

Archives of the Olympic Games. The Case of Barcelona '92

Joaquim Borràs

Montserrat Beltran

Barcelona Municipal Archives

The Barcelona Municipal Archives houses a document collection of great wealth and historical relevance for sports. Besides the Olympics collection, the archive conserves documentation resulting from the policies and competencies that the city develops in the area of sports activities and competitive, educational and community events; fostering cohesion of neighbourhoods and the population through sport.

Today, however, we will be focusing on the documents brought to the Municipal Archives as a result of the candidature and hosting of the 1992 Olympic Games, which for the city of Barcelona meant not only the welcoming this big sporting event, but it was also the catalyst for a decade of urban transformation, the axis of modernisation of the city and of the international cultural and touristic projection.

Additionally, there is an essential part of the audiovisual documentation from the Barcelona Olympic Games that was deposited and is being held at the Photographic Archives of Barcelona, a true graphic chronology that reflects the Olympics success.

Previous action

In the first edition of the Management Plan by the COOB'92 (Barcelona '92 Olympic Games Organising Committee), in April 1988, there was a reference to the "Archive and Document Resources" project, which put together the basic suggestions from the Barcelona Municipal Archives regarding the handling of documents at the different administrative sections and offices, their conservation and later diffusion as a historical testimony of the Games. With this objective, the COOB Documentation Service was created, consisting of two parts: one, a documentation centre, and the other, an archive which had to provide support and direction to the departments regarding the creation, classification and organisation of the documents. Unfortunately, this project was not able to be completed in its entirety due to the lack of human resources in the department. Even so, the basic tools needed to classify the documents and to provide overall directions were created, making it possible to compile the collection and transfer it later.

Funds deposit process

On April 1, 1993, the Founding Charter of the Barcelona Olympic Foundation was signed. Among other things, this document established that the said Foundation is the owner of the document collection generated by the COOB'92, and that it would be deposited at the Barcelona City Hall as a permanent contribution.

This condition was put into practice with the transfer of a large part of the documents to the Municipal Contemporary Archives (at that time, the Municipal Administrative Archives), while another part remained at the Barcelona Olympic Foundation until March 5, 2007, when the initial agreement was ratified with the definitive transfer of the conserved documentation from the COOB'92, from the creation of the office for promoting the candidature of the city until the dissolution of the Committee. Still now, however, part of the fixed and mobile image documentation remains at the Olympic Museum, pending being digitalised and transferred to the Photographic Archives of Barcelona.

With regard to the HOLSA Funds, the first agreement was signed on April 22, 1992, between the Barcelona City Council and HOLSA for the cataloguing, archiving and subsequent transfer of the documentation generated by the company and its subsidiaries, once the Olympic Games of 1992 concluded. By virtue of this first agreement, on May 3, 1995, an agreement was signed between Barcelona Holding Olímpic, SA, and the Barcelona City Council for the definitive transfer of the documents generated and received as a result of the involvement of this company and its subsidiaries in the urban transformation and construction of Olympic facilities and venues. The document collection also includes the graphic and audiovisual exposition materials of these businesses. The documents deposited in the Barcelona Municipal Archive were produced by HOLSA and the businesses it represented: Anella Olímpica de Montjuïc, SA (AOMSA), Institut Municipal de Promoció Urbanística, SA (IMPUSA), and Vila Olímpica, SA (VOSA). These documents were soon made open to the public and scholars.

Basic data about the Funds

A) Barcelona '92 Olympic Games Organising Committee, SA (COOB'92)

Active dates: 1981-1993

Custody and volume:

- Municipal Contemporary Archives. Administrative and management documentation: 541.80 linear meters of documents.
- Photographic Archives of Barcelona. Photographic and audiovisual documents: 1,300 photographs.



Archival history

In 1993, the documentation generated by the Barcelona '92 Olympic Games Organising Committee (COOB'92), from 1981-1993, was deposited at the Municipal Contemporary Archives (AMAB). This agreement was ratified on March 5, 2007, with the definitive transfer of all the documentation produced by the COOB'92, from the creation of the office for promoting the candidature of the city through the dissolution of the Committee. Part of the photographic documentation of the COOB'92 remains at the Olympic Museum, pending being digitalised and transferred to the Photographic Archives of Barcelona.

Summary of contents

Documentation resulting from the administrative management and activity of the Barcelona '92 Olympic Games Organising Committee and the different departments in which it was structurally organised to carry out the competencies and functions entrusted to it.

The archives are structured in sections that reflect the internal organisation (Administration and Finances, Accommodations, Olympic Family Support Office, Chief Executive, Construction, Commercial, General Management of Sports, General Management of Operations, General Management of Resources, Team'92, Special Projects, Chief Executive Staff (contracts and legal advice), Image and Communication, Infrastructures, Information Technology, Sports Logistics, Logistics, Food, Organisation of Competitions, Olympic Office, News Operations, Olympic Radio/Television '92, Paralympics, Planning and Control, Human Resources, External Relations, Security, Telecommunications, Operational Units, Volunteers and Villages).

The photographic documentation conserved in the archive is centred on the actions of the Olympics volunteers.

Production entity

The Barcelona Olympic Games Organising Committee of 1992, from the creation of the office for promoting the candidature of the city through the dissolution of the Committee once the Games concluded.

B) Holding Olímpic, SA (HOLSA)

Active dates: 1985-1993

Custody and volume:

- Municipal Contemporary Archives. Administrative documentation and project management: textual and cartographic documents, in total 666 linear meters and 49 maps.
- Photographic Archives of Barcelona. Photographic and audiovisual documents:
AOMSA: 265 photographs
IMPUSA: 25,081 photographs
VOSA: 63,838 photographs
and a collection of 91 edited videos.



The old collectors exit, 1987. (Author: COLITA. AFB.)

Archival history

By virtue of the first agreement signed on April 22, 1992 between the Barcelona City Council and HOLSA for the cataloguing, archiving and subsequent transfer of the documentation generated by the subsidiaries of HOLSA once the Olympic Games of 1992 concluded. On May 3, 1995 the documents were transferred to the Barcelona Municipal Archives (definitive transfer of the documentation and the graphic and audiovisual exposition materials of the businesses).

The documentation deposited in the Barcelona Municipal Archive was that produced by HOLSA and the businesses it represented: Anella Olímpica de Montjuïc, SA (AOMSA), Institut Municipal de Promoció Urbanística, SA (IMPUSA), and Vila Olímpica, SA (VOSA).

Summary of contents

Documentation produced resulting from the construction of the majority of urban infrastructures, buildings and sporting facilities created for the 1992 Olympic Games, including those managed by HOLSA as well as the businesses AOMSA, IMPUSA and VOSA.

Production entity

HOLSA. In May 1989, the State Administration and the Barcelona City Council agreed to establish Barcelona Holding Olímpic, SA (HOLSA), as a collaborative tool for promoting the urban transformation projects of Barcelona. In September 1989, IMPU Olympic Games 92 was changed to a public limited company under the name of Institut Municipal de Promoció Urbanística, SA (IMPUSA), for the purpose of allowing the Barcelona City Council to contribute its shares to HOLSA together with those of AOMSA and VOSA.

The purpose of IMPUSA was basically to manage urbanization projects located in the Olympic areas of Barcelona (Montjuïc, Vall d'Hebron, Diagonal and Poblenou), Ronda de Dalt, Ronda del Litoral, Ronda del Mig and its connections to the urban road network, the Meridiana-Glòries axis, its cultural facilities and the connection of Aragó-Guipúscoa and Avinguda Prim.

The Anella Olímpica de Montjuïc, SA (AOMSA), was established on July 10, 1985 with the purpose of executing and managing the works in the Olympic Ring of the city of Barcelona, which was focused on the construction of the major part of the sports facilities located there. In 1989 it became a part of Holding Olímpic (HOLSA), and it managed the construction of the new Olympic Stadium, the Palau Sant Jordi sporting arena, the headquarters of the National Institute of Physical Education of Catalonia (INEFC), the municipal baseball field, the Bernat Picornell swimming pools, the aeromodelling tracks, the Pau Negre hockey stadium, the warm-up running track, the general urbanisation of the Olympic Ring and Migdia Park.

Vila Olímpica, SA (VOSA), was established on December 19, 1986 and its purpose was not only to build the residential areas for the athletes, but also to help the city restore an area previously occupied by industrial plants and warehouses that prevented access to the sea. It joined Holding Olímpic in October 1986.

C) Olimpíada Cultural, SA (OCSA)

Active dates: 1988-1992

Custody and volume:

- Municipal Contemporary Archives. Administrative and management documentation: 44.20 linear meters.
- Photographic Archives of Barcelona. Photographic and audiovisual documents. 6,261 photographs.



Archival history

The photographic documentation was transferred to the Photographic Archives in 1994 from the Technical Office of Images at Barcelona City Hall, who had already begun archiving it, while the textual and administrative documentation was deposited at the Municipal Contemporary Archives, together with the material from the COOB'92, in 1993, and the rest, in 2007 (4 linear meters), originally from the Barcelona Olympic Foundation.

Summary of contents

Documentation resulting from the administrative management and activity of the Cultural Olympiad, whose purpose was to promote projects and initiatives designed to appreciate the historical and artistic heritage of the city, promote cultural creativity and its international projection.

The material is structured by sections: Chief Executive; General Management (Planning and Control, External Relations, Information and News); Organisation and Management (Administration and Finance, Logistics, Commercial); Programming (Expositions and Historical and Artistic Heritage, Music and Performing Arts, Audiovisual Arts, Classes and Participation, Awards and Vila Olímpica.)

It also contains other cultural activities occurring between 1989 and 1992 related to the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games.

Production entity

Olimpíada Cultural, SA, was the company in charge of carrying out all the artistic and cultural activities in Barcelona between the Cultural Portico, in 1988, and the 1992 Olympic Games. It organised the Olympic Arts Festival, with expositions and the International Awards of Barcelona.

Balance

It is clear that depositing these archives into the Barcelona Municipal Archives has been a benefit for historical sports archiving, which lacks precedent in other Olympic cities until then. In summary, we can conclude:

- a) Comprehensive archiving treatment that included:
 - Depositing and safekeeping the documental sources of the Olympic Games that changed the city.
 - Laying the foundations for the preservation and integrity of the documents from the beginning.
 - Applying the evaluation and documentary access (technical and legal process guaranteed from the beginning): in the Evaluation Access Commission meeting at Barcelona City Hall, on May 26, 2010, it was decided to order the elimination of documents corresponding to four series of the Administration and Finance section of the COOB'92, SA, fund.
- b) Integrating archives and institutional and personal collections:
 - Previously: collections from the Universal Exposition of 1888 and the International Exposition of 1929.
 - Precedent for other events: World Police and Fire Games 2013, Forum of Cultures 2004, the Rambla Bombing (2017), etc.
- c) Establishing good practices and lessons learned: the archive must always be present, advancing towards the events.

Conclusions

It is imperative that the IOC takes resolutions on the need to include in the Olympic Charter the basic and strategic points to follow in this field, and also, demand that the Master Plan for the Execution and Management of the Olympic Games includes a specific project that provides a department of human and economic resources to manage the documentation produced and received during the phases of planning, executing and concluding the Games. The resources need to be correctly proportioned and the personnel (archivists) must have the necessary technical profile.

The archival organisation of the documents that these international events generate must be allowed, from the start, to fully manage and conserve documents with not only administrative and legal value, but also historic value, by granting access agreements. This way, when the institution organising the Games adjourns and shuts down, it must be possible to transfer the custody of those documents needing long-term conservation to a permanent archive belonging to the Public Administration, and to eliminate the remaining documents that do not carry any value.

The computer software to support the processing and management of the Games must have the ability to recover information and electronic documents in any standard system and thus avoid the loss of information and documents due to an incompatibility of operating systems.

If the necessary resources for this archiving project are not previously agreed upon between the institutions that need to support the initiative, it will be difficult for the local authorities or public archives in charge of safeguarding the documents, once the Olympic organisation is shut down, to assume the responsibility and treatment of these records.