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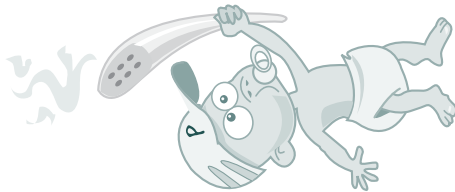
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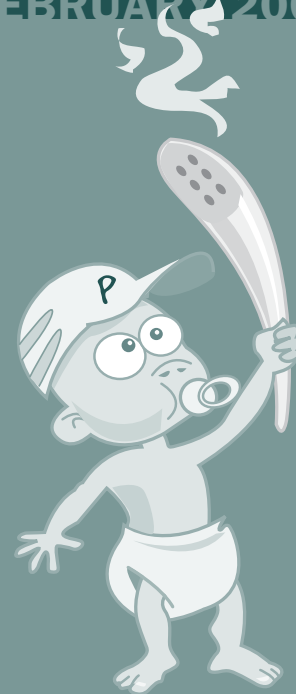
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FEBRUARY 2006



The Winter Olympics and Steel

By Jim Stavis

In case you live in a cave, the Olympics will be held this year in Turin, Italy from February 10-26. NBC will have 24 1/2 hours of television coverage between all of its affiliate stations. This means we will be drowning in coverage for this two week period.

You would think it's a stretch to find a correlation between the Winter Olympic Games and steel. Of course steel is a component of skates and the edges of skis and certainly the Olympic venues are constructed of steel and other raw materials, but you might say, "Where's the Steel?" We have two examples to share with you:

Steel Example No. 1

Always a highlight of Olympic coverage is the lighting of the Olympic flame. To that end, the Italians have not held back. They are constructing a 20-story steel cauldron that will hold the flame for the 16 days of the Games. It weighs more than a 70-seat airplane, more than 170 tons and stands nearly 200 feet. It was designed by a Turin-based design firm, the same engineer of Fiats and Ferraris, for a fee of \$1.77

(Continued Inside)

The Winter Olympics and Steel *(Continued from Front)*

million. It is composed of five thin steel tubes, representing the five Olympic rings that are twisted around a sixth central tube near the top. It is painted white. Besides the question of who will light the cauldron at the February 10th ceremony, organizers are keeping it a secret how it will be ignited.

Steel Example #2

In June of last year it was announced that U.S. Steel Corporation had become the

official designer and supplier to Team USA Luge. Working closely with Team USA Luge coaches and athletes, U.S. Steel would research and develop high tech steels for use on the national team sleds. Researchers from U.S. Steel Research Center in Pennsylvania and the Automotive Research Center in Michigan have focused their efforts on a critical part of the sled: the steel runners. Since the runners support the sled and come in direct contact with the ice, the steel must meet very specific technical requirements. So if our Luge team brings home a medal this year, you can say you heard it here first.



The Olympic Games - Historical Trivia

What is the significance of the rings?

They represent the union of five continents and the meeting of athletes from around the world.

What are the origins of the games?

The Olympic Games took their name from the Greek city of Olympia which was the birthplace of the games. The games were held every four years and the word "Olympiad" refers to the four year intervals between competitions which were commonly used to measure time. The first documented Olympic champion was Coroebus, a cook from Elis who won a sprint race in 776 B.C. Originally the Olympic Games consisted of just one event, a race called the "stade" equal to a distance of 210 yards. Later, other races were added, then came wrestling, boxing and the pentathlon, as well as specialized events for soldiers and heralds. After the Roman conquest of Greece in the second century B.C., the Olympic Games suffered a decline in popularity. The Roman emperor ordered their abolition in A.D. 393.

What brought them back?

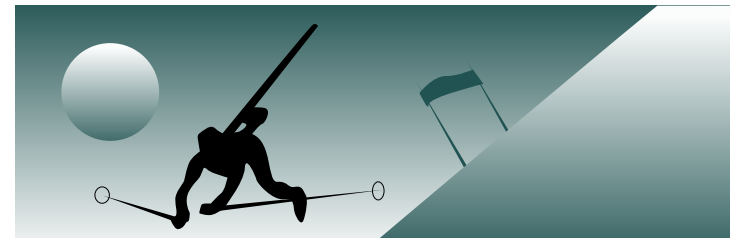
In 1892 the idea of reviving the games

originated with a 29-year-old French aristocrat named Baron Pierre de Coubertin. He managed to convince delegates from 49 organizations representing nine countries to vote in favor of an Olympic revival. The event was to be held in Athens, Greece in April of 1896 at the birthplace of the Olympics. Every four years thereafter the games were held in different cities until 1940 when the games were cancelled due to World War II. They resumed in 1948.

When did the Winter Games begin?

After many seasons of Summer Games, the idea was raised to have winter events on snow and ice in the same year as the Summer Games. The first Winter Games were held in Chamonix, France in 1924. It was not until 1994 when the Winter Games shifted its schedule so it was not held in the same year as the Summer Games. Now each Olympic Games (summer and winter) are held two years apart.

So there you have it, the link between the games and steel. So as they say before each Olympiad, "Let the games begin."



Memories of Winter Games Past

By Jim Stavis

Growing up in sunny Southern California makes it difficult to fully appreciate the Winter Olympic Games. While many parts of the country are enjoying their hockey, skiing and skating, we are still playing golf, tennis and swimming. I do fondly remember as a kid the beginning scene of Wide World of Sports where the ski jumper falls off the course in "the agony of defeat". It's a shame that it was the amazing crashes that always got my attention. I also remember Peggy Fleming and Scott Hamilton with his summersault flips and Jean Claude Killy in some amazing downhill racing. And who can

forget the best memory of them all, the Miracle on Ice, when the USA hockey defeated the Russians in 1980. Indeed the Winter Games have produced some enduring memories, but what about today? Are we as captivated by the USA snowboarders who are projecting to win five or six medals in Turin?

Maybe it's just a case of nostalgia, where events of the past seem to be more memorable than the events of today. I also, however, don't live for the crashes anymore, because I suppose I sympathize with the crashing athletes. I guess that is part of maturing or having kids who I wouldn't allow to perform such dangerous stunts. For now I will gladly turn on my big screen HD-TV, settle in my comfortable leather couch and thank my lucky stars that I'm not in Turin, Italy freezing my you-know-what off ...