

Are You Going To The Melbourne Games?

Australia Prepares for Olympics Reporters

By Fred Flowers

Take 800 newspapermen and a sprinkling of hardboiled female newshounds, about 150 press and magazine photographers, at least the same number of movie, radio and television commentators, plus an army of technicians. Bring them from more than 70 different countries encumbered with their equipment, language barriers, phobias and habits, concentrate them in one tight group in a strange city thousands of miles off the beaten track—and let 'em loose on the one BIG STORY.

What have you got? One big happy family, or chaos?

Even the Kansas City Milkman could not answer that one. Certainly Melbourne's 1956 Olympic Games Organizing Committee won't know the answer until *after* the Games which will run from November 22 to December 8. But officials are expending as much effort on preparations for this record influx of newspapermen as they are on preparations for the athletes.

There will be an average of one visiting newsman to every four athletes. Numerically the Games will be the best covered, the most intensely written about, in history.

Keeping all these highly individualistic people happy is the Herculean task of the Press and Publicity Committee, and its sub-committee, whose members are mostly newspapermen with long overseas and local experience in arranging the coverage of major events.

Thurber once wrote that in his time he had met many disgruntled reporters, but never a grunted one. It is Melbourne's aim to send back home hundreds of grunted reporters who could be Australia's best ambassadors ever.

Australians are deeply conscious of the need for a good, friendly press overseas. They are anxious to attract migrants and overseas capital and they hope to use the Games as a publicity vehicle to achieve this purpose—of course as a natural by-product to efficient promotion of the Games.

They recognize that even one disgruntled reporter of note could shatter their plans by cabling back home a string of abusive articles.

So—the red carpet will be laid for visiting newspapermen who will be in danger of becoming the most pampered in Games history.

Accredited journalists and photographers will live in downtown hotels not much more than a mile from the main olympic stadia. Their hotels won't *all* be up to Statler

standard, but what they lack in tinsel will be made up for by extra, friendly service.

Tough, wise, old soldier, Lieutenant-General Bill Bridgeford—the Games Chief Executive Officer—has personally padded the sidewalks of Melbourne to point out to hotelkeepers (and when Bill points out it's practically an order!) why it is necessary to keep newspapermen happy. And, he tells me, he will send his staff round again to yarn with hotel managers before the first press contingent arrives.

"They might have to share a bloody bathroom in some instances," says General Bridgeford, "but we'll see they get good meals whenever they want them, that they have at call the quickest possible means of clearing their stories by cable, phone or radio."

Top-class working conditions will be assured for 800 accredited journalists, 125 accredited still photographers and 100 accredited film and television correspondents. Seating and working rooms have been reserved for them at 19 different olympic venues.

Accreditation quotas were allotted to each of 87 member countries of the International Olympic Committee, and at least 70 nations have taken up all or part of their quotas. The USA, Britain and Russia have each been allotted 50 seats for the main olympic stadium, the Melbourne Cricket Ground, one of the world's greatest sports arenas with accommodation in modern stands for 110,000 spectators.

The USA and Russia are certain to use their full quotas. Extra paid seats will be available for unaccredited press representatives at the main stadium.

An accredited reporter will be entitled to free accommodation in the olympic stadia that concern him. Seating arrangements for the press, TV, and radio representatives are as follows:

Athletics, soccer and hockey finals (main stadium), 500 seats with desks, and 300 other seats;

Swimming, 215 seats with desks and 131 other seats;

Hockey preliminaries, 20 seats with desks and 30 other seats;

Soccer preliminaries, 50 seats with desks, and 50 other seats;

Track cycling, 80 seats with desks, and 120 other seats;

Road cycling, 63 seats with desks and 65 other seats;

Boxing, 100 seats with desks, and 170 other seats;

Rowing and canoeing, 50 seats with desks, and 50 other seats;

Fred Flowers of the Melbourne *Herald* was an associate Nieman Fellow at Harvard 1955-56.

Water polo, 25 seats;

Fencing, 30 seats;

Basketball and gymnastics, 35 seats with desks, and 65 other seats;

Wrestling and weightlifting, 30 seats with desk and 48 other seats;

Yachting, 30 seats on official craft;

Rifle shooting, 20 seats;

Clay Pigeon shooting, 6 seats;

Modern Pentathlon; riding, 10 seats; fencing, 18 seats; cross-country run, 10 seats.

Most olympic venues will have fully furnished press rooms.

The main stadium will have a special press dining room and refreshment bar and a modern working center open to 2 A.M. daily. World news agencies will have their own work rooms. AP, UP, and INS each will send a team of 25 men to the Games and will recruit extra casual staff in Melbourne. Reuter, Tass, and other big world agencies will also send strong teams. The international agencies will pool their resources to promote a world syndication service of results direct from the main stadium. This service will be managed by AP sports editor, Harold J. ("Spike") Claassen, who will have with him two men from each agency. The service will be linked direct to New York and London by teleprinter. Results from outlying stadia will be flashed to the main stadium and distributed immediately after each event.

The press will follow the Marathon and 50 Kilometer Walk by bus—of course, anybody who wishes to walk can!

Accredited film and television men will live at the residential colleges of Melbourne University, about two miles from the main stadium. Broadcasters will live at the university's Women's College. The women will be on leave!

Special taxi services will be provided for correspondents, also exclusive parking areas will be reserved at the gates of all olympic venues.

More than 40 countries from Burma to Brazil, from Portugal to Peru, are sending radio commentators. Fifty sound proof studios are being built in the new stand at the main stadium. These studios will be fitted with tape-recorders and microphones. Each country will have at least one commentator in the press stand who will broadcast from his actual viewing seat. Wherever necessary viewing seats will be fitted with telephones.

The main stadium is being fitted with 800 separate telephone lines to carry the vast traffic. During the Games at least four Radio Australia transmitters will be broadcasting continuously to Europe and North America from 6 p.m. to 3 a.m. (Melbourne time) daily. This is the only period during which it is possible to broadcast from Australia to Europe. Each nation's commentators will be allotted 30 minutes of broadcast time daily.

Olympic broadcasting arrangements are under the control of the Australian Broadcasting Commission whose general manager, Charles Moses, Sydney, will be pleased to provide further details.

A pressroom will be established outside the six-million-dollar Olympic Village and pressmen will have free access to the Village for interviewing.

Where space limitations make it impossible to accommodate all reporters a ticket system will operate.

A co-operative known as The Olympic Photo Association has been formed to pool still photographic work. The co-operative is divided into three sections:

The Australian and New Zealand sections, excluding magazines;

The global section representing the overseas press, excluding magazines;

The magazine section representing Australian and overseas magazines.

Each section will bear its own costs. Its members will meet daily at least once to assign tasks, to allot all restricted positions, to iron out difficulties.

Processing of negatives taken by the Australian and global sections will be done at the main stadium and prints distributed on an equal priority basis.

The global section will consist of AP Photos, International News Photos and UP Photos, and any other agency which desires to enter the section and carry its fair share of the costs. They will exchange photographs.

The magazine section consists of Australian magazines, *Life*, and *Sports Illustrated*. Its members won't exchange photographs unless the number of magazine positions available is less than three.

A special meteorological information bureau will be established at the main stadium and will issue detailed weather information to the press, such as forecasts of weather temperatures, wind direction and velocity, humidity and other weather variations.

When this was written in May the Olympic Games Organizing Committee had not decided the basis on which it would allow television services to cover the Games. Earlier the Committee had indicated it expected the TV agencies to tender and pay cash for these rights. The agencies were holding out for the same tariff-free rights accorded the press and radio.

If any newspaperman, radio or TV commentator, or newsreel reporter has any question concerning the Games he should direct them to E. A. Doyle, chairman of the Press and Publicity Sub-Committee, Olympic Games Organizing Committee, Melbourne.

Visiting pressmen will need Olympic constitutions to keep up with the work, and the social events planned for them during their few weeks in Melbourne.

I'll be seeing you!