

The Elections of the Host Cities for the Olympic Winter Games

An historical overview

— Karl Lennartz —

At its session in Durban in July 2011, the IOC will decide on the venue of the XXIV Olympic Winter Games. The race for the games is between three bidding cities. Annecy, in the French Alps, is the capital of the region Haute-Savoie and has a population of 53,000. Munich in the German foothills of the Alps, is the capital of the federal state Bavaria and has 1.33 million inhabitants. Pyeongchang is located approximately 180 kilometres from Seoul in the Taebaek Mountains and has a population of 46,000. It is bidding for the third time.

The evaluation committee visited each of the candidate cities in early 2011. The bidding committees will also travel to Lausanne on May 19th to provide answers on technical questions. The final vote is to be in Durban at the IOC Session on July 6th. To provide an historical perspective, this article will give an historical overview of the elections of all host cities for the Olympic Winter Games.

1908 London

The Games of the IV Olympiad took place from April to October 1908 in London. In Paris in 1894 during the discussions about the programme for the first Olympic Games of the modern era, skating had already been mentioned as the first winter sport event. Although it was already possible to skate on artificial ice towards the end of the nineteenth century, figure skating [with four events] was first introduced to the Olympic programme for October 1908, together with “winter” team sports such as football, and hockey.

1912 Stockholm

On May 29, 1909, the 11th IOC-session in Berlin assigned the Games of the V Olympiad unanimously to Stockholm after Berlin had relinquished its application. Because of an implied competition with the Nordic Games, which had been organised in Stockholm since 1901, the Organising Committee for the Games of the V Olympiad in Stockholm in 1912 refused to accept figure skating as an event.

1916 Berlin

At its first meeting on the 14th session on July 4 1912 in Stockholm the IOC chose Berlin as the venue for the games of the VI Olympiad in 1916 after Budapest stood aside, recognising that Berlin had a longer standing claim. The plans for these Games included figure and speed skating, and skiing events in the Black Forest, these to be staged in February 1916. These winter sport events had been approved by the 1914 Olympic Congress in Paris.

1920 Antwerp

On April 5, 1919 the 17th IOC session in Lausanne assigned the Games of the VII Olympiad to Antwerp. During the Games of the VII Olympiad in 1920 in Antwerp, figure skating and ice hockey took place in the spring.

1924 (I OWG) Chamonix

At its 20th session on June 2, 1921, the IOC assigned the Games of the VIII Olympiad to Paris and those of the IX Olympiad to Amsterdam. The Olympic Congress in Lausanne in 1921 decided that in the future winter sport weeks should also be organised in connection with the Olympic Games, but only insofar as the host countries in question could satisfy the requisite geographical and organisational conditions. The 22nd session in Rome in 1923 thus agreed on a winter sport week in 1924 in Chamonix. Nevertheless, this was not to be considered part of the Olympic Games although it was patronised by the IOC. The organising committee for the Games of the VIII Olympiad in Paris in 1924 did not accept this decision and organised a winter sport week in Chamonix as part of the Olympic Games. With an opening ceremony, the Olympic oath and a closing ceremony with the presentation of Olympic medals to the winners they followed the rituals of the Olympics to the letter.

1928 II OWG St. Moritz

The 25th session in Prague decided on May 25, 1925 to introduce a separate cycle of Olympic Winter Games which were to take place according to the same rules and in the same years as the Olympic Games and at a venue to be determined by the IOC. The host country of the Summer Games was to have first refusal.

“Le CIO institue un cycle distinct de Jeux Olympiques d’hiver. Ces Jeux auront lieu la même année que les Jeux Olympiques. Ils prendront le nom de premiers, deuxièmes, troisièmes Jeux Olympiques d’hiver et seront soumis à tous les règles du protocole olympique. Les prix, médailles, diplômes et documents divers devront être différents de ceux employés pour les Jeux de l’Olympiade en cours (le terme Olympiade ne sera pas employé). Le CIO désignera la localité où seront célébrés les Jeux Olympiques d’hiver, en réservant la priorité au pays détenteur des Jeux de l’Olympiade à la condition que ce dernier se puisse fournir les garanties suffisantes de sa capacité d’organiser les Jeux d’hiver dans leur ensemble.”

The subsequent Congress and the International Ski Federation made it clear that they wanted to see Chamonix’s International Sports week re-designated as the “I Olympic Winter Games”. This was agreed by the IOC at its 25th Session in Lisbon on May 6, 1926.

The decision to host the Winter Games in the same country the Summer Games take place immediately caused problems. In the Netherlands it was impossible to carry out alpine competitions. There was even discussion about whether competitions should be restricted to those on ice. Before long, winter sport resorts signalled

their willingness act as hosts: Davos, Engelberg and St. Moritz. On May 6 there was a heated discussion. Due to the lacking height and, connected to that, the unreliable snow conditions Engelberg withdrew as it was felt that their peaks were not high enough to guarantee snow. There was even a discussion whether to split the competitions between Davos and St. Moritz. Eventually, St. Moritz was chosen with 22 pros and one abstention. The duration was set at eight days including two Sundays.

1932 III OWG Lake Placid

As early as in 1923, on the 22nd session of the IOC in Rome, the Games of the X Olympiad had been allocated to Los Angeles. Now the selection of the venue of the Winter Games remained with the Americans. At the end of 1927, the American Olympic Committee asked Lake Placid, a winter sport venue in the state of New York; whether they were willing host the Games. To gather information about the Winter Games Dr. Godfrey Dewey, the president of the local winter sport association, visited the event in St. Moritz. After his return a committee was founded and the venue applied for the Games. Shortly before the 28th session in 1929, some other American cities applied: Yosemite Valley (California), represented by the IOC member John Garland, Bear Mountains (New York), Duluth (Minnesota), Minneapolis (Minnesota), Denver (Colorado) and Lake Tahoe (California). IOC member James Merrick agitated for Montreal. The Norwegian Thomas Fearnley made the case for his country to host the Games. There was an ongoing discussion. As the IOC had stipulated in Prague that the same country should host both summer and winter games, this made it difficult for Montreal. The IOC president, Baillet-Latour, argued in favour of Lake Placid. Afterwards, Lake Placid was unanimously chosen, supposedly by acclamation.

1936 IX OWG Garmisch-Partenkirchen

In 1931, after the 30th session following a postal ballot, Berlin was chosen as host for the XI Olympiad. Now it was the task of the German Olympic Committee to offer the IOC a venue for the VI Olympic Winter Games in 1936. A meeting of the GOC on November 11, 1932, postponed the election once more. Applicants were Garmisch and Partenkirchen, Schreiberhau, the climatic spa and winter sports resort in Lower Silesia, Braunlage in the Harz Mountains and Schierke in the Upper Harz Mountains. Garmisch and Partenkirchen was the preferred choice, but Schreiberhau was also supposed to be checked by a commission. Finally, Garmisch and Partenkirchen won the election. Both cities were consolidated into one community and the decision was conveyed to the IOC at its 32nd session in June 1933.

1940 (V OWG) Sapporo – St. Moritz – Garmisch-Partenkirchen

At the 34th session in Oslo in 1935 the representatives in Japan, Italy, Finland), thus the candidates for the Games of the XII Olympiad, were asked about the possibilities to host the Winter Games. They argued in favour of a regular distribution of the Games according to the statutes of



the IOC. Count Albert Bonacossa proposed Cortina D'Ampezzo as a possible venue. Ernst Edvard Krogius stated that a bob run would be built in Finland.

At the 36th session in Berlin, Toyko was chosen on July 31. On the session in Warsaw, one year later, there was an intense discussion about the resolution of 1925 to host "both Winter and Summer Games in the same country". Fearnley argued that whilst small countries would not necessarily be able to host Olympic Games; they would however be able to stage successful Winter Games at the high standard of winter sports, because these were generally on a smaller scale than the summer games. Even so, the IOC stayed with the Japanese as hosts and named Sapporo as the venue

By 1938, conflict in many lands was widespread. The Japanese members of the IOC came to the 38th session in Cairo (13th, 15th-18th March 1938) with the message that they believed the 1940 Games could still take place in Japan, regardless of the war in China.

At a confidential meeting of some members of the IOC at the end of the session, it was agreed that president de Baillet-Latour should establish contact with Helsinki and Oslo to talk about the possibility of these cities taking on organisation of the 1940 Games in the event that Tokyo and Sapporo withdrew.

After Japan had given back the mandate to host the 1940 Games on July 16, a meeting of the executive committee took place on September 3 in Brussels. The Olympic Games were assigned to Helsinki while the Winter Games were assigned to St. Moritz.

The problem of eligibility remained. The FIS regarded ski instructors as amateurs, whereas the IOC considered them to be professionals. Alpine competitions were to be removed. The refusal of the Swiss Olympic Committee to include ski demonstrations in the programme of St. Moritz instead, forced the IOC to make the decision to remove the Games from St. Moritz of the Games and to assign them instead to Garmisch-Partenkirchen. This decision was taken unanimously at the 1939 session in London. At the same session London and Cortina D'Ampezzo were selected as the venues of the 1944 Games.

The unanimous decision in favour of Garmisch-Partenkirchen is astonishing because the IOC members must have been aware of the persecution of Jewish people and other atrocities in the Nazi state. On the other hand, it must be taken into consideration that a considerable part of the membership came from fascist states [Ger, ITA, POR] and dictatorships. Besides, there remained the belief that a nation organising the Olympic Winter Games in 1940 would not start a war. It was a misguided view. War broke out on September 1, 1939, with the invasion of Poland.

In November 1939, the German Olympic Committee made it clear that they would not be able to organise the Winter Games. In May 1940, as the Russo-Finnish war came to an end, the Finns too decided they would not be able to stage the Games.

1948 V OWG St. Moritz

Just a few days after the war in Japan finally came to an end, IOC president Sigfried Edström, Vice-president

Avery Brundage and Lord Aberdare gathered in London for the 34th session of the executive committee. This was held from August 21 – 24, 1945. They decided in favour of the venues St. Moritz and London for the Games in 1948 and asked the members by postal ballot. The 40th session, which took place from September 3 – 6, 1946 in Lausanne, confirmed the decision of the executive committee.

1952 VI OWG Oslo

When in 1947 the IOC met for their 47th session in Stockholm the resolution to host "both Games in the same country" was finally rejected. A vote on the host city for the VI Olympic Winter Games in 1952 was taken on 21st June. Oslo was chosen (18 votes), ahead of Cortina D'Ampezzo (9 votes) and Lake Placid (1 vote).

1956 VII OWG Cortina D'Ampezzo

Four cities applied for the VII Olympic Winter Games. The result of the ballot was held at the 44th IOC Session in Rome on the 28th of April was as follows:

Ballot:	1 st					
Cortina D'Ampezzo	31					
Montreal	7					
Colorado	2					
Lake Placid	1					

1960 VIII OWG Squaw Valley

A clever businessman, Alexander Cushin successfully convinced the American Olympic Committee and then also the IOC to host the VIII Olympic Winter Games in the "Valley of the Squaw" in the Rocky Mountains. There was as yet no infrastructure and Cushing was the only inhabitant and homeowner in the whole place [300km from San Francisco and 1,900m above sea level].

Very late in the day, much too late, the organising committee informed the IOC that as a result of financial constraints, no bob track could be built. For a short while there were efforts to transfer this event to Europe, but this plan was abandoned. The first artificial rink was built for speed skating.

Nevertheless, there were rival candidates at the 51st session in mid-June 1955 in Paris and for the first time two ballots were necessary:

Ballot:	1 st	2 nd				
Squaw Valley	30	32				
Innsbruck	24	30				
Garmisch-Partenkirchen	5					
St. Moritz	3					

1964 IX OWG Innsbruck

At the 56th session in May 1959 in Munich, representatives of the International Federations were allowed to be present for the "Choice of the venue of the Olympic

Games”; they were even allowed to vote. On May 26 there were only three candidates and only one ballot was needed. Even before this, a decision was made that in the event Lahti was chosen the city would be allowed to stage the alpine competitions in another location. However, the results shows that this was not necessary:

Ballot:	1 st				
Innsbruck	49				
Calgary	9				
Lahti	0				
Total	58				

1968 X OWG Grenoble

The idea of hosting the Olympic Winter Games in Grenoble was first mooted in 1960. The IOC made its decision at the 62nd session in Innsbruck on January 28, 1964. Calgary had promised a 150\$ travel allowance for those coming from afar and Lahti had indicated that alpine competitions would be held in Sweden in the event that they won. This had been agreed by the Swedish NOC. Three ballots were necessary:

Ballot:	1 st	2 nd	3 rd		
Grenoble	15	18	27		
Calgary	12	19	24		
Lahti	11	14			
Sapporo	6				
Oslo	4				
Lake Placid	3				

1972 XI OWG Sapporo

In 1940, the fifth Olympic Winter Games were supposed to be hosted in Sapporo. After the choice of Tokyo as the venue of the XVIII Olympiad a *Committee for the Invitation of the Olympic Winter Games* was formed and presented its application for the 1968 Winter Games to the IOC in 1963. Sapporo got only six votes at the ballot on January 29, 1964. At the second time of asking Sapporo was chosen to host the 1972 Games. Only one ballot was needed. The decision was made at the 65th session in Rome and the discussions ahead of the voting raised some interesting points. IOC member Gustav Dyrssen (SWE) was concerned about the Chinook wind which was able to raise the temperature in Bannf to 20-25 degrees above zero in a short while (see Calgary). Åre in Sweden could expect only four hours daylight at the projected time for the Olympics.

Ballot:	1 st				
Sapporo	32				
Banff	16				
Lahti/Åre (SWE)	7				
Salt Lake City	7				





1976 XII OWG (Denver) – Innsbruck

At the 70th IOC session in Amsterdam, four cities applied but Denver was chosen to be the host of the XII Olympic Winter Games. In support of its candidacy Denver noted that 80% of its sports venues existed already, the USA would celebrate its 200th anniversary and Colorado would itself be 100 years old. Denver's success was sealed on the third ballot.

Ballot:	1 st	2 nd	3 rd			
Denver	29	18	38			
Sion	18	31	30			
Tampere/Åre	12	8				
Vancouver	9					

By the next IOC session in Luxembourg, it became clear that not all the residents of Denver were behind the Games. The organising committee had plans to change many of the sports venues so that only a few would remain in Denver, in Steamboat Springs (Nordic), in Vail (alpine). Due to high costs, no bob and luge tracks should be built. The protests grew because of planned blastings and extensive earth removal in the alpine area and the resulting environmental damage. An initiative called "Citizens for the future of Colorado" started a petition and collected enough signatures to force a popular referendum. On November 9, 1972, further financial support from the state and country was rejected by 60.41%. The organising committee gave back its mandate to the IOC on November 15, 1972. On February 4, 1973 the executive committee made a decision to re-assign the Winter Games. Shortly after the 1972 Winter Games in Sapporo, Dr. Alois Lugger, the mayor of Innsbruck, had informed the IOC about the interest of his city to host the Games once more. Tampere and Chamonix were also interested. Other American cities expressed their own interest, Salt Lake City, Lake Placid, Reno/North Lake Tahoe and South Lake Tahoe/Squaw Valley presented themselves to the USOC. Lake Placid was chosen by the USOC as their preferred host but the IOC executive committee decided in favour of Innsbruck on February 4 in 1973, without publicly proclaiming the result of the ballot.

1980 XIII OWG Lake Placid

After the 1932 OWG, Lake Placid confirmed further interest to host extensive winter sport events. At the end of the 1940s, the area was considered the biggest skiing venue in the USA. They staged three bobsleigh world cups and a Nordic world cup and bid three times for the Olympic Winter Games.

In January 1973, a ballot on the subject of the 1980 OWG showed the acceptance of 75% of the population of the region. Moreover, Governor Nelson Rockefeller supported the project. One year later the approval of the NOC of the United States followed. As a result, the other candidates, Banff, Oslo, Chamonix and Garmisch-Partenkirchen withdrew their applications and finally Vancouver-Garibaldi did the same on October 4 1974. Accordingly, Lake Placid was the only applicant city for the VIII Olympic Winter Games. Since all six present representatives of the International Federations agreed on the plans, Lake Placid was chosen to host the Games in Vienna on the 23rd October 1974. But the representatives of Lake Placid had to present a written guarantee of the President of the United States.

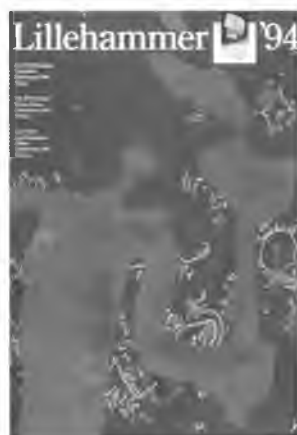
1984 XIV OWG Sarajevo

As early as 1968, the city first thought about applying for the 1976 or 1980 Olympic Winter Games. In 1979 a committee for the application was founded. At the 80th session of the IOC in Athens, three cities wanted to host the 14th Olympic Winter Games. The decision was made on May 28 in 1978:

Ballot:	1 st	2 nd				
Sarajevo	31	39				
Sapporo	33	36				
Gothenburg	10					
Invalid	1					

1988 XV OWG Calgary

Montreal hosted the Olympic Games in 1976 and there was also huge interest in staging Olympic Winter Games



as well. The Canadian Olympic Association staged an internal competition. Banff withdrew following protests by environmental activists because of what they saw as a threat for the local national park. Calgary beat Vancouver in the nomination. The Canadian government was willing to spend 200 million dollars (50% of the budget). 80,000 inhabitants of Calgary had become members of the CODA and each contributed at least five dollars. Calgary thus had an additional fighting fund of two million dollars.

On 30th September 1981 at the 84th IOC session in Baden-Baden, Calgary was chosen to host the XV Olympic Winter Games on the second ballot.

Ballot:	1 st	2 nd				
Calgary	35	48				
Falun	25	31				
Cortina	18					
Abstentions	4					

1992 XVI OWG Albertville

The IOC merchandising programme (TOP) had been introduced in 1985 and was beginning to take effect. The number of applicants rose rapidly. For the 1992 OWG there were no less than seven candidates. The decision was taken on October 17 in 1986 at the 91st IOC session in Lausanne.

Ballot:	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	6 th
Albertville	25	28	42	42		51
Sofia	19	25	24	24		25
Falun	10	11	9	9	41	9
Lillehammer	10	11	9	9	40	
Anchorage	7	5				
Cortina	7	6	7			
Berchtesgaden	6					
Abstentions					1	
Invalid					3	
Total	84	84	84	84	85	85

1994 XVII OWG Lillehammer

The idea to host OWG in Lillehammer stemmed from the resident German hotelier Wolfgang Müller. He had considerable local support. According to an opinion poll, almost 60% favoured the realisation of the Games. IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch had asked Oslo to apply but they withdrew. Lillehammer had been a candidate city for the 1992 Games but lost against Falun in the fifth round of voting October 17, 1986. In truth Lillehammer would have stood little chance against Sofia or the eventual winners Albertville. The city was not yet well enough known to the IOC membership.

At the same session in Lausanne, the IOC voted to change rule 5 of the Olympic charter. No longer would the winter games take place in the same year as the summer games. From 1994 onwards, the Winter Games were to be held in the second calendar year after the Games of the Olympiad. By doing this the IOC followed the wishes of American television networks who were finding it increasingly difficult to lay out huge sums for the broadcast rights to two games in the same year. By staggering the games it eased the cash flow. To assist them further in terms of attracting advertisers, the duration was extended to 16 days. By opening the Games on a Friday, they could include three weekends in this time, peak viewing times which would attract advertisers. To make the games more attractive several new competitions were accepted.

On September 15 in 1988, Lillehammer were chosen at the 94th session as the first hosts of the new cycle. The Swedish city Östersund had been considered the favourite. Lausanne had put forward its own candidacy but had been forced to withdraw after a negative poll amongst the local population. As it turned out, Lillehammer's Olympic Winter Games were a spectacular success and to this day are considered the "best Winter Games ever".

Ballot:	1 st	2 nd	3 rd			
Lillehammer	25	30	45			
Östersund	19	33	39			
Anchorage	23	22				
Sofia	17					
Abstentions	1					



1998 XVIII OWG Nagano

Japanese cities were keen to host the OWG again. Four cities applied: Yamagata, Morioka, Asahikawa and Nagano. The Japanese NOC decided on Nagano on July 3rd 1988. The vote was to be taken at the 97th session of the IOC in Birmingham. Before the vote on June 15 in 1991 environmentalists protested complaining about the impact in Nagano. The media also carried accusations of irregular financial practices ahead of the vote. The IOC refused to be influenced by this:

Ballot:	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	
Nagano	21		30	36	46	
Salt Lake City	15	59	27	29	42	
Östersund	18		25	23		
Jaca	19		5			
Aosta	15	29				

2002 XIX OWG Salt Lake City

There were originally nine applicants. These included Graz (Austria), Jaca (Spain), Poprad (Slovakia), Sochi (Russia) and Tarvisio (Italy). These cities were eliminated from the race for a variety of reasons including lack of finance and incomplete applications. The four cities which made it through made their way to Budapest for the vote on June 16 in 1995 at the 104th session. Salt Lake City won with 54 of the 89 votes in the first ballot. They beat Sion (14 votes), Östersund (14 votes) and Québec (7 votes). Before this session, the German media had praised the application of Salt Lake City as the very best. The media suggested that if this city was not chosen, this would mean foul play or bribery. In the winter of 1998/1999 it became known that at least 24 IOC members had been bought by the application committee of Salt Lake City. Four IOC members resigned and five more were suspended. Furthermore, the rules concerning the term of the IOC members were changed, the members were forbidden to visit the applicant cities and the way the vote itself was conducted was also changed.

2006 XX OWG Turin

There were six applicants. The following were eliminated before the final vote: Helsinki, Klagenfurt, the Slovakian city Poprad and the Polish winter sport centre Zakopane.

At the 109th session on June 19 in 1999 in Seoul, Turin beat the Swiss city of Sion with 53 to 36 votes against Sion. According to many experts, Sion had presented the better application. Their main strength was the compact nature of their bid. In Turin, only ice disciplines were actually staged in the city, Alpine and Nordic disciplines were held over 150 km away. The application was backed by the Fiat group. The defeat of Sion was surprising; therefore there was a feeling that this constituted an act of revenge against the Swiss IOC member Marc Hodler, who had been central to the revelations in the Salt Lake City bribery scandal.

2010 XXI OWG Vancouver

In Canada there was initially a vote of the Canadian Olympic Committee, in which Vancouver came out first against Québec and Calgary. A popular vote in Vancouver displayed an approval rating of 64%.

Beforehand, the evaluation commission narrowed down the field. Andorra la Vella, Harbin (in the People's Republic of China), Jaca (in Spain) and Sarajevo did not make the cut. The final vote was between Vancouver, Pyeongchang in Korea and Salzburg. Berne withdrew after 80% of its population voted against hosting the Games. The ballot took place on July 2 2003 at the 115th session in Prague.

Ballot:	1 st	2 nd				
Vancouver	40	56				
Pyeongchang	51	53				
Salzburg	16					

2014 XXII OWG Sochi

This time, seven cities applied. Once again the IOC Evaluation commission made a preliminary selection. Almaty in Kazakhstan, Borjomi in Georgia, Jaca and Sofia were not chosen. There were various reasons that these cities were not admitted. The venues were too far apart (Borjomi); opening and closing ceremony not in Jaca. There were insufficient answers in the catalogue of

questions (Sofia). The evaluation commission narrowed the field down to Pyeongchang, Salzburg and Sochi. The application of Pyeongchang was considered as the best. The budget of Salzburg seemingly was too small. In particular there were concerns about the accommodation of the athletes and the small size of the media centre. In Sochi, criticisms included the lack of existing venues, the threat to the environment and the infrastructure were criticized. The cities of Pyeongchang and Salzburg were both graded *excellent* whilst the candidact of Sochi was considered only *very good*. The result of the ballot at the 119th session on July 4 in 2007 in Guatemala City was the following:

Ballot:	1 st	2 nd				
Sochi	34	51				
Pyeongchang	36	47				
Salzburg	25					

2018 XXIII OWG ?

The closing date for the applications was October 15 in 2009. Annecy, Munich and Pyeongchang were confirmed as candidates. On 22nd June 2010 the IOC initially accorded them the status of an official applicant. Annecy was asked to hand in a revised version of the concept for its venues. The choice of the venue for the 23rd OWG takes place on July 6 at the 123rd session in Durban. ■