



The Sports Corp Spotlight

A column by from Mike Moran with his own opinions and musings devoted to all things in Sports in our town and around the area, and the "buzz" for everything from the Olympic athlete to the Weekend Warrior.

September 27, 2009, #31 Decision Friday; The 2016 Olympic Games Vote

Friday morning at 10:30 a.m. Colorado Springs time, there will be a lot of our town's residents glued to a television set or the internet with a sense of anticipation and emotion not unlike watching the Power Ball results with a pot of millions.....that's the time for the International Olympic Committee's decision among Chicago, Rio, Madrid and Tokyo for the distinction of staging the 2016 Olympic Games.....the suspense is intense, and the coverage this week will be staggering.....already in Chicago, both newspapers are tasking their columnists for something special from every angle -sports, society, business, gossip and punditry, with one theme about who will be on the Chicago 2016 charter plane and who sits where.....its Mayor jetted off for Copenhagen with reporters shouting at him about costs, inside deals for cronies and all the usual stuff you get with Chicago politics, and Hizzonor ripping the media for damaging the bid by writing about it.....**the reward is huge, but particularly for one group of Colorado Springs homeowners, the National Governing Bodies** of Olympic sports with their national headquarters here in the city.....NGB leaders like Skip Gilbert (USA Triathlon), Rich Bender (USA Wrestling), Chuck Wielgus (USA Swimming), Rick Adams (USA Weightlifting), David Askinas (USA Taekwondo), Doug Beal (USA Volleyball), Denise Parker (USA Archery), Dan Cloppas (USA Badminton), Jim Tooley (USA Basketball), Jose Rodriguez (USA Judo), Mike Cavanaugh (USA Table Tennis), Steve Johnson (USA Cycling), Kurt Aichele (USA Fencing), Sheila Walker (USA Field Hockey), and Robert Mitchell (USA Shooting).....these talented, passionate and committed professionals are charged with the task of developing and nurturing American athletes for the Olympic Games, Pan American Games, World Championships, World Cups and scores of events, along with the grassroots programs for their sports and the compelling task of bringing kids into their sports with tremendous financial limitations and resources.....their budgets are all over the grid, with some needing only basic United States Olympic Committee funding and grants, others dependent on the USOC to sustain their existence.....they operate under the radar for the most part, then complete the cycle by

presenting (or renting) their elite athletes to the USOC as members of the Olympic Team every four years.....they are restricted from the luxury of being able to use the golden Olympic Rings and terminology in their marketing and fund raising efforts despite the fact that their athletes are the ones who become Olympians.....and they have steadily lost voice and representation on the USOC Board of Directors in the constant realignment of the body over three decades.....for them, the 2016 Olympic decision is particularly meaningful in a host of areas.....**a Chicago triumph means exposure for their sport**, the value of the sponsorship they are dependent on for their National Teams, their pre-Olympic marketing, their USOC special grants to develop their elite athletes for an American Games, and the *Pied Piper* effect that always goes with a Games in an American city.....the constant coverage, marketing and advertising and national exposure that will end up attracting thousands of American kids into their sports after seeing it on television during the Games.....the tremendous upsurge in new athletes of all ages that came with Gymnastics and Volleyball after the 1984 Los Angeles Games, the thrilling parade of young American girls into Softball and Soccer after the 1996 Atlanta Games, and yes, for young girls in Ice Hockey after the amazing gold medal triumph by the 1998 Olympic Women's team in Nagano, too.....you can't tally the value of an American Games for these men and women.....obviously watching the tube Friday morning as well will be the three hundred or so staff of the United States Olympic Committee here in town who have the loving task of setting the table for our Olympic and Paralympic athletes in concert with the NGBs.....these passionate men and women live and breathe the dreams of these athletes every day, from training, feeding, and housing them at our Olympic Training Center....they devote themselves unselfishly to the needs of the athletes and their families, and then have to read and hear the sorry stuff in the local news media and opinion pages about their organization's "greed" and self-serving action related to the complicated effort by the city and the business community to retain the USOC's national headquarters here.....they commit countless time, energy and hours to the community, its programs for the needy and kids in sport, and to the simple task of raising their families in Colorado Springs and giving back to the community.....it's these groups, the NGBs, the USOC, US Paralympics and the thousands of athletes who chase their dreams here who count, and who will be glued to the news on Friday morning.....I land in Chicago O'Hare airport right about the time of the announcement, on my way to my annual autumn date with Kennebunkport, Maine, my cherished *second home*.....I will be thinking of all these special men and women and what a Chicago triumph would mean to them.