

Olympics: A struggle for survival from start

It took the decree of a Roman emperor and two world wars to halt past Olympics. In ancient Greece, where the athletic contests were born, wars were interrupted for the Games — not the Games for wars.

If the 1980 Olympics are moved out of Moscow in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, it would be the first time that the location has been switched this late in the games.

If the Olympics are postponed from July until sometime in 1981, it would be the first time in modern times that they were not held — as prescribed — in the fourth year of the Olympiad.

And if the United States withdraws from the Games entirely, it would be the first time that U.S. athletes have not competed in the modern Games.

THE CURRENT Olympic crisis was predicted in the midst of the 1976 Games in Montreal. William Bradley,

now a senator from New Jersey, was a professional basketball player when he wrote in the New York Times on July 21, 1976:

"The Olympic Games are scheduled for Moscow. It is 1980. The political disputes of previous years — the North Korean pull-out in 1964, the racial protests of 1968, the terrorist attack of 1972, and the China-Taiwan dispute of 1976 — are part of the Olympic legacy as much as the spirit of sportsmanship of Pierre de Coubertin."

"Suddenly, two weeks before the opening ceremony, the President summons the head of the United States Olympic Committee to the White House. Two days later the highest United States Olympic Committee official . . . announces our withdrawal from the Olympics . . . (they) justify the action on the grounds of national security . . . the Olympic Games as we know them in the post-World War II era are dead."

COMMENTING now on his remarkable prediction, Sen. Bradley, who won a gold medal in 1954 as a member of the U.S. basketball team, said, "It was only a matter of time before the conflicts became so great that it would force some changes in the Games or bring the Games to a halt."

As part of a package of proposals for reforming and depoliticizing the Games, Sen. Bradley and others have recommended that the Olympics be taken home to Greece to be permanently situated in the land of their origin. The Greek government, which recently renewed its invitation to the world to perpetually play host for the Games, has said it would welcome them back. Participating countries would contribute to the cost of needed structures.

AS OFFICIALS wrestle with the problem of whether this year's Games should be boycotted, transferred, post-

poned, canceled or held as scheduled, the Olympics' own track record shows a champion's ability for endurance.

According to records compiled by the National Geographic news service, the Olympic Games were first held in 776 B.C. in Olympia in southwestern Greece and continued there uninterrupted for a marathon 1,200 years.

But in their later years the once glorious athletic and religious festivals degenerated into carnivals, routs and pagan spectacles.

Finally Emperor Theodosius I of Rome put a stop to them in A.D. 394. His decree ended the Games for about 1,500 years.

Then in 1896 the ancient games were reborn in Athens through the efforts of Baron Pierre de Coubertin of France, who envisioned the revival on an international scale with nations sending their best athletes to compete.

Eight countries responded and the modern Olympics have been held every

four years since then — except for the war years of 1916, 1940, and 1944.

THE 1916 Games had been set for Berlin, but were canceled by World War I. The Olympics resumed on schedule in Antwerp in 1920, with athletes from 28 countries competing.

In 1940 the Games were to have been held in Tokyo, but by midsummer 1938 Japan's conflict with China forced it to give up the Games. Helsinki was selected as the substitute site, but the next year Finland found itself at war with Russia.

No one was certain whether the Olympics could survive World War II. Within three months after Germany surrendered, however, the International Olympic Committee met in London in August 1945 and selected that city for the 1948 Games. The Olympics made a strong comeback in 1948, with 59 countries participating.



Anwar Sadat meets with Nancy Dickerson in this television special.

Middle East talks on 56

Public television will provide three mid-eastern views of the world today at 10:00 p.m. Friday when Channel 56 presents "Nancy Dickerson Special Assignment: The Middle East."

Produced by Detroit WTVS/56 for broadcast at this time on PBS, the one-hour documentary goes on location to Egypt, Israel and Saudi Arabia for exclusive update interviews with President Anwar Sadat, Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Foreign Minister Prince Saud al Faisal. This is the first time that these three leaders have voiced their views in the same TV forum.

"So much of the future of the West

is wrapped up in the Middle East," says Dickerson, "that we wanted to walk in the shoes of these three key leaders for this program to obtain a sense of how they view their region and the world."

Portions of the interviews, along with location footage, will be integrated into this cohesive, hour-long update on the prospects for this region.

Such issues as dealing with the stress of Russian advances and the newly intensified potential of a Syrian-Israeli war are considered by the leaders.

Smiley Brothers

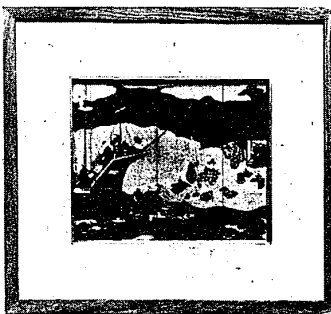
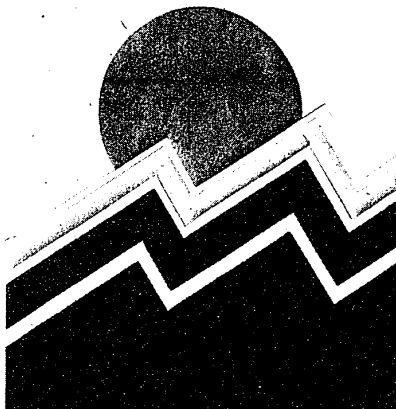
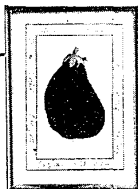
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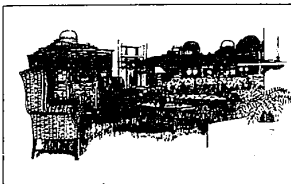
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