



THE 1984 OLYMPICS IN LOS ANGELES

Olympics

Nations participating: **140**
 Number of participants: **6,829**
 Sports: **23**
 Opening Ceremony: **July 28, 1984**
 Closing Ceremony: **August 12, 1984**

Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum

Opening: **May 1923**
 Cost: **\$ 955,000**
 Refurbishment: **1931 and 1983**
 Capacity: **95,516**

(USA)

THE SECOND OLYMPIC GAMES HOSTED BY THE CALIFORNIAN METROPOLIS, BESIDES BEING AN EXPLOSION OF COLORS AND EXCITING PERFORMANCES, OFFERED UNPRECEDENTED RESULTS FROM A FINANCIAL STANDPOINT. AMONG THE ATHLETES, IT WAS CARL LEWIS WHO DOMINATED THE SCENE AND HE PREPARED FOR SUCCESS, TRAINING ON A MONDO TRACK.

AN EXAMPLE FOR THE FUTURE

The Los Angeles Olympics were the first to be organized, using only private funds. The decision to rely entirely on sponsors to secure funds was criticized at first; however, in the end it generated a profit of \$215 million, making the Games of 1984 in a model to be imitated. After some initial difficulties, the \$225 million agreement signed with the American Broadcasting Company (ABC) gave the Organizing Committee a financial basis on which to lean, establishing the start of a sponsorship program that led to a limited number of selected sponsors and official suppliers; about one hundred were chosen overall, as opposed to the 150 seen in Montreal and Moscow, and the over 300 of the 1980 Winter Olympics in Lake Placid. Thus, the Olympics in Los Angeles succeeded in fulfilling one of the primary objectives: costing taxpayers nothing.

USING EXISTING EQUIPMENT

One of the most important decisions contributing to minimizing costs was the one to use existing facilities. Los Angeles did not want to end up like Montreal, and for the construction of new facilities, which had to ask for the State to make a large contribution, and, consequently, taxpayers themselves, as they faced additional taxes. Southern California was an area full of sports facilities; the Los Angeles area alone had enough space to



host 21 of the Olympic sports in the program, with two stadiums, having a capacity of over 90,000 spectators. One after another, every Olympic discipline found the right venue to be hosted. Only two structures were built from scratch: the velodrome, the first world-class such facility in the western United States and the pool at the University of Southern California. Both projects were funded entirely by sponsors.

EXPOSITION PARK

Just as had happened for the 1932 Games, **Exposition Park** in Los Angeles was the centerpiece of the 1984 Olympics. The challenge was to convert the entire area (54 hectares), which hosted the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum and Sports Arena, in the center of all Olympic activity, an area giving access to more than 100,000 people simultaneously. Among the permanent improvements that were made, with a \$1.8 million expenditure, were the renovation of the irrigation system and street lighting around the area, the repaving of the streets surrounding the park, the renovation of the turf and important gardening work. The final touch was the Games' memorial statue created by the artist Robert Graham, featuring two bronze statues depicting a pair of athletes: a water polo player and a sprinter.

LOS ANGELES MEMORIAL COLISEUM

At a cost of \$954,872 and opening in May 1923, the **Memorial Coliseum** served as the main stadium hosting both Olympics in Los Angeles. The facility was renovated before the 1932 Games and the same happened in view of the 1984 ones. Among the interventions, which cost \$ 5 million, the most evident was the removal of the first row of seats on the North side of the stands in order to comply with the IAAF requirements. Even the Swim Stadium adjacent to the Coliseum, which in 1932 was the venue for swimming and diving competitions, underwent a profound transformation, becoming the athletes' warm-up and support centre before competitions. The Coliseum hosted the opening and closing ceremonies as well as the track and field events. In the tradition, the cauldron used in 1932 was not replaced, and it hosted the Olympic flame again in 1984.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING

The protagonist of the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles was undoubtedly **Carl Lewis**. Mondo also contributed to the American athlete's successes, with the track at **Santa Monica University**, which was used by the champion during what is the most delicate and important time for an athlete: training. "At the Los Angeles Olympic Games, Mondo supplied four red color tracks, all featuring **Sportflex Super X** surfaces. One of them was laid at Santa Monica University, where Carl Lewis and other athletes of the Santa Monica Club would train", recalls **Andrea Vallauri**, Head of Mondo's Export Division. The positive experience of Los Angeles 1984 was crucial for Mondo's entry in the U.S. market. "The tracks represented the main strengths. The presence at the Olympics allowed Mondo to acquire fame and prestige. Since then, the Company has started to develop the American market in a more structured manner, starting in California and moving eastwards," said Vallauri. A process that began by supplying the great universities, such as Harvard and MIT, which led to the creation of **Mondo America** and the presence of Mondo tracks in various locations scattered throughout the United States.

REVENGE OF THE USSR

In retaliation for the boycott suffered just four years earlier, during the Moscow Games, the USSR and almost the entire Soviet bloc (except Romania) decided not to participate in the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. Overall, in addition to the Soviet Union, 13 countries did not participate: Cuba, East Germany, Afghanistan, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Ethiopia, Hungary, North Korea, Laos, Mongolia, Poland, Vietnam and the Democratic Republic of Y e m e n .

The announcement of the boycott did not come until May 8, 1984, motivated by security concerns and the presence of "chauvinistic sentiments and anti-Soviet hysteria" in the United States. Although the number of participating countries was lower than the number of countries that boycotted Moscow 1980, the Soviet Union and its allies' absence influenced the results in many Olympic disciplines. The countries participating in the boycott organized a big event between June and September 1984, calling it Game of friendship, but no competition was held in conjunction with those of the O l y m p i c s .



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