

TORONTO'S SKYDOME:

A Prime Olympic Venue

In an attempt to create the best sports facility in the world, Toronto, the Province of Ontario and private investors had decided that the sky was the limit in giving birth to the state-of-the-art project.

The sky was the limit — on all fronts. For starters, the stadium's price-tag was more than \$500 million. And the size of the structure is unparalleled. With its roof shut, SkyDome could enclose a 31-storey building or Rome's Coliseum. Not only does SkyDome have the world's first retractable stadium roof for predictably perfect "weather," the roof weighs in at an incredible 7 107 metric tons — the equivalent of 2 376 family sedans — and contains one and one-half times more concrete (213 360 metric tons) than its impressive next-door neighbour, the CN Tower.

Winning Formula

Since its inception, the driving force behind SkyDome has been "how to make it better" — better for audiences, better for performers, better for event organizers and promoters, better for the community. Critics agree that the stadium's designers came up with a winning formula.

Through vision, innovation and careful planning, SkyDome has become a marvel of modern architecture, flexible and versatile enough to stage every conceivable kind of event — exhibitions, trade shows, conventions, concerts and sports extravaganzas. But it is primarily a sports stadium, the new home of the Toronto Blue

Jays baseball team and the Canadian Football League's Toronto Argonauts. SkyDome would be a premier venue for the 1996 Olympic Games in Toronto's lakefront area.

SkyDome has a flexible seating configuration that provides up to 60 000 seats. And it also has an ingenious system whereby curtains and a drop ceiling can subdivide the overall space to provide a sense of theatre or audience intimacy. This versatility will make SkyDome the perfect Olympic venue for accommodating events as different as artistic gymnastics, baseball and volleyball.

Highest Tech

Imagine a television screen more than three storeys high and three times as wide — SkyDome is equipped with the largest colour video display scoreboard in the world. A revolutionary innovation built by Sony, the screen provides incredibly sharp and bright full-colour images, comparable to home television. The video display screen is fully programmable for instant replays, intimate close-ups, satellite feeds, scores, statistics, animation and sponsor messages.

Thanks to this unique technology, SkyDome could provide a dramatic setting for medal presentations, the huge screen allowing spectators to see facial expressions close-up, as well as replays of winning performances. This would make for moving and memorable presentations, with the possibility of keepsake videos that athletes would cherish the rest of their lives.

Built right into SkyDome is Dome Productions, a permanent, 1 858 m², state-of-the-art television production and post-production facility. This unique complex has 47 built-in camera positions wired to the first, all-digital control centre. Producers can take their product directly to air, mix live feeds via uplink and downlink facilities, or tape and edit in any of three world-class production suites.

Another interesting SkyDome feature is its built-in resort hotel with rooms that overlook the field and have just about every amenity imaginable. There is also an adjoining family entertainment centre, a health and fitness centre, as well as numerous restaurants catering to every taste.

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To top it all off, SkyDome is located right in the heart of the city. Torontonians are passionate about their downtown and they insist it be a place to walk, enjoy the balmy summer, relax and have fun as well as live and work. Unlike other isolated suburban stadiums surrounded by a sea of asphalt, SkyDome is part of the city's heart, surrounded by parks, theatres, hotels, restaurants and public transit. SkyDome is a unique experience in an unequalled setting.

In the final, frantic week before the SkyDome's opening, the drive to ensure that all systems were go in the world's first domed stadium with a fully retractable roof had all the tension of a major sporting event. Then on June 3, 1989, 55 000 cheering spectators gathered for a thrilling first public display of the retracting roof in action.

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