THE 1976 MONTREAL OLYMPICS

THE 1976 MONTREAL GAMES ARE REMEMBERED FOR THE HIGH COSTS INCURRED AND THE GREAT PERFORMANCE OF ATHLETES IN THE GAMES. FOR MONDO THIS WAS THE FIRST OF TEN OLYMPIC EXPERIENCES BY THE MAIN CHARACTER.

Olympics
Participating countries: 92
Number of participants: 6,084
Sport: 21
Opening Ceremony: July 17, 1976
Closing Ceremony: August 1, 1976

Olympic Stadium
Start of construction: April 1973
Opening: July 17, 1976
Coverage: Kevlar retractable roof
Cost: U.S. $ 1.47 billion
Project: Roger Taillibert
Seats: 68,500 (Olympics)

THE REALIZATION OF A DREAM

The hosting of the Olympic Games in Montreal in 1976, was for the Canadian city the realization of a dream that had been shattered in the past more than once. The Canadian city, had applied to host the 1944 Winter Olympics (which was not played due to war) and 1956, and the 1972 summer games. The favor of Montreal’s bid over those of Moscow and Los Angeles, it was the intention on the part of the International Olympic Committee, not to entrust the hosting of the Games to one of the superpowers. This was due to the fear of political backlash, which would occur in the next two editions of the Olympics. Montreal 1976 was the realization of a dream for Mondo and London 2012 celebrates its tenth consecutive Olympics. “Even if in those days things were a little ‘different, because there was still the professionalism that we have today. For us the Olympic Games in Montreal, as well as all games in which we participated, was an important experience because it helped us grow as a company from many different points of view,” says Federico Stroppiana, Managing Director of the Mondo Group.

MONDO AMERICA

Among other things, Montreal 1976 was the reason for the Italian company to create a Mondo America. You can argue that the adventure of Mondo in North America started around that time, and later developed strategies through various vicissitudes, with the first being in Canada and then into the
United States starting in the late '80s. "The initial idea was from the beginning to expand to a much larger and important market such as the U.S. - recalls Federico Stroppiana - but initially it was not easy. Therefore, at the beginning, we worked more in Canada. "Today, Mondo has sales throughout North America and 20% comes from Canada and the rest from the United States. This is due to the references that the Mondo has achieved in the last 20 years, especially when it comes to tracks for athletics, sports in the university sector, where many investments are being made.

HOW DO YOU BECOME AN OFFICIAL SUPPLIER?

To become an Official Supplier of the Games is very important given the experience and reputation that a company has created over time, not so much by its name, but by the quality of the products it offers. "Consider the Olympic track - explains Federico Stroppiana - As part of the costs for the Games it is not a large expense, because the larger investments are those made for the stadium and other infrastructure. The track, however, is critical to the success of the Olympics. It is the most visible during the entire event and it will host the most important events, including opening and closing ceremonies. On it focuses the attention of all the media and it has maximum visibility on television. If something goes wrong with the Olympic track, the failure would be much more than a mishap in comparison to another sports facility. For this reason, the IOC makes sure that the track at the Olympic Stadium is a quality product and provides the best performances for the athletes. It is better to have a product that athletes already know and are accustomed to because if you chose a new surface you the risk is greater not only in terms of quality, but also in the performance of athletes."

ALWAYS LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Although the participation in the Olympics represents, from an economic perspective, a cost for a company, there is no doubt that this is a valuable investment: no sporting event, in fact, can give the same visibility worldwide. For this competition to be chosen as Official Supplier is very strong. "There are so many competitors, so you have to work on time and in depth with the local Olympic Committee - concludes the CEO of the Mondo Group. Each edition of the Games the Committee is different, so you have to start over every time, because even if you can warrant the work done well the last time, it has to do with nations and different people who may not know you. The first meetings with the Brazilian Olympic Committee, for example, has already begun and will become more defined after London 2012. It is work that considerable time must be devoted."

THE AFRICAN PROTEST

The hope that the award of the Olympiad to Montreal could avoid the political disagreements, disappeared when a large group of African countries decided to boycott the Games to protest against Apartheid in South Africa. The boycott was due to refusal of organizers to ban New Zealand, who had played the first few months of rugby on South African soil, to participate in the Olympics. At that time, an embargo was in effect that prohibited South Africa to participate in international sporting events and for other countries to participate in sporting events organized in the African country. In total there were twenty-two nations that joined the boycott. Iraq and Guyana also joined the protest carried out by the Congolese delegation. Some countries (including Morocco, Cameroon and Egypt) joined the protest after the conclusion of the first day of the Games. Only Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire withdrew.

THE OLYMPIC STADIUM COMPLEX

Montreal's Olympic Stadium was designed by French architect Roger Taillibert, who took inspiration from the shapes of plants and animals to draw what is still considered a masterpiece of modern organic architecture. The initial idea was to create the first stadium in the world with a retractable roof. The project involved a 175 meter high tower tilted above the stadium that was supposed to deploy or withdraw coverage depending on the environmental conditions. The complexity of the project, along with a series of strikes, meant that only the basic structure could be completed in time for the Games, while the tower and roof were incomplete. Even under the incomplete tower the Olympic pool and velodrome were built in time. During the Games, the Olympic Stadium hosted several events, including the opening and closing ceremonies of the Games, athletics, football finals of the tournament and team equestrian events.