Houghton/FEI



Laura Kraut riding Cedric. Members of the gold medal-winning Team USA at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing

© Kit Houghton/FEI

OLYMPIC DISCIPLINES: JUMPING, DRESSAGE AND EVENTING

Eventing opens the Olympic equestrian programme on 28 July with two days of dressage, followed by cross-country on 30 July and two rounds of jumping on 31 July to decide the Team and Individual medals. Dressage starts on 2 August, with two days of Grand Prix competition. The top seven Teams and 11 best-placed Individuals go forward to the Grand Prix Special on 7 August, which decides Team medals. The Freestyle to Music to decide the Individual medals takes place on 9 August.


The first Jumping qualifier on 4 August is followed by the two-round Team decider. The two rounds of Jumping to decide the Individual champion take place on 8 August.

LONDON 2012 PARALYMPIC GAMES
Para-Equestrian Dressage is the only equestrian discipline included in the Paralympic Games and was introduced in 1996 at Atlanta. The London 2012 Paralympic Equestrian events take place from 30 August - 4 September.

LONDON 2012 MEDIA COLLABORATION
The FEI is working closely with the International Olympic Committee and the London 2012 Organising Committee on the equestrian schedule to allow the Olympic Broadcasting Service (OBS) and wider international media the opportunity to maximise coverage of the equestrian disciplines.

See You Next Year

The leaders of world sport will gather next in Quebec City with London 2012 knocking on the door.

The Chateau Frontenac opened in 1893 and has dominated the skyline of Quebec City ever since.  (Getty Images)

The 10th annual SportAccord Convention is provisionally slated for May 20 to 25, roughly two months before the opening ceremony to next year's Olympic Games.

With the 2018 race long since decided, bids for 2020 will be the ones making pitches next time around.

As usual, annual general meetings of the international sports federations, the Associations of International Olympic Summer and Winter Sports (ASOIF), the General Association of International Sports Associations (GAISA), the International Masters Games Association (IMGA) and the International World Games



Association (IWGA) will coincide with the weeklong gathering.

The IOC executive board also will schedule a meeting on the sidelines of SportAccord 2012.

More than 1,500 representatives of international sport are expected in Quebec City for the conference. Its venue is to be determined.

All About Your Host

- One of the oldest European settlements in North America, Quebec City was founded in 1608 by French explorer Samuel de Champlain. Four centuries later, it's the capital of Quebec as well as the province's second most populous city.
- Jean Lesage International Airport is about 20 minutes from downtown Quebec and offers regular flights from New York, Chicago, Detroit and Paris as well as elsewhere in Canada.
- Visitors to Quebec City have no trouble finding a hotel. The Chateau Frontenac is a can't-miss symbol of the city as well as the most prominent feature of its skyline.
- Other top-of-the-line hotels include the Loews Le Concorde and Hilton Quebec.
- The Old Town, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is peppered with quaint shops, yummy restaurants and hundreds of historical relics, including the original city walls.
- Daily highs for late May hover around 18 degrees Celsius and nightly lows around 6 degrees, temperatures warm enough to make you forget you're in a Winter Olympic bid city of the past – and possibly the future.
- Quebec's provincial premier wants the Games in 2022 after losing out to Salt Lake City in 2002, then failing to get Canada's nomination in 2010. ■

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Bidding for the Games



South Korea Leads Field in Olympic Bid Power Index

Written by Ed Hula, Mark Bisson, Edward Hula III

A commanding lead in public opinion helps put PyeongChang in the lead of the three-city race to host the 2018 Winter Olympics.

The South Korean bid holds a three-point lead over Munich in the Around the Rings Olympic Bid Power Index -- 77 to 74 -- out of 100 possible points across the 11-category index. Anney lags with 67 points, thereby earning true underdog status as the race heads into a crucial three-month stretch to the July 6 IOC vote.

Now in its seventh year, the Power Index is compiled by the experts at Around the Rings, all of whom have studied and followed the bids from their inception, including multiple visits to each city and extensive interviews with each bid's organizers.

The 11 categories range from ambience to venue plans. Two categories are subjective; the other categories are based on numbers provided by the bid cities or gathered by ATR. The rankings are not meant to predict the outcome of the IOC vote in July, but to show the relative strengths and weaknesses of the cities. ■

| March 2011 | Anney | Munich | Pyeong Chang |
|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Accommodations | 6 | 7 | 6 |
| Ambience – out of 5 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| Bid Operation – out of 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 |
| Games Cost | 7 | 8 | 7 |
| Last Games | 6 | 7 | 9 |
| Legacy | 6 | 7 | 9 |
| Marketing | 7 | 8 | 8 |
| Gov/Pub Support | 6 | 8 | 10 |
| Security | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Transportation | 7 | 7 | 7 |
| Venues/Experience | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| POWER INDEX | 67 | 74 | 77 |



the three bids – barely above 50 percent.

Positives:

Anancy and Chamonix offer a small-town atmosphere, the charm of the French Alps and a stadium for ceremonies on the shore of the pristine lake.

With Chamonix as the host of the first Winter Olympics in 1924, Grenoble in 1968 and Albertville in 1992, there is a wealth of experience and heritage of winter sports. That has lessened the need for venue construction, minimizing the costs of preparation. Same goes for infrastructure, with existing highways and rail service connecting Anancy to Europe.

Government support appears to be unflinching despite the bid's difficulties. Sports minister Chantal Jouanno's passion for the Olympics and willingness to become heavily involved in the run-up to July 6 is a huge plus. Sensitivity to the environment is high. Athlete involvement in the bid is strong. New CEO Charles Beigbeder brings a vitality the bid could have used a year ago.

The bid from Anancy seemed to be on the ropes two months ago amid a leadership crisis. The team has settled down, but the bid still seems to face long odds. One problem may be public opinion: the IOC survey done in December during Anancy's darkest hour is expected to show the lowest level of public support among

Anancy Hit by Sagging Public Opinion

Negatives:

The effort to bring the third Winter Games in 50 years to this part of France lacks a compelling story and the novelty that seems to attract IOC votes.

The original venue plan for the Games was modified after IOC criticism, but with venues scattered among four clusters it still presents a challenge.

Also challenging will be accommodations, with more than 500 hotels and inns needed to satisfy IOC needs for housing spread across the Haute Savoie and Geneva, Switzerland. Indeed, the biggest hotel listed in the Anancy bid file is next to Geneva Airport -- 40 minutes from Anancy and almost two hours from Chamonix.

The bid's legacy seems unremarkable. There would be new public housing from the Olympic Village; for sport, a new ice rink in Chamonix and a speed skating track, which France now lacks.

Anancy's revamped communications strategy has been slow to materialize and the under-funded bid now faces a tough PR battle against its more organized and better-resourced rivals. Budgetary issues remain a concern as the international campaign heads into the final few laps. After an inauspicious start to its 2018 bid, there is a lingering suspicion that France has its sights set on the 2020 Olympics prize and is only staying the course in this campaign to strengthen its standing in the Olympic Movement. ■



Katarina Witt – it makes this an attractive bid. Building on the 1972 Summer Olympics legacy is also part of its narrative.

Munich, like Anancy, faces so-so public support: IOC public opinion polling in late 2010 likely will show support at the 61 percent mark.

Positives:

Transforming some of the 1972 Olympic facilities into ice venues is a neat trick that will go down well with IOC members with memories of those Summer Games. The Snow Park in Garmisch-Partenkirchen is also impressive too. Likewise Kandahar ski resort proved its credentials this year with the staging of the skiing world champs, while the site of the ski jump at the old 1936 Olympic Stadium has a sense of history and charm.

IOC vice president Thomas Bach is an influential figure whose connections with IOC members should help Munich in the July vote. Government backing from Chancellor Angela Merkel remains on a solid footing.

The "unmatched potency" of German sports sponsorship is also a benefit for the bid as the impact of the global recession recedes

The "Festival of Friendship" theme taps into Germany's passion for winter sports. Together with the wealth of Olympic expertise and some household names on the team -- Thomas Bach and

"Why?" for Munich Still Unanswered

– the market is projected to exceed €22 billion (approximately \$30 billion) in value between 2013 and 2020.

Accommodations and transport elements of the bid are strong.

Negatives:

The venues plan does not rely on any 'big build', but the distance between Munich and the sliding center at Koenigssee, more than 90 minutes away, would not be ideal for athletes and spectators.

So far, calls for a referendum by anti-Olympic protestors in the town of Garmisch-Partenkirchen have been all talk with little evidence that enough people will back the NOlympia group to make it happen. But the Munich 2018 bid has struggled to shake off some of their environmental concerns.

If there's one thing the Munich bid lacks, it's a stronger narrative to explain why it deserves to host the Games.

Developing the line taken by Bach at the closing press conference of the IOC Evaluation Commission could be the way forward. Talking about the country's winter sports traditions, he noted that Germany had not hosted a winter Games for 80 years, "10 generations of winter sports athletes have passed without having the Games in this heartland of winter sports."

The commission chair's comments also were revealing. When Gunilla Lindberg said "we have not really seen any big surprises" on the four-day inspection tour, it was perhaps an indication that while the Munich bid is impressive enough and ticks a lot of boxes, it doesn't dazzle. ■

People, Korea Want These Olympics

The experience of three consecutive bids is helping PyeongChang put the pieces together for a winner – perhaps. The most compact of the three 2018 venue plans, the South Korean bid is backed and organized by the national government. That leaves little doubt about the bid’s ability to deliver on promised venues and infrastructure. But the Koreans will face a big job.

Public support is rock-solid: PyeongChang will win that category based on IOC polling from late last year. Expect to see public approval for the Games at the 93 percent level when those results are released in May.

Positives:

With snow blanketing the region for February’s IOC visit, PyeongChang looked like a place to hold the Winter Olympics.

Nearly all venues are within about 30 minutes of the Olympic Village, some much closer.

Government support is a major strength; the bid has not struggled for financing. The overarching involvement of the national government has meant the removal from office of the Gangwon province governor for election law violations. While that is a potentially troubling development, it has had little impact on the leadership of the bid.

Olympic legacy would mean a sliding center, new ski runs and a skating oval. But bid leaders hope the real legacy of the

Games would be substantial growth for winter sport in Korea and Asia. The notion of PyeongChang as the first Winter Olympics in South Korea will offer a major edge over Annecy or Munich.

Negatives:

The distance from Incheon Airport to the Olympic venues is about 250km. Seoul is about 200km, which makes the airport the farthest gateway for any of the three 2018 bids. Some \$4 billion in transport work will be needed to connect PyeongChang to Seoul, most of that for a high-speed railway. While the new Alpensia Resort shows the high quality of accommodations that South Korea can provide, more are needed. Spectators may have to stay in Seoul to find rooms.

Great attention needs to be paid to improving the ambiance. There are few restaurants, bars, shops or other diversions that Olympic visitors will seek out.

Security should not be an issue, but the North Korean border is just 100km away. A state of war remains in place between North and South – a fact ignored in the PyeongChang bid book. ■



The Categories Explained

10 points for each category, except Ambience and Bid Operation, which are scored 5 points each, due to more subjective aspects of these categories. This results in a total possible score of 100 points across the 11 categories.

Accommodation: Quantity, quality

Ambience: Is the city comfortable, tourist-friendly, a pleasure to visit?

Bid Operation: Leadership, strategy and public relations

Games Cost and Finance: Projected bill for operating the Olympics and infrastructure needed, unusual finance risks. Higher scores indicate lower costs.

Last Games in the Country: Years since last summer or winter Olympics. Higher the score, the longer since the Games. Some credit could be given for recent Olympic bids.

Legacy: Impact of the Olympics in a city; sustainable venues

Marketing: The size and impact of marketing programs

Government & Public Support: The commitment of government and population to a Games

Security: Reputation and quality of security, perceptions of risk

Transportation: Ease of travel, multiple transport options, airports, quality of public transit, taxis

Venues and Experience: Overall plan for the Games and experience handling other events, winter sports in particular.



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Out of Many, Few Will Bid: Candidates for 2020

The race for 2020 will soon take shape, both because the IOC demands haste and because its 2018 decision will weigh heavily on future bid plans.

The 2018 host city will be chosen on July 6 at the 123rd IOC Session in Durban, South Africa. The next round of bidding begins literally the next day.

Written by Matthew Grayson



▲
Rome (Getty Images)

LIKELY TO BID

Italy: Rome is the only city so far to formally declare its candidacy for 2020. IOC vice president Mario Pescante heads the bid, and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi promises full government support. The 1960 host city lost to Athens 2004 in its attempt at a second Summer Games.

South Africa: IOC Pres. Jacques Rogge famously called for a South African bid at the close of last summer's World Cup. After a suspect nomination process in which only Durban had the chance to apply, Port Elizabeth and Johannesburg have since joined the fray. Expect only a single candidate by the time the IOC comes to town.

DEPENDS ON 2018

Japan: The Japanese Olympic Committee had said it would wait until mid-July to choose between Tokyo and Hiroshima, but the earthquake may have changed any appetite to bid for an Olympic Games this year. Aside from that, gubernatorial elections in April

could impact government support, the NOC will celebrate its centennial July 16, and -- of course -- a PyeongChang win would likely end consideration for either bid. Experience gleaned from Tokyo's failed 2016 run might help Japan's cause; losing both IOC members to retirement this year won't.

France: Sports minister Chantal Jouanno expects France to vie for 2020 if, and only if, Annecy misses out on 2018. She declined to single out any candidate cities but insisted her country's next Olympic bid would not get a late start like Annecy did this time around. Paris hosted in 1900 and 1924 but campaigned unsuccessfully in 1992, 2008 and 2012.

Spain: Madrid hopes its third time is the charm after falling short for 2012 and 2016. The Spanish capital awaits the outcome of mayoral elections in July as well as the decision in Durban. Should a European city win the 2018 race, 2024 is the likelier bet for a bid from Madrid.

South Korea: Seoul hosted the Games in 1988, but Busan wants the honor this time around. The South Korean port city staged the 2002 Asian Games, an event in some ways even more complex than the Olympics. A Busan bid hinges entirely on the fate of PyeongChang in the race for 2018.

Portugal: Lisbon may try for 2020 after passing on 2016. Portugal paired with Spain for its failed 2018 FIFA World Cup bid but will have to fly solo with the IOC. 2024 seems a likelier bet should Annecy or Munich win the 2018 Winter Games.

TO BE DETERMINED

India: Many predicted last year's Commonwealth Games would be a stepping stone to 2020. Then the spotlight arrived, and so did allegations of shoddy construction, graft and financial mismanagement. India's NOC is still debating with its government whether to pursue an Olympic-sized follow-up to Delhi 2010.

Middle East: Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha all want to stage the Middle East's first Olympic Games. It's doubtful Doha will bid for 2020 with Qatar's World Cup just two years away. Dubai is the likelier candidate from UAE despite the city's current credit crunch.

Turkey: The government will decide after a June 12 general election whether to pursue the 2020 Olympics or European soccer finals. Though not a Middle East city, Istanbul would be the first host from a Muslim country. The ancient Byzantine capital bid for the 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012 Olympics but sat out the 2016 race.

Azerbaijan: Baku is building an Olympic Stadium atop a former oil field as the centerpiece of a 2020 bid. Azerbaijan also campaigned for 2016 but did not advance past the applicant stage, in part due to its lack of a showcase stadium. At the time, its construction was merely a proposal and the oil field had yet to be reclaimed.

Russia: St. Petersburg's governor has eyes for 2020 or 2024, but Russia's NOC has yet to commit. A bid would likely get the backing of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, a native of St. Petersburg and Sochi 2014 devotee. Moscow hosted the Summer Olympics in 1980 but lost out to London in 2012.

May 16 – IOC invites NOCs to nominate applicant cities

July 6 – IOC members elect 2018 host in Durban, South Africa

Sept. 1 – Applicant city nominations due from NOCs

October – IOC holds information seminar for 2020 applicants

Feb. 15, 2011 – Application files and guarantee letters due at IOC

May 2011 – IOC EB decides on candidate cities

January 2013 – Bid dossiers due at IOC

Spring 2013 – IOC Evaluation Commission visits

Sept. 7, 2013 – IOC members vote in Buenos Aires, Argentina



▲
Durban (Getty Images)



▲
Busan, S. Korea (Getty Images)

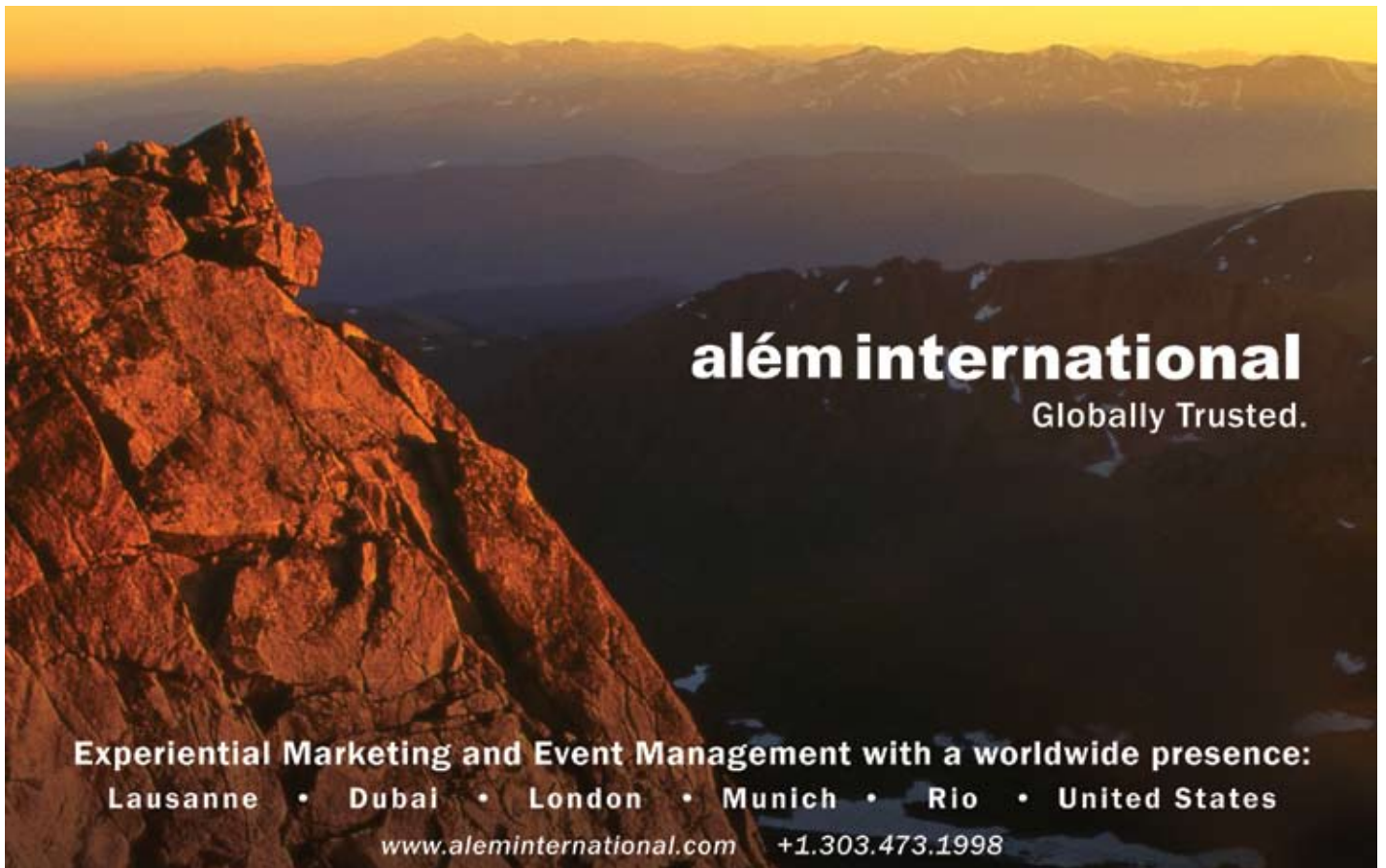
LONGSHOTS TO BID

Hungary: Public opinion is strong for a bid from Budapest, but financial support lags. The country's taxpayers would likely have to cover almost all the \$16 billion needed in Olympic works, according to one Hungarian media report. Budapesti Olimpiai Mozgalom is an NGO formed to investigate the feasibility of a Budapest Summer Games.

Canada: The Canadian Olympic Committee plans to bid for either 2020 or 2024 and thinks Toronto is long overdue. The Ontario capital fell short in 1996 and 2008 and hasn't hosted a major international sporting event since the 1976 Summer Paralympics (the 1976 Summer Games were held in Montreal). The Toronto 2015 Pan Ams should help the city's cause, as should the success of Vancouver 2010.

Egypt: The president of the Egyptian Olympic Committee called for a bid from Cairo in December during the NOC's centennial celebrations. Rogge was in attendance then and reiterated his long-held desire to bring the Olympics to Africa. In the wake of January's revolution, 2020 may prove too soon, at least for the Egyptian capital.

Australia: It's Brisbane's turn to bid after Melbourne hosted in 1956 and Sydney in 2000. The Queensland capital finished third in the race for 1992 and has its sights set on 2020, 2024 or 2028. Brisbane is also pushing for a World Expo in 2020 to coincide with a potential Summer Games. ■



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FIFA Women's World Cup

CEO Eyes Full Stadiums, Breakthrough Moment

Steffi Jones expects full stadiums for this summer's tournament in Germany and believes the women's game in England is on the cusp of a breakthrough.

Written by James Corbett



▲ Steffi Jones, 2003

Steffi Jones expects full stadiums for this summer's tournament in Germany and believes the women's game in England is on the cusp of a breakthrough.

Three years after her retirement from a trophy-studded playing career, the engaging former Germany international – a World Cup winner herself in 2003 – is heading the local organizing committee for the tournament that kicks off June 26.

“The transition [from playing in a World Cup to organizing one] really surprised me,” she tells World Football INSIDER.

“I mean, you come on the field [as a player] and can easily say

‘Why’s that not there? Why’s that not done? Or why aren’t we having a full stadium?’

“But now I know how much hard work it is, working on the other side. It is a great experience and I’ve learned so much out of it, and I’m really happy that I got the opportunity.”

Jones said the “first ambition” of her organizing committee is to have full stadiums.

With 500,000 tickets already sold, she is well on her way to fulfilling that ambition. She revealed another 90,000 tickets were sold following November’s draw, at which point England’s match locations became clear.

She believes Germany’s old rivals -- the USA and Brazil -- will be the biggest draws of the finals, along with the host itself.

Jones is respectful of previous tournaments, saying her intention isn’t to stage the greatest Women’s World Cup but instead to “write our own World Cup history like the others did”.

“China was great, USA was great, and ours is going to be the same,” she said.

“I know we have a lot of pressure because FIFA says Germany is going to be the best. That’s not our aim that

we’re going for. It’s a World Cup and it’s a great chance for Germany. But also worldwide, we hope it will open doors and make acknowledgement a little bigger for all the teams.”

Boost for Women's Football in England

Jones singled out England – longstanding rivals of Germany in both the men’s and women’s games – as being on the verge of a breakthrough moment.

An eight-club women’s semi-professional league kicks off in April, one The Football Association is supporting to the tune of almost \$5 million over two years. ESPN also has agreed a broadcast deal.

“Here you will see that all the players will stay here for the next year,” she said, signaling a reverse in the trend that has seen the country lose several of its best players to overseas professional leagues.

“Here, you are hosting the Olympic Games, so why would you go somewhere else when you need your preparation? This is a fantastic chance, building up your own league and a foundation that is stable to last. That’s just a chance that they have.”

Jones may keep a watchful eye on the launch of FA Women’s Super League later in April, but her focus remains firmly fixed on this summer’s World Cup and the inroads the tournament might make for the women’s game globally.

“We have so much media coverage for the World Cup,” she promised. “The World Cup is going to be seen everywhere.”

Germany versus Canada at Berlin’s Olympic Stadium is the opening match. The final takes place in Frankfurt on July 17. ■

FACTBOX

WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2011

Dates: June 26 – July 17

Host Country: Germany

Venue cities: Augsburg, Berlin, Bochum, Dresden, Frankfurt, Leverkusen, Moenchengladbach, Sinsheim, Wolfsburg

Teams: 16

Defending champion: Germany

Countries making World Cup debut: Colombia, Equatorial Guinea

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