

Calgary to host Games



Calgary, Alberta, with the Olympic Saddledome in the foreground.

When the Olympic flame arrives in the McMahon Stadium on Saturday, 13 February, 1988, the curtain will go up on what promises to be the biggest winter sports event of all time. The fact that the Calgary Olympics are costing five times as much as the 1984 Winter Games in Sarajevo is some measure of what visitors to Calgary can expect.

Many of the facilities are brand new. Speed skating events will be held in the Olympic Oval — also on the university campus — which has just been completed. It is the world's first, fully enclosed 400 metre speed-skating oval, and seats 4,000 spectators.

Ski jumping, nordic combined, bobsleigh and luge events will be held in the Canada Olympic Park 15 minutes from the city centre. This used to be a small recreational ski area, but now the Park boasts 70-metre and 90-metre ski jumps, as well as Canada's first bobsleigh and luge track. With more than 60 miles of refrigeration pipe, this is the most technically advanced track of its type in the world.

Perfect view

Figure skating and ice hockey will be housed in the Olympic Saddledome, a unique structure with seating for 17,000 spectators. It features the world's largest

concrete suspended roof. This means that every spectator has a perfect view, and no seat is more than 200 feet from the centre of the 30 x 60 metre rink. The Saddledome was completed in 1983 and is the home of the Calgary Flames ice hockey team.

Close to the Saddledome is the second venue for ice hockey and figure skating — the Stampede Corral, which seats 6,500 and has fully up-to-date facilities. The Father David Bauer Arena, named after the coach of Canada's first national hockey team for the 1964 Winter Olympics, will also host some of the figure skating events.

New skiing events

For the spectacular skiing competitions, you will need to head for the Rockies. Nakiska at Mount Allan is the venue for all the Alpine skiing competitions. The base area elevation of this 225-acre site is 5,000 feet above sea level, and the vertical rise of the men's downhill run is nearly 3,000 feet.

The Olympic Program at Nakiska will include two new events: the Alpine combination and the super giant slalom. The Super G requires skiers to be very precise at high speeds, and the long sweeping high-speed turns should make this one of the most spectacular competi-

tions in the Games.

The cross country skiing, nordic combined and the biathlon will be held at the Canmore Nordic Centre 55 minutes west of Calgary near the resort of Banff. The centre has 35 miles of competition, recreational and training trails, stadium facilities and a 32-target biathlon shooting range.

Confident of success

What happens if the unthinkable should occur and there is a shortage of snow? Calgary may have cold winters, but local meteorologists claim the city enjoys 20 per cent more sunshine annually than does tropical Hawaii.

If there was to be an exceptionally mild winter, the show would still go on. Every ski course has been equipped with state-of-the-art snow-making equipment. Nothing has been left to chance.

"In 100 years time when people look back at Calgary 1988, I don't doubt they will regard it as the turning point in the history of the Winter Olympics," says Chairman of the Organising Committee Frank King. For anyone who likes to be present at epoch-making events, these Winter Games look too good to miss.

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