

For the British people, Wednesday 6th July, 2005, was a momentous and historic day. That was the day that Britain was awarded the right to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012. Such an announcement transformed the image of Britain as a nation capable of hosting large scale sporting mega-events. The venue of the announcement was Singapore: the voice delivering the decision was IOC President Jacques Rogge.

However, Britain were never favourites to win the bid. Lord Sebastian Coe is notably credited with heading up one of the most memorable, innovative and auspicious bid teams in the history of event bidding and without doubt, it is because of his leadership that the bid was such a success.

THE TEAM

The bid team included celebrated Olympians Steve Redgrave, Kelly Holmes, Daley Thompson, Denise Lewis, Matthew Pinsent and Paralympian Tanni Grey-Thompson.

The London bid team certainly included heavy hitters from the world of business and sport, but the addition of the most powerful monarchs and politicians in Britain to the bid were an exciting and powerful strategic move. For example, the stunning piece de la resistance of the 2004 IOC visit to London was a gala dinner hosted on the last night of the trip by none other than Her Royal Majesty the Queen, within the sumptuous and spectacular surrounding of Buckingham Palace. The Prime

Minister Tony Blair was to also prove a central and powerful influence. It must be acknowledged that any successful Olympic and Paralympic bid must be backed decisively by the national government of the host nation if the bid is to be successful; London certainly achieved this in style.

COURTING THE POLITICIANS



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Tony Blair had always been in favour of a bid from day one and had played an important role in persuading the rest of the Cabinet to back a London bid.

Rarely do British political parties unite together in a common goal, but it was during the final stages of the bid that the leaders of the three British political parties were to stand shoulder to shoulder in proud unity; a concept never seen again since the bid. The presence of opposition leaders Michael Howard (Conservative) and Charles Kennedy (Liberal Democrats) at an IOC meeting hosted by Tony Blair at 10 Downing Street proved to the Olympic Federation that the Olympic and Paralympic Games would be valued highly and

that plans would be followed through decisively no matter which ruling party happened to be in power by 2012.

MANAGING THE MEDIA

Managing the British and international media proved to be a particularly demanding issue for the London bid team, given the generally intrusive and often negative characterisation of the bid by the domestic press.

The communications campaign took a strategic move of targeting the international press, as it anticipated negative domestic coverage.

VOLUNTEERING

Continuing the traditions of 1948, London 2012 will depend on up to 70,000 volunteers to make sure the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games run smoothly and successfully.



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THE LEGACY

The award-winning London 2012 'Sport at Heart' promotional video featured famous

British icons such as David Beckham and Roger Moore, and athletes running past famous landmarks, all set to the song 'Proud', a hit song by the popular British artist Heather Small. The final presentation of the bid team at Singapore was accompanied by lots of young Londoners from different cultures, driving home the legacy goals of the bid.

THE LEGACY

London identified its key bid themes as: regeneration of the east end of London, the diversity of London, the legacy of the Games, the use of London's iconic landmark sites at which the Games would be hosted, and what the Olympic and Paralympic Games could offer British and world sport. Such legacy promises exerted a significant effect on London's success in securing the Games.

START THE DISCUSSION

- ❖ Not all members of the bid team are now on the LOCOG team. Do you think this has made a difference to the effective organisation of the Games?
- ❖ What aspects of the London 2012 Games do you find particularly strong?
- ❖ What aspects of the London 2012 Games do you find a little controversial or precarious, and why?

- ❖ What does the pivotal effect of Coe's strong leadership tell us about the role of a leader in bid management?
- ❖ The bid team adopted a specific media strategy, courting the international media but minimising the involvement of the British press. Why do you think this might be?
- ❖ Do you think that the Games are popular amongst the British public?
- ❖ Whilst the budget for the Games has risen significantly, facility development remains on target in terms of time. What factors caused the budget to have to be recalculated at such a notably higher cost?

FIND OUT MORE:

London 2012 Olympic Games website

<http://www.london2012.com>

Olympic Games website

<http://www.olympic.org>

The Race for the 2012 Olympics

Mike Lee, Virgin Books (2006).

CREDITS

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This resource was produced as part of the [2012 Learning Legacies Project](#) managed by the HEA Hospitality, Leisure, Sport and Tourism Subject Centre at Oxford Brookes University and was released as an Open Educational Resource. The project was funded by HEFCE and part of the JISC/HE Academy UKOER programme. Except where otherwise noted above and below, this work is released under a [Creative Commons Attribution only licence](#).



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