

AROUND THE RINGS

VANCOUVER VIEW - No.6

Vancouver: Partly Cloudy 11°C / 5°C - Whistler: Isolated Showers 8°C / 2°C

FEBRUARY 23, 2010

ATR Newsmaker Breakfast: Keeping the Games Alive

The eyes of the world have been on Vancouver for more than a week. What comes after the Olympic flame is extinguished?

Legacy – not only of the Vancouver Games, but of the next Summer and Winter Olympic sites of London and Sochi – was addressed Monday at the Olympians Reunion Center during the Around the Rings Newsmaker Breakfast.

Taking part in the panel discussion, moderated by ATR Editor Ed Hula:

Colin Hansen, British Columbia finance minister; Charmaine Crooks, a five-time Olympian in athletics and a member of VANOC; Craig Reedie, IOC Executive Board member; John Steele, chief executive of UK Sport; Dmitry Chernyshenko, CEO of Sochi 2014.

If You Build It They Will Come

Hansen said hosting the Vancouver Games has been “absolutely” worthwhile.



The audience listens to notable panelists during the breakfast at the Olympians Reunion Center. (ATR)

Zach Parise (C) and Jamie Langenbrunner celebrate after scoring a power play goal in the ice hockey men’s preliminary game between Canada and USA. (Getty Images)



PHOTO OF THE DAY

He noted that when the Games were awarded in 2003, British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell said, “this is not a landing pad; this is a launching pad. For Vancouver, for British Columbia, for Canada.”

An example of a physical benefit beyond the Olympics, Hansen said, is the Richmond Speedskating Oval. The \$180 million facility was paid for by the sale of city land. After the Games, the Oval will be transformed into a community recreation center that will include four hockey rinks and six basketball courts.

In order to keep the Whistler Sliding Centre operating, VANOC has ticketed “legacy funds” to pay for an endowment, Hansen said.

Reedie noted that London will

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The View from Here: Is Legacy Worth the Olympics?

Is legacy an over-rated idea for the Olympics? Is it simply an excuse to allow host cities or host nations to launch grandiose projects without regard to cost or sustainability?

Talk like this might be seen as heresy, given the way legacy seems to have crowded out sport as the reason to host an Olympic Games.

Athens and Beijing may be the most recent examples of largess gone amok. Unused stadiums after the Games, millions (billions) spent on facilities -- for what?

In Beijing, the estimate on spending climbs as high as \$30 billion.

While the IOC has always said that what a city spends on an Olympics is its own business and not based on requirements by the IOC, massive budgets for Olympic Games-inspired projects could discourage bids from cities fearful of getting caught in spending quicksand.

The bill isn’t fully calculated for Vancouver, but the investments made for the 2010 Games are significant.

On the bricks and mortar side, there’s the revamped Sea-to-Sky Highway, the must-have transport project that cost \$600 million to build. Needed for more

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Whistler Blog: Nordic Venue Delivers

The Whistler Olympic Park is proving to be a hit with spectators, athletes and media.

The brand-new \$119.7 million venue for biathlon, cross-country, Nordic combined and ski jumping is situated in a pristine alpine setting in the Callaghan Valley, 25 km from Whistler and 119 km from downtown Vancouver.

Sitting at an elevation of 870 meters (2784 ft.) and surrounded by the snow-capped Coastal Mountains, the venue includes one of the world's most sophisticated ski-jump snow refrigeration systems, and is the only venue in Olympic history to host all four Nordic disciplines in the same location.

"I think this place is great," said Heiko Junge, staff photographer for ScanpixAS from Oslo, Norway. "We are surrounded by these nice peaks. We have been very happy, especially on a beautiful day like today when the sun is shining."

"The transportation has been perhaps a little far to get here, but this is the only thing," Junge noted as a solitary criticism.

The venue has a total capacity of 12,000 for all four venues.

While some Alpine skiing events in Whistler have been re-scheduled, so far all of the Nordic events at the Olympic Park have gone ahead as planned. The first three days of competition were

marred by rain and low-lying fog, but when the sun has shone, some athletes have expressed both concern and praise over the condition of the track.

"Where there is shade it is dry and where the sun is shining, it's really wet, so it is very challenging," said Finnish Cross-country competitor Virpi Kuitunen. "But a very nice track to compete on."

Several members of the visiting international media have given the venue an A+ rating, including journalist Johan Wahlin of Sweden's biggest newspaper, The Daily News.

"Everything is very top-notch," said Wahlin on the media bus after a day of covering the events.

"Especially the people. Everybody is very welcoming and always asking how they can help. They've all been fantastic," he said.

After the Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, the venue will be operated under the direction of the Whistler 2010 Sport Legacies, supported by a \$120 million endowment trust established by the federal and provincial governments as part of their 2010 Winter Games venues investment. +

TODD LAWSON



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ATR Newsmaker Breakfast: cont' from page 1

have the biggest park built in Europe in more than 150 years.

Sochi will have six ice facilities for the 2014 Games. However, three of the six will be disassembled once the Games end, then moved to regional sites.

Children, Change, Inspiration

London's legacy program -- International Inspiration -- has a goal of inspiring and enabling youth to participate in sports. Reedie said the aim is to reach 12 million young people in 20 countries.

The United Kingdom will look after its own, too.

"We need to surround (the legacy) with a really good system of sports science, sports medicine and proper funding," Steele said. "All the supports and staff and systems that are (needed by athletes) to be as good as they can be."

Crooks said "legacy" has been part of Vancouver's plan from the start. VANOC targeted youth access to sports as well as for seniors, and paid attention to aboriginal and cultural aspects.



ATR Editor Ed Hula (front row, right) with the group of panelists who participated in "Keeping the Games Alive". (ATR)

In a one-on-one interview with ATR, Hansen said his advice to those mapping out Olympic legacies "is to look 10 years beyond the Games as to what do you want that legacy to look like, both in terms of the physical and the spiritual."

He said that VANOC "benefited hugely from our discussions with the Sydney Organizing Committee reps. I think they sort of wrote some

of the first chapters on how to maximize long-term legacy benefits from the Games. We're adding a few more chapters to that."

"The legacy is in our blood," said Sochi's Chernyshenko.

"Our solid legacy plan was one of the crucial factors of the success that was proven by the secret ballot of IOC members in Guatemala," he said. "It's not only about the venues."

Accelerating social change is part of the spiritual legacy he envisions.

"Look at the Beijing example, how much it changed Beijing and China since they were awarded the right to host the Games," Chernyshenko said.

"The same with Russia. The Russians should open the doors for all they world and they should be well prepared for the world to come and see how change (has come to) Russia." +

-Mark Maloney

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The View from Here: cont' from page 1

than the Olympics, the improved highway is supposed to provide a faster, safer journey to Whistler for years to come.

The skating oval in Richmond is the single biggest venue built for these Olympics. Its \$200 million price tag was paid for by VANOC and the city of Richmond. The oval will become a community recreation center after the Games.

But few if any other host cities will undergo preparations for the 2014 Games that Sochi -- the first host in Russia for a Winter Olympics -- has.

As much a national project as one for the region of Sochi, the Winter Olympics mean new roads and airport. A new rail



The Richmond Olympic Oval will become a community recreation center after the Games. (Getty Images)

line will connect the ski venues to the ones on the Black Sea. And finally, Sochi will get an ice rink, a venue that it seems

should already exist in such a major Russian city.

London 2012 is wrestling now with maximizing its legacy for the Games, one that includes major structures such as the Olympic Stadium and the Olympic Village. More intriguing may be efforts to forge a Games legacy that generates a resurgence of interest in Olympic sports among young people -- not just in Britain, but globally, too.

UK Sport, the organization responsible for elite sport development, thinks the Games mean opportunity for a new generation of sports leaders from the U.K. to take their place at the top of international sports federations -- as well

as put the U.K. in a position to host other major sports events.

But is the payoff of a world championship worth the investment?

Will a new stadium return benefits as valuable as money spent for schools or other social needs?

As legacy grows as a rationale for hosting the Games, answers will be needed if the Olympic Movement expects a healthy competition for the Games in the future. +

ED HULA



The Great Vancouver Walk-Off Disaster Averted (for One Competitor, Anyway)

Publisher Sheila Hula narrowly averted disaster at the end of the ninth full day of competition for gold in The Great Vancouver Walk-off.

Publisher Hula was dismayed to discover her pedometer was missing as she and Editor Ed Hula set off on a particularly long trek to dinner. Despite fears of dirty tricks by the camp supporting her opponent, the pedometer was later found sitting safely on a counter back at their apartment.

"I am most relieved that it was an error on my part and not a case of athletic espionage," the publisher said. "I am more determined than ever to finish strong and leave no doubt that I am the true champion in this contest."

Unfortunately for the publisher, Rule 54(a) of the

federation's guidelines decrees that distances walked but not officially metered are sacrificed. That allowed the editor a 3.6 km gain on the publisher in the increasingly tense Olympic Walking competition. The publisher has logged 49.32 km; the editor records a paltry 22.86 km.

The Great Vancouver Walk-off is the only competition that lasts all 17 days of the Games. Results will be verified via the VANOC-branded pedometers contained in kits for accredited media. They will be updated throughout the competition period on AroundTheRings.com and @aroundtherings on Twitter and www.YouTube.com/AroundTheRings. More thrilling updates are now available on YouTube.

Fans can send messages of support to either contestant (or both) at Walk2010@aroundtherings.com. +



(ATR)



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