

'If' persists in Detroit Olympic bid

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By David Litogot
special writer

Historians are always fascinated in what might have been "If." What if the South had won the War Between the States? What if President John Kennedy had not been assassinated? What if the French had won the French-Indian War?

If, in the Detroit area, we could speculate how the city would be different if it received the 1988 Olympic Games.

The date was Friday, Oct. 18, 1963. For the seventh time in 25 years, Detroit has put forth a bid for the Games. In the years 1939, 1946, 1947, 1948, 1953 and 1959, the city would be overlooked.

Hopefully, 1963 would be different. The Motor City edged five other U.S. cities to be the sole national representative. Our competition for the 1968 Games came from Lyon, France; Buenos Aires, Argentina; and Mexico City, Mexico.

The fateful decision that October day would be made in Baden-Baden, West Germany, by 58 voters of the International Olympic Site Selection Committee.

During that entire week leading up to the final decision, the competing cities set up displays, wine and dined the voters, and presented their final arguments before the committee-at-large.

DETROIT'S BID looked good. The 322-member Detroit Olympic Committee worked hard for years to get this far. No one worked harder than industrialist-philanthropist Fred

footprints in history

Matthaei Sr., who spent half of his life and \$250,000 of his personal fortune to bring the Games to his home city.

He and more than 100 Michiganders (including Gov. Romney and Mayor Cavanagh) went to Germany to set up the displays, meet with the delegates, and present a positive image of the city. Detroit's official presentation was, according to the Detroit News, "a snappy, forcefully delivered mixture of sound film, slides and short speeches lasting 45 minutes."

On film was a plea by President Kennedy, an illustration of the countless facilities present, and a demonstration of the area's capabilities. To help offset the staggering cost of sending athletes to Detroit, the U.S. Olympic Committee agreed to use some of the \$5 million from television revenues to house and feed 9,000 athletes and officials. We had to be careful about how much we would offer — we didn't want to look like we were "buying" the Games.

READY WE were. Our abundant fresh water was our best physical asset. But we also had the facilities: Cobo Hall, Olympia and the University of Detroit Memorial building for the indoor events. Rouge Park already had two Olympic-size pools for swimming and diving with one more pool on the drawing board.

Also planned were a \$50-million Olympic Village, (it would be part of Wayne State University's expanding housing program) and a \$25-million Olympic Stadium on 200 acres at the

State Fair grounds with seating for 100,000 spectators.

The land was ready for spade work and legislation was passed in Lansing to construct the massive triple-tiered and partially-roofed structure. Another \$15 million would be spent to renovate and modernize the Fairgrounds coliseum and other buildings.

Also promised were a 10,000-seat velodrome for cycling, a 2000-meter rowing course on Belle Isle; a shooting range for rifle, skeet, and trap; and a new \$3.2-million Wayne State recreation building.

Our chief competitor, Mexico City, had some advantages over Detroit. It had stadiums, experience in hosting international competitions (the 1955 Pan American Games) and was backed by "mucho" financing. The Mexican capital's biggest liability was its altitude. In the 7,500-foot elevation, endurance athletes and animals would suffer from the thinner air.

Despite this flaw, Mexico City was the chosen site. According to several voters, it had it wrapped up from the start. Mexico City received 30 votes, Detroit 14, Lyon 12, and Buenos Aires 2.

ALL THE delegates were delighted with Detroit's presentation. But Latin America had never hosted the Games. The United States had hosted two (St. Louis in 1904 and Los Angeles in 1932). The delegates wanted to "spread it around" and give it to a country that has never been in the international limelight. Some voters,

in fact, felt that since Detroit was "such a big, successful city," that it did not need the Olympics.

Other considerations must also be taken into account. The '60s were turbulent years of political unrest. Many countries feared that the United States would refuse visas to athletes from the "unrecognized" countries of North Korea and East Germany. Mexico promised no visa problems and even undercut Detroit in providing cheaper room and board.

Needless to say, Detroiters were disappointed. The Games would improve Detroit's image and attract millions of dollars. New facilities would be available and jobs would be produced. Some of the city's crumbling jewels, namely Belle Isle and the State Fair grounds, would be improved.

NATURALLY THERE would have been problems. Mexico City had its share. Hundreds of students were killed there by police during a pre-Olympic demonstration. Many athletes suffered from "Montezuma's Revenge," and seven horses died in the rain, mud, and high altitude.

The Games, despite the Bob Beamon long jump and the Fosbury Flop, also witnessed a Black Power demonstration and disorganization. Detroit eventually did provide the university housing, recreation facilities and a stadium. But the glamour, prestige and international glory was not to be.

Fred Matthaei expressed his feelings: "This time we threw everything we had. It will be a long, long time before Detroit is back in Olympic competition."

Next month: Farmington Olympic Connection

campus pipeline

If you have news from a college, university or other campus of higher education — and there's a Farmington-area connection — we'd like to hear from you so we can share your news item with other Farmington Observer readers. Send items to Campus Pipeline, Farmington Observer, 33203 Grand River, Farmington 48024.

NEW STUDENTS

The following Farmington-area students were accepted for admission to Siena Heights College for the fall semester: Darric Newman, Peter Van Vleet, Kathleen M. Holloway, Holace Darby, Marianne Fonnit and Chad Marcoux.

DEAN'S LIST

Scott Schutt of Farmington Hills was named to the dean's list at Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Petty Lynne Latimer of Farmington Hills was named to the dean's list at Eastern Michigan University.

Tammy Spengler of Farmington Hills was named to the dean's list at Wittenberg University, Springfield, Ohio.

NEW GRADUATES

Philip Ross and David Rogers of Farmington Hills graduated from Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.

Karen Spodarek and Eric Trimas of Farmington Hills are candidates for a doctor of osteopathy degree from Michigan State University.

Spodarek will begin a one-year rotating internship at Botsford General Hospital, Farmington Hills. She received a bachelor's degree in biology and anthropology from Wayne State University in 1984.

Trimas will intern at Botsford General Hospital. He received a bachelor's degree in health care administration from Southern Illinois University.

Graduating physicians from the MSU College of Osteopathic Medicine have completed four years of medical training, including education in the basic and behavioral sciences and clinical rotations through ambulatory care centers and hospitals.

Mary Ann Herrmann of Farmington Hills received a master of physical therapy degree from Hahnemann University, Philadelphia. She is a 1982 graduate of Farmington Hills Mercy High School and a 1986 graduate of Kalamazoo College, where she received a bachelor's degree in health science.

Eric Alstrom and Tara Twomey of Farmington and Paul Amendt of Farmington Hills graduated from Kalamazoo College.

Alstrom majored in history and completed a concentration in American studies. He participated in extracurricular activities, playing the tuba for the Kalamazoo Concert Band, editing two editions of The Cauldron, a literary/arts magazine, and editing one edition of the Forum, a magazine of poetry. This fall, he plans to attend the University of Michigan's information and library studies program.

Twomey, a health sciences major, won the Catherine A. Smith Prize in women's athletics.

Amendt graduated with honors from the theater and communications arts department and received the Senior Fellowship in Theatre. During part of his sophomore year, he participated in the GLCA New York Arts Program, interning at the Gene Frankel Theatre Workshop and taking classes as compensation for his administrative work.

Almost his entire junior year was spent in London, England, where he participated in the British and European Studies Group's acting program, taking classes in voice, movement, mime and improvisation and stage combat.

YMCA highlights

These YMCA highlights appear every week of the Farmington Observer. For information, call 553-4626.

CORPORATE MEMBERSHIP PROGRAM — The Farmington YMCA has developed a Corporate Membership/Fitness Program for small and large businesses. On-site programming as well as discounted membership programs are available. Contact Greg Voss for more information.

FALL PROGRAM — It's not too early to begin to think about our fall programs. The Farmington YMCA has something for everybody

and a comprehensive facility suited to meet your every need. Fall class registration begins the week of Aug. 29. Contact the "Y" 553-4020 for more information.

BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT — The Farmington YMCA will be sponsoring a 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament on Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 10 and 11. This double elimination tournament is open to Farmington YMCA members. Call Jean Warren at the Y for more information.

INDIAN GUIDE ORIENTATION — The Farmington Area YMCA Indian Guide Parent/Child Program — participants and staff will be hosting two orientation Pow-

Wows in September. Pow-Wows are scheduled for Saturday, Sept. 10 at 6:30 p.m. and Sunday, Sept. 11 at 1 p.m. Free swim, children's games and lots of information regarding our programs will be included.

FIT CHECK SCREENINGS — The Farmington YMCA will be offering "Fit Check" fitness evaluations for YMCA fitness program participants on Saturday, Sept. 10 and Saturday, Sept. 17 from 7:30-11 a.m.

Fit Check evaluations include blood pressure screening, blood cholesterol, and body fat, resting and target heart rate and health education topics.

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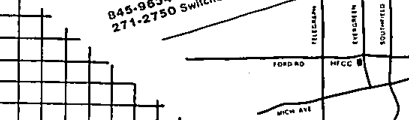
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Wed	8:00pm	3	ANY	Sun	9:30pm	4	ANY
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