

Olympics

# Rio organizers get grilled by IOC

By **STEPHEN WADE**  
Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — With the Rio de Janeiro Olympics set to open, worried IOC members grilled top organizing officials about traffic jams, water pollution, security, and the absence of signage that gives the games its own distinct look.

International Olympic President Thomas Bach also turned up the pressure Wednesday by talking straight to organizing committee president Carlos Nuzman and CEO Sidney Levy, who tried to soothe almost 100 IOC members.

"It's delivery time," Bach said. "Here we go now. It really starts. We are very confident we will celebrate great games here in Rio and the world will be surprised to see what will happen here."

Bach also cautioned: "All praise is premature now. ... It's too early to celebrate."

Prince Albert of Monaco asked about Rio's severe water pollution, which soils Olympic venues for sailing, rowing, canoeing, triathlon and open-water swimming. Rio treats about half of its raw sewage, dumping the rest into the waters surrounding the area of 12 million people.

"The media has said a lot about the preparations of these games, and they say a lot about the levels of pollution," Albert said. "How worried should we be?"

Rio spokesman Mario Andrada repeated assurances that bacterial pollution levels fall within World Health Organization guidelines. However, organizers have been criticized for the astronomical viral levels in the waters, and for not testing for this kind of pollution.

Then there's surface debris. "We do have a few problems



**Brazilian garbage collector and dancer Renato Sorriso, left, passes the Olympic flame to Brazilian actress Carla Camurati, on its way for the opening ceremony of Rio's 2016 Summer Olympics, in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Wednesday, Aug. 3, 2016.**

AP Photo/Felipe Dana

with the floating garbage," Andrada acknowledged, explaining plans to use a dozen garbage collection boats in the sailing venue. Rio is also using barricades to block the flow of garbage from streams, and helicopters to spot garbage flows.

Swiss IOC member Denis Oswald asked about traffic jams in the run-up to the games, which open Friday.

"Those who've had the opportunity to get to some of the venues have had lots of difficulties," Oswald said.

Rio official Leo Grynner said there were "some constraints" getting the Olympic lane system to work. The lanes are to help get athletes and officials around town quickly. He said city officials were making changes.

"They are making the flow quicker and making sure all the athletes get to training and competition on time," Grynner said.

Rio commercial officer Renato Ciuchini was asked why there was so little signage — signs that give the games its distinct look and help direct fans to venues. It was suggested the number installed only reached 15 percent.

"We are very confident the supplier will now install everything, but I believe a few will be installed a bit late," Ciuchini said. IOC officials said Christophe Dubi, the Olympic Games executive director, was holding an emergency meeting with the supplier.

IOC member Alex Gilady asked Levy about his three largest worries. Levy listed transportation, security — despite a force of 85,000 police and soldiers — and finances.

He said transportation was going well between the two largest venue clusters — the Olympic Park and the northern cluster of Deodoro. He said that

comprised 75 percent of the trips. The problem area was in urban Rio around Copacabana Beach and the Rodrigo de Freitas lagoon where rowing takes place.

"It's a real challenge," Levy said.

He also acknowledged the operating budget is under stress. That is a budget of 7.4 billion reais (\$2.3 billion) for operating the games themselves, but not for building venues and roads.

Rio organizers have been getting cash advances from the IOC but still maintain their budget is balanced. Several reports say the IOC recently turned down a \$70 million loan to Rio.

Away from the venues, Brazil is in its deepest recession since the 1930s. Separately, President Dilma Rousseff has been replaced by interim president Michel Temer as she awaits an impeachment trial in the federal senate.

# Baseball, softball to return for 2020 games

By **STEPHEN WILSON**  
Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Olympic leaders approved the addition of five sports to the program of the 2020 Tokyo Olympics on Wednesday, including the return of baseball-softball and the introduction of youth-oriented events such as skateboarding and surfing.

The International Olympic Committee voted to accept the five-sport package, which also includes karate and sport climbing.

The five, which were proposed for inclusion last year by Tokyo organizers, were approved unanimously by the IOC members.

Under new IOC rules, local organizers can propose the inclusion of at least one additional sport for their games. Wednesday's approval was for the Tokyo Games only.

The new sports will add 18 events and 474 athletes to the program. The Tokyo Games will now feature 33 sports and about 11,000 athletes, compared to the usual number of 28 sports and 10,500 athletes.

The IOC said the package presents a mix of the traditional and youth-focused sports.

"This will help make the games one of the most innovative games in our history," IOC vice president John Coates said.

While baseball and softball — both highly popular in Japan — will be returning after a 16-year absence, the

other sports will be making their Olympic debuts.

Baseball and softball have been off the Olympic program since the 2008 Beijing Games. The two were rejected in separate bids to return for the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, so they combined forces to put forward a single bid for inclusion in Tokyo.

Baseball was a full part of the Olympic program from 1992 to 2008, with softball joining in 1996. The IOC voted them both out in 2005.

Baseball will have a six-team tournament in Tokyo, short of the eight-team format sought by officials from the sport's international federation. Women's softball will also have six teams.

Skateboarding will have street and park events, and feature 80 athletes — 40 men and 40 women. In climbing, 40 competitors will take part in the disciplines of speed, bouldering and lead (also known as sport). Karate will have 80 athletes competing in men's and women's Kumite and Kata events, while surfing will have two shortboard events for 40 competitors.

Organizers hope skateboarding will catch on with worldwide viewers as halfpipe in snowboarding did in the Winter Olympics.

"There are more participants in skateboarding than most sports so I feel like they (the Olympics) need our credibility and they need our excitement level in their Summer Games," skateboarding icon Tony Hawk said recently.

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