

A New Olympic Life Form: The Beginning of Olympic Television

By Richard W. Pound

Introduction

Paris 1924: Start of telecommunications. The French Ministry of War had installed a transmission system between the competition facilities, which made it possible for telephone correspondent clerks to transfer information on the competition standings. The Eiffel Tower transmitter had been in operation since 24 December 1921.

Photo: Igrzyska VII-mej Olimpijady Paryż 1924, Lwów, Warszawa, Kraków 1926.

This is the first of several articles that explore the history of Olympic television, as seen from the perspective of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as it gradually became aware of its impact on the growth of the popularity and universality of the Olympic Games and the Olympic Movement. This first article primarily covers the period ending with the 1960 Games in Rome and Squaw Valley as the IOC attempted to come to grips with a new medium that it did not fully understand and from which it tried to benefit, all without engaging in many of the activities that were required to maximise both its promotional potential and economic returns. The outcome was a series of frustrating and often confrontational interchanges with Olympic Organising Committees (OCOGs), International Federations (IFs), National Olympic Committees (NOCs), and broadcasters over a period of several decades. These articles are not intended to be an examination of the technical aspects of Olympic broadcasting (although some are noted), but rather to document the IOC's voyage as it came, by trial and error, to understand the new medium and eventually to exercise definitive hands-on control with respect to its production and exploitation.

International sport and technology at the end of the 19th century

With the development of organised sport and the improved ease of travel made possible through the harnessing of steam came another phenomenon, namely the growing interest of spectators in sporting contests and, perhaps more important for the expansion of sport, a willingness to pay to watch them or to read about them in the press. Such practices were well-established even



before the Modern Olympics elevated sport competitions from essentially domestic affairs to an international level. By 1896, photography had sufficiently evolved to provide reliable images, at least for outdoor events held during the day. Radio signals became available by the turn of the century and long-distance cross-Atlantic transmissions were achieved early in the new century. As equipment improved and radio technology became more sophisticated, it became possible to transmit music and voice. Broadcasting was born following the 1908 Olympic Games. "Broadcasting" was a term derived from farming a background, referring to the casting of seeds in all directions.¹ By the early 1920s, radio transmissions were much clearer and broadcasting became more ubiquitous. The first "radio" Olympics were in 1924 in Paris, with essentially local coverage and only very limited broadcasting distances then achievable. By 1936, technology had advanced rapidly and the Berlin Games were broadcast by NBC directly to New York. Crystals and vacuum tubes were, in due course, replaced by transistors, which enabled production of smaller and lighter high-quality radios.

Birth of Olympic television

Such is the accelerating nature of technical evolution/revolution that, even as radio entered its golden age from 1936–1960, a nascent technology called television, then using a cathode-ray tube, was already in its early stage of development. Progress had been sufficient



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to allow some closed-circuit experimentation during the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. There were viewing rooms (*Fernsehtuben*) equipped with several television sets assigned for watching the Games. The screen size, measured diagonally from lower left to upper right, was 50 centimetres. There were 138 viewing hours and 162,000 viewers and the television programmes were made from filmed coverage taken earlier in the day. The pictures were limited and not particularly impressive. But the seed of television had nevertheless germinated.

Twelve years later, when the Games were renewed following World War II in London in 1948, the British Broadcasting Corporation conducted its own trials of Olympic television coverage, but again, the coverage was not widely distributed (nor even distributable) to the still-recovering post-war public. The BBC paid the paltry sum of 1,000 guineas for the right to broadcast the Games. The IOC was not involved in this transaction,

which was between the London organising committee and the BBC. There were radio, but no television, broadcasts at the Oslo and Helsinki Games in 1952.

Cortina in 1956 marked the first occasion when the Olympic Games were broadcast outside the host country. The Italian public broadcaster distributed the signal to 61 broadcast organisations around the world. It was not until early 1956, almost 20 years following Berlin, that the IOC Executive Board had its first discussion on television in relation to the Games. Little more was done than to note some of the technical and other challenges, such as the fact that the Cortina organising committee had paid 40 million Italian lire to build the various relays required for television, and to conclude that a careful study of the matter should be undertaken.

The Executive Board members were generally aware that television was used differently in different parts of the world. In America, for example, private companies

The Telefunken company's swivelling iconoscope, also known as the "television cannon". For the first time, it made live broadcasts from the Berlin Olympic Stadium in 1936 (far left). Left: Recordings made with the film camera first had to pass through an intermediate film scanner before they could be transmitted 90 seconds later. Below it: Italian athletes are shown a television set in the Olympic Village.

At the 1936 Olympic Games, there were 25 television rooms in Berlin, as well as two in Leipzig and one in Potsdam, which were connected by cables. Around 162,000 TV viewers were recorded. Left: Admission ticket to a television room. On 10 August 1936, the viewing session went from 10 am to 12 am.



Photos: Olympia-Weltseher, Reichsrundfunk GmbH Berlin (Ed.); Volker Kluge Archive

Commentary box at Wembley Stadium in London in 1948. Live broadcasts were only possible from the stadium and the Empire Pool. There were an estimated 80,000 televisions in the UK – mostly in private households. The broadcasting range was limited to a radius of 50 miles around London. In all, the BBC transmitted 64 hours and 27 minutes.

Photo: The Official Report of the Organising Committee for the XIV Olympiad, London 1948

offered large amounts to televise spectacles, whereas in other countries, governments maintained control of television broadcasting.² Advertising was identified as a possible economic factor, but commercial advertising was not always allowed.³ The IOC had, however, even without knowing much about the medium, laid claim to television revenues during the Olympic Games. Armand Massard (FRA), had been interviewed to that effect on French radio and IOC President Avery Brundage (USA) had, or at least so he thought, reserved the right to claim revenues from Squaw Valley and Rome, hosts of the 1960 Games.⁴

While the IOC had not been quick to recognise the revenue potential in television, the omnivorous international federations had immediately understood both the increased reach provided by the medium, and the potential of monetising broadcast rights. At the 1955 IOC Session in Paris, the IFs had applied for a share of the profits derived from televising the Games. It was this demand by the IFs which had caused Brundage to forewarn the organising committees of Squaw Valley and Rome of the IOC's claim to an entitlement derived from the television revenues. No such claims had been asserted by the IOC with respect to Cortina and Melbourne, the respective host cities for the 1956 Winter and Summer Games.⁵

Games organisers expressed early concerns that they might suffer financially if the Games were to be available on television, fearing that spectators would prefer to stay at home to watch the Games on television, for free, and would not be willing to buy tickets. This had not mattered for Cortina because the venues were small enough that they could be filled even if there were television broadcasts. At that stage neither the IOC nor Olympic host cities seemed to have grasped that television exposure of the Games, far from reducing



spectator interest and presence, would soon lead to hugely expanded Olympic audiences. It would have been impossible for the IOC to conceive that, well before the end of the 20th Century, Olympic television audiences would be measured in billions of viewers and that the related revenues would be measured in billions of dollars.

Relations with television broadcasters

An even more dynamic early concern came to the fore during the course of internal discussions, namely that of relations between the IOC and executives of television organisations. Initially, the IOC thought that discussion should be framed as advising the television executives regarding the difficulties of organising the Games and the general lack of funds required to achieve the "vast and heavy tasks" incumbent in staging the Games. The IOC concluded that it should, therefore, advise the executives that, in large centres, television would, to a certain extent, be prejudicial to the finances of the Games, and that it was evident that the quality of an attraction like the Olympic Games, which excited a worldwide interest, would bring the broadcasters a great number of new subscribers and publicity contracts. The general IOC view was that the television managers were sharp businessmen, who were perfectly aware that they could not retain all the profits for their own account. If, however, the IOC were to adopt a defiant attitude toward them, the IOC would find itself in an awkward position, but the problem could be solved to the mutual interests of both parties.⁶

Brundage was, typically, not quite so accommodating. First, he said that once the IOC had laid down a rule regarding television (i.e., that the IOC had a right to share revenues from television), it was the responsibility – he called it "duty" – of the organising committees thereafter to deal with the television representatives, which would insulate the IOC from involvement in commercial disputes.⁷ He reviewed the communications he had received from the largest of the television companies. Some of them, he said, hinted at threats and boycotting. All of them claimed freedom of the press and

A visionary look from 1936 into the year 2000: The husband lies on the sofa watching the Olympic competitions on television. His wife goes to make coffee, but wants to be called to watch the finals.

Cartoon: Reichssportblatt 1936





information, with a decided emphasis on “free” – for them.

Brundage proposed, therefore, to undertake a detailed inquiry on the subject and report back to the IOC Members later that year in Melbourne and perhaps the following year, once the IOC had acquired some experience with television at those Games. It was obvious (to him) that the IOC was entitled to deduct a sum from the profit realised by means of television, but the matter was so involved that it was necessary to act with great circumspection and fairness.⁸

A month or so before the Melbourne Games, Brundage reported to the Executive Board members that the television companies, including EBU and the three major US broadcasters (NBC, ABC, and CBS), had decided to boycott the Melbourne Games, on the stated basis that the conditions imposed by the organising committee were unacceptable. This was shorthand for the matter of the broadcasters being required to pay for access to the television signal. Since this was a problem then falling entirely within the IOC-mandated competence of the organising committee, the Executive Board decided it would not intervene.⁹ In Melbourne, just prior to the Games, the Executive Board decided to postpone action on the complicated question of television until the next Session. At that time, the IOC might have the benefit of the experience of the Melbourne organising committee.¹⁰

Brundage has often been criticised for a statement attributed to him, to the effect that the Olympic Games had got along perfectly well for 60 years without television and could get along just as well for another 60 years. The statement has been used by some commentators to “demonstrate” that Brundage was hopelessly out of tune with the development of television, but it is clear from his positions during IOC Executive Board meetings that he was fully aware of its importance, both in general and in relation to the IOC.

It is far more likely that he was warning the television companies that they would not get access to valuable rights without making reasonable payments for those rights and that he, the IOC, and the organising committees would not be bullied into submission by the television industry. Melbourne, for its part, would not



have been willing to pay for (or forego ticket revenues because of) television broadcasts, so the stand-off was complete. At the time, there were not more than 5,000 television sets in Melbourne, so no significant public pressure would have existed even in favour of local broadcasts of the Games.

Undaunted by the failure of television broadcasts to produce income with respect to Melbourne in 1956, the IFs continued to press for a share of television revenues early the following year. The IOC appears to have acknowledged that the IAAF and the boxing federation were entitled to some refund of the expenses they incurred while participating in the Games.¹¹ At the level of television itself, the IOC continued to try to establish a set of governing principles, as between television and some of the traditional methods of publicising the Games.

Newsreels, it thought, could probably work in conjunction with the spoken word (radio) and the written press,¹² while the official film¹³ would require some concessions before television rights could be acquired by broadcasters.¹⁴ This was prior to colour television broadcasts and satellite communications, which arrived a few years later in 1963, and which would require more extensive re-thinking with respect to many of the parameters.

It soon appeared that there would be difficulties with the television rights relating to Squaw Valley. Despite the early notice given by the IOC regarding its entitlement to a share of the television revenues, the Squaw Valley organising committee had made an arrangement with the government of California to pay the full amount of any such revenues to the government, against the government's guarantee provided in relation to the costs of the sports installations. The initiator of the candidature of Squaw Valley (Alexander Cushing) had “neglected” to advise the organising committee of the IOC decision which had been communicated to him.¹⁵ There was not much the IOC could do in the circumstances, faced with the *fait accompli*, other than to forego its asserted rights in return for the assurance to be given by the American delegation that it would assume responsibility for any unexpected liabilities which the IOC might incur.¹⁶

A television camera in Melbourne's Main Stadium in 1956. The Official Report of the Games noted that three Australian TV stations used mobile vans linked by radio with their main studios, but each had “atmosphere” circuits connecting to the public address.

Far left: A broadcasting car belonging to the Italian radio and television company RAI at the Winter Olympics in Cortina d'Ampezzo. Broadcasts could only reach some regions of northern Italy.

Photos: Official Report Cortina d'Ampezzo 1956; The Official Report of the Organizing Committee for the Games of the XVI Olympiad Melbourne 1956

RAI advertisement for the 1960 Olympic Games in Rome, for which international live coverage was available for the first time. Thirty-eight countries took advantage of the new service. The BBC transmitted 24 hours 57 minutes of coverage of which 18 hours 47 were live.

Source: Games of the XVII Olympiad Rome 1960, Official Souvenir



By now, Brundage had reached the conclusion that television, despite the low levels of money involved at that time, could nevertheless become a significant source of profit to the IOC and the matter, therefore, required very special attention, which was left to the Executive Board to manage.¹⁷ The Rome organising committee was to be asked to sell the television rights at the highest possible tariff, although a short topical news film would still be allowed.¹⁸

This was the first time that television "rights" to the Games were to be sold as such.¹⁹ No further discussion on the subject of television is recorded throughout 1957, 1958, and even in 1959 and it is evident that the principal concern of the IOC and the IFs was not so much managing Olympic television broadcasting as it was focused on the general financial circumstances of the IOC. The Marquess of Exeter (GBR) proposed that in future, a global sum of US\$150,000 should be asked from the Games organisers, to be divided equally between the IOC and the IFs. The organisers would be in a position to collect such an amount from the "profits" they would make on television.²⁰

At the same meeting, the Rome organising committee is reported, "contrary to our rules, agreements and instructions", as offering the IOC a mere 5% of the television rights. Brundage was opposed to the proposal and undertook to reply accordingly.²¹ The following year, the matter had not yet been resolved, although Brundage reported to the Session that the 5% offered by

Rome was now accompanied by a minimum guarantee of US\$50,000. The IOC's newly stated position was that it (not the organising committee) should receive the full amount of the television rights, in order to make the appropriate allocations. It was left to the Executive Board to act on behalf of the IOC and in its best interests, including in relation to Innsbruck and Tokyo for 1964.²²

At the 1959 IOC Session in Munich, there had been a lengthy discussion on financial assistance requested by the IFs. During the 1957 IOC Session in Sofia, Exeter had proposed a 5% tax on tickets, of which 3% of the proceeds would go to the IFs (of which his federation, the IAAF, having by far the largest stadium and lengthy programme, would obviously benefit the most). The implied threat was that the IAAF would hold its own world championships, which might have serious consequential effects on the Olympic Games.

This was a threat which one of Exeter's successors in the presidency of the IAAF, Primo Nebiolo (ITA), would later use on IOC President Samaranch, in the period up to 1983, when the World Championships were first organised in Helsinki, and later expanded to world championships held every two years. Samaranch and I always had differing views regarding this threat. Samaranch thought it was a very serious issue which could have an adverse effect on the Games. I thought that only good could come from it. Nebiolo would never have attempted to run IAAF championships against the Olympic Games, since none of his member federations, or their countries, would prevent their athletes from participating in the Games. If the world championships were held the year before the Games, they would simply set up the Games and if they were held the year after, they would be an anti-climax. I said that the more world championships Nebiolo organised, the more he would increase the prestige of the Olympic Games and lower the importance of the world championships. In fact, I said, Samaranch should encourage Nebiolo to have world championships every year.

It did not take long for many of the television broadcasters to lose most of their interest in IAAF world championships and Nebiolo was soon back to beg Samaranch to use his influence to persuade Olympic broadcasters (e.g., NBC) even to provide coverage of his world championships. NBC was quite prepared not to broadcast the world championships, being firmly of the view that athletics was only important (at least in the United States) in the context of the Olympic Games and said, in reply to Samaranch's entreaties on Nebiolo's behalf, that if he insisted, NBC would deduct whatever it paid for the world championships from what it paid the IOC for Olympic rights.

The Rome Olympics were the first Games to receive significant television coverage across Europe. Some 18 countries broadcast the Games. In addition, for

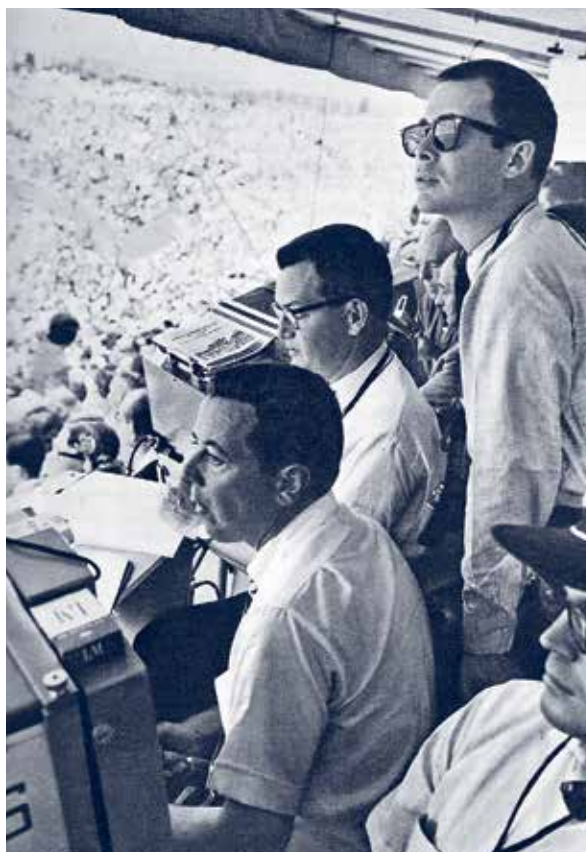
the first time, viewers in the United States, Canada, and Japan were able to see the Olympics on television through a combination of taped and live events. The US broadcaster, CBS, flew film across the Atlantic to New York every evening. CBS had also by then overcome its pre-Melbourne refusal to pay rights fees for Olympic access.

The interim legacy of IOC non-involvement

The real problem for the IOC in coming to grips with the matter of television had been its reluctance to insert itself directly into the negotiation process. Part of that reluctance resulted from its lack of knowledge of the new medium, but this could likely have been mitigated by a judicious choice of professional advisers, who could have provided the necessary counsel. Another part related to possible exposure of the IOC to financial responsibility, especially with respect to any failure of the technical facilities required for broadcasting such a huge event as the Olympic Games, but, again, much of any such exposure could easily have been pushed off onto the organising committees or have been insured against. It was true that the IOC had insufficient resources to discharge any significant liability, perhaps even to pay the legal costs of defending an action, since it still depended for its financial existence on annual assessments of contributions from its individual members together with whatever it might be able to squeeze from Olympic organising committees.

This fiscal reality, on the one hand, might well have been an incentive for the IOC to have stepped in aggressively to take control of a growing and potentially significant revenue stream attached to its one-and-only event, the Olympic Games. On the other hand, as a volunteer-based and impecunious organisation having minimal professional staff, the IOC might have been justifiably nervous about engaging with seasoned professionals who understood the medium and who devoted all their waking efforts to the advancement of their own financial interests. Possibly, however, the real root cause for its standoffish attitude was a residual, amateur-based, philosophical distaste for involvement in any organisational activity smacking of commerciality.

The result was an unworkable combination of gradually attempting to claim ownership of the television rights, while assigning all responsibility for management of them to the organising committees, which, in consequence, had all the direct relationships with the broadcasters and on whom the broadcasters depended for the necessary facilities, camera positions, studios, work permits, and local assistance.²³ For the organising committees (which already had what they needed from the IOC, namely, the right to organise the Games) and for broadcasters, therefore, the IOC was little more than an off-site nuisance, huffing and puffing, but



Rome 1960:
CBS reporters in action. These were the only summer Games for which they held the rights. Since direct satellite broadcasts between Italy and the United States were not yet possible, the footage was first sent to London; from there the videotapes were transported by plane to New York.

Photo: Official Report Rome 1960, vol. 1

completely irrelevant from the perspective of getting the organising and broadcasting jobs done. The organising committees were quite content with this form of arrangement and constantly took advantage of the IOC, cheerfully sharing their divide-and-conquer strategies with other organising committees which were coming on line, so that the IOC was regularly faced with contractual arrangements beyond its power to alter.

By the end of its 1960 experience, the IOC seemed to have realised that it was being regularly outplayed by the organising committees and that it was becoming impracticable to simply claim a portion of the television rights. Instead, in a rather startling and short-sighted reversal of its oft-stated position, the Executive Board proposed that the IOC stop asking for a share of the television rights and that, in future, the television rights would belong to the organisers of the Games, from whom the IOC would demand a fixed rate of indemnity. The amount to be requested from Tokyo was US\$130,000 and from Innsbruck, US\$20,000.²⁴ These decisions were made in the context of the continual demands from the IFs for a share in the Games television rights and it was considered that amendments to Olympic Charter Rule 49 should solve the financing problem.²⁵ Massard (FRA) once again raised the issue of considering the NOCs in the repartition of revenues.

While the short-term exasperation of the IOC in this context might be understandable, it is hard to imagine the short-sightedness of the Executive Board



View of the reporters stand in Rome's Olympic Stadium. Far right: A badge for radio and TV employees.

Photos: Official Report Rome 1960, vol. 1; collection Pasquale Polo

in permitting the organising committees to own the Olympic television rights. Among other things, it fostered an episodic, one-off, view of each edition of the Olympic Games, rather than an Olympic continuum, and merely exacerbated the resentment of organising committees of being taxed on "their" revenues, so urgently needed to finance the costs of organising the Games. The only reasonable conclusion can be that, apart from Brundage (coming from the United States), the other Executive Board members had no visceral sense of the magnitude of the impending expansion of commercial television and continued to focus on incremental increases from previous narrow revenue bases. Nor did they seem to anticipate the growing appetites of both the IFs and NOCs for shares of Games-related revenues.

Massard did not let the NOC matter drop. When Brundage reported to the 1961 Session that Tokyo had made payments on account of the requested indemnities and that half of each payment had been deposited in a special account placed at the disposal of the IFs, Massard objected once more to the system of distribution of the subsidies. He said the IFs had their championships, whereas NOCs, which were also in need of funds, often depended on governments. Brundage replied that the benefits realised from the television rights were not sufficiently large to allow the IOC to subsidise NOCs as well.²⁶ Exeter was in charge of drawing up a chart for the distribution of revenues to the IFs. The revenues were to be distributed following the Games in 1964, but the only IFs entitled to benefit from the financial support were those which acknowledged the Olympic Games as their own world championships and which did not organise world championships during the year of the Olympic Games.²⁷ No further discussion on television was recorded until just prior to the Innsbruck Games in 1964, when it was noted that the European Broadcasting Union (EBU) had sent in a request for an increased number of accreditations for commentators



and assistants, which was referred to specialists for both radio and television and the press agencies.²⁸

During the Innsbruck Session, Marc Hodler (SUI) reviewed the receipts and expenses from 1956 to 1960, during which period the financial situation of the IOC was catastrophic. After 1960 the situation had improved as a result of the payments made from television royalties by the cities organising the Games. There were now more than SF400,000 in reserve and contributions were still to come from the 1968 host cities. Up to that time, the IOC President had paid his enormous expenses himself. New expenditures had to be faced because the City of Lausanne had now allocated the second floor of Mon Repos, where the IOC was already occupying the third floor. The IOC could at last have a reception room worthy of its visitors and more spacious offices.²⁹

No other discussion occurred regarding television and no reference was made to the subject in the meeting in Tokyo prior to the 1964 Games, although at the next Executive Board meeting, Brundage deplored the fact that in the United States, certain television broadcasts of the Games were sponsored by firms advertising alcoholic drinks and cigarettes. In the future, commercial sponsorship should be submitted to the IOC for approval.³⁰ This was a typical Brundage after-the-fact response to situations by making a rule and trying to insert a requirement for IOC approvals.

As the IOC headed into the next Olympiads, it had not addressed the structural issues affecting its relations with the organising committees and broadcasters, which would continue to plague it. Rules and demands that IOC approval must be sought before contract were signed were largely ignored. There was a consensus among organising committees that the IOC was not prepared to insist that its rules and requests be complied with and that it would not be willing to litigate. Given that the IOC would be a foreign organisation litigating in the national courts of the host country, it is perhaps a realistic

assessment by the IOC that it would be unlikely to be successful. Other measures would need to be applied in future to protect the IOC, but they had not yet been devised.

There were other storm clouds forming that would have serious impacts on the IOC and the Olympic Games and which would distract the IOC's attention from its unsatisfactory position regarding television, even as the revenues were beginning to become more significant.

But, to use the television expression: "Stay tuned ..." ■

- 1 This is to be contrasted with "narrowcasting", which involves a single target, such as a particular ship at sea at which the signal is directed.
- 2 In many countries, television was a monopolistic instrument of the state, used to control the information made available to its public and to deliver government propaganda.
- 3 IOC EB 22 January 1956, Cortina, item 11.
- 4 IOC EB 22 January 1956, Cortina, item 11.
- 5 IOC Session, 24–25 January 1956, Cortina.
- 6 IOC Session, 24–25 January 1956, Cortina, Prince Axel (DEN).
- 7 Brundage, wearing his Olympic "hat", abhorred the idea of commercialism touching upon the IOC and, while he could rationalise the thought of Olympic organising committees becoming involved in commercial matters as a practical necessity of generating sufficient revenues to organise the Games, he did everything possible to ensure that none of the commercial ordure would attach to the IOC.
- 8 IOC Session 24–25 January 1956, Cortina, Brundage.
- 9 IOC EB 3–4 October 1956, Lausanne.
- 10 IOC EB 17 November 1956, Melbourne, 4. No doubt this referred to the possibility of a full assessment of the positions taken by the television broadcasters and the responses from the organising committee as a precursor to evolving a strategy for the future.
- 11 IOC EB 3–4 June 1957, Evian, 1.
- 12 It would not take long for Games television coverage and televised news coverage to collide and for the latter to be cut back severely in favour of the general Games "spectacle" coverage for which rights fees were paid. Tensions continue to exist between what are now termed "rights-holding broadcasters" and "non-rights holders" on the occasion of the Games.
- 13 The IOC required the organising committees to produce a visual record of each Games.
- 14 IOC EB 3–4 June 1957, Evian, 1.
- 15 IOC Session 23–28 September 1957, Sofia, 9.
- 16 This reflected one of the shifting "philosophical" approaches adopted by the IOC from time to time in relation to its claim to a share of revenues derived from television. It was essentially an "alms" approach, namely that the claim could be justified as being used to offset or reimburse costs incurred by the IOC in relation to the Games (and possibly costs of the IFs), without any entrepreneurial thought of using the television revenues to expand the IOC's financial and operational capacity. It would not be until the late 1970s and early 1980s that television rights fees became significantly greater and thus fundamentally changed the role and influence of the IOC. It was only after Juan Antonio Samaranch became IOC President in 1980 that the IOC stepped (not without difficulty and resistance from OCOGs) into the centre of the negotiations for television rights, which altered the entire Olympic television paradigm.
- 17 IOC Session 23–28 September 1957, Sofia, 7–8.
- 18 IOC Session 23–28 September 1957, Sofia, 14. Note also p. 15 regarding Rule 49, where all arrangements were left to the care of the "editorial committee", which would act in accordance with the arrangements made by the television. The modern version of the rule leaves such matters to the attention of the IOC Executive Board. The IOC had not yet formally asserted that the IOC itself "owned" the television rights, but had merely taken the position that it was entitled to a

share of the revenues derived from the sale of the rights by the organising committees.

- 19 While there are many references to television rights in the early discussions, these were not rights in the intellectual property sense that they now represent, but rather in the sense of the IOC asserting the right to claim a share of whatever revenue might result from the Olympic broadcasts.
- 20 IOC EB 2 October 1959, Paris, item 23.
- 21 IOC EB 2 October 1959, Paris, item 24.
- 22 IOC Session 15–16 February 1960, San Francisco, 7–8. The total television rights for Rome amounted to US\$1,178,257, which were paid as follows: CBS \$394,940; EBU \$667,967; OIRT \$66,320; NHK \$48,400 and others, \$630. The \$50,000 guarantee to the IOC would have been just over 4% of the total rights fees.
- 23 In the early years, especially in Europe and Japan, the improved television coverage of the Games was assisted by the fact that the broadcasters were public broadcasters and had a certain level of technological and production expertise to put at the service of the organising committees. The Japanese, in particular, would use the 1964 Games in Tokyo to demonstrate the enormous progress they had made, inter alia, in television and electronics. These factors led to a notional split of the television revenues into rights fees and services, from which the IOC derived a share of the former, but not the latter.
- 24 IOC Session 22–24 August 1960, Rome, 7–9. Tokyo had agreed with the IOC proposal. Innsbruck had complained at the Paris Session in 1955 that the amount of the indemnity had been fixed at SF30,000. US\$20,000 was too high and they did not think the organising committee would accede to the new request. In Austria, the television rights belonged to the government and the organising committee derived no benefit from them. It was agreed that the organising committee would study the request and respond definitively at the 1961 Session in Athens. Count de Beaumont (FRA) seems to have figured out that requests and rules emanating from the IOC were not effective and proposed that in future, a contract "drawn in good and due form" be signed between the contracting parties, namely the IOC and the organisers of the Games (p. 14). Even this, however, would not have enabled the organisers to bind the government regarding television, but, if the rights were not necessary in future, the monetary obligation was one which the organising committee could undertake, even if it did not have access to television revenues. The matter was resolved and Brundage reported to the next Executive Board meeting that agreement had been reached and payment made on account (IOCEB 15–18 June 1961, Athens, 1–2). The television rights for Tokyo realised US\$1,557,778, of which NBC paid US\$1,500,000 and other broadcasters paid US\$77,778 (an approximate ratio of 95% to 5%).
- 25 The principle underlying Olympic Charter Rule 48 of the day was: "The IOC takes all the necessary steps in order to ensure the fullest coverage by the different media and the widest possible audience in the world for the Olympic Games."
- 26 IOC Session 19–21 June 1961, Athens, 3. The formula based on venue size (or ticket revenues) was a regular contributor to the constant demand by IFs for larger Olympic venues: they did not care about after-use, but only wanted additional revenues based on ticket sales at the time of the Games. See, for example, distribution key proposed for the 1968 Games (IOC Session 3–9 May 1967, Tehran, p. 13, item 19 and Annex XIIIa).
- 27 IOC EB 2–3 March 1962, Lausanne. This was approved at the 1962 IOC Session, 5–8 June 1962, Moscow, 7.
- 28 IOC EB 25–26 January 1964, Innsbruck, 2. At the following Executive Board meeting, it was decided that it might be better for the IOC rule to specify a minimum number of accreditations, rather than a maximum, and leave it to the organising committees to deal with the matter thereafter (IOCEB 26–27 June 1964, Lausanne, 6).
- 29 IOC Session 26–28 January 1964, Lausanne–Innsbruck, 2.
- 30 IOC EB 11–14 April 1965, Lausanne, 5, item 21, Other business, Commercial publicity and television.