



The BC/Yukon Blazon

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OLYMPICS SPECIAL ISSUE

By Carl Larsen



History, Emblems and the Vancouver 2010 Games

This issue was inspired by the incredible success of the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympics earlier this year, and the enthusiasm, patriotism, energy and colour witnessed on the streets of Vancouver and Whistler and at the various sporting events.

The articles touch on some of the history and background of the modern Olympics, but its main focus is on the many emblems related to the Olympics since 1896 including the Vancouver 2010 Games. There is a mixture of articles on many aspects of the Olympics, interesting emblems, medal designs, logos, both good and bad, and here and there, are a few heraldic connections. I hope you will enjoy this special single topic issue.

The International Olympic Committee

Let's begin with the people who own the Games, or at least the Olympic brand. The IOC is a corporation based in Lausanne, Switzerland that was created in 1894 by Baron Pierre de Coubertin and Demetrios Vikelas, a Greek who became the first President of the IOC. Its membership now consists of 205 National Olympic Committees representing the countries and territories of the world. The purpose of the IOC is to organize the modern Olympic Games to be held in Summer and Winter, every four years. Until 1992, both the Summer and Winter Olympics were held in the same year but in different cities. After 1992 the IOC shifted the Winter Olympics to the even years between Summer Games, to help space the planning of the two events two years apart.

The Canadian Olympic Committee, (COC), was recognized by the IOC in 1907 and is responsible for all aspects of our involvement in the Olympic Movement, including selecting and supporting Canadian cities in bids to host the Games.



The Olympic Rings

The first use of the Olympic Rings was on a flag at the 1920 Games in Antwerp. Baron de Coubertin described this universal symbol of the Games in 1912 in "Revue Olympique" as... "five intertwined rings in different colours blue, yellow, black, green, and red, placed on the white field of the paper". In heraldic terms they could be blazoned "Argent three annuli in fess Azure Sable and Gules interlaced in base by two annuli Or and Vert".



As to the symbolism of the Rings, de Coubertin commented that the number of rings was intended to represent the five inhabited continents, America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia, and the colours with the white background were chosen from the colours appearing on all the national flags of the world at the time. He viewed North and South America as one continent and excluded Antarctica as it was uninhabited.

De Coubertin chose wisely. A survey in 2001 found the Olympic rings to be the most recognized symbol in the world and it is clearly the most important element in the Olympic brand along with the torch and the words "Olympic" and "Olympiad".

Baron de Coubertin was armigerous and inherited his arms from an ancestor who had also received the French Order of St. Michael. His arms are blazoned Azure nine shells of St. Michael Or.

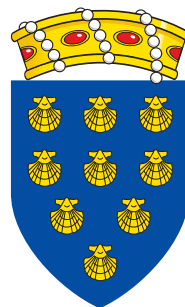


Illustration: A. Ailo

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Grant of Arms Bearing Olympic Rings

Only one coat of arms is known to include the Olympic rings, and that was granted to the late Juan Antonio Samaranch y Torelló, President of the International Olympic Committee from 1980-2001. King Juan Carlos I honoured the IOC president in 1991 with the title of 1st Marquis of Samaranch, Grandee of Spain, for his service to the country, including bringing the 1992 Olympics to Barcelona. This is the one and only occasion that the IOC has ever sanctioned the inclusion of the Olympic emblem on a coat of arms.

The Byzantine cupola in the first quarter is an allusion to St. Basil Cathedral in Moscow, a reminder of the Marquis of

Samaranch's service as Spanish ambassador to the Soviet Union, 1977-1980. The second quarter, "barry wavy argent and azure", represents the Mediterranean Sea where his ancestral roots go back many generations; the third quarter displays the arms of Barcelona, his birthplace.



Emblems of the Games

There have been 26 Summer and 21 Winter Games held since the first modern Olympics in Athens in 1896. Each has been represented by its own distinctive emblem which must incorporate the Olympic rings, the year, and a logo and wordmark selected by the host country's Olympic Committee. These emblems may be used on promotional materials by sponsors of the Olympics and must appear on the uniforms of every competitor at the Games.

Following are the eight emblems of the Winter Games from 1988 to 2010 and the Montreal Summer Games of 1976 with the symbolism of each. These logos each had a lifespan of six years from the acceptance of the winning bid to the closing of the Games.

The **Vancouver 2010** Olympic Winter Games emblem is a contemporary interpretation of the Inukshuk which is the Inuktitut word for friend. This is the symbol of Canada's Games, the friend who will help us greet the world in 2010.



The **Torino 2006** emblem is drawn in ice crystals in white and blue, signifying the snow and the sky. Its crystal web portrays as well the web of new technologies and the Olympic spirit of community. It further represents "La Mole Antonelliana", the tallest building in Torino which has become a recognized landmark of the city.



The **Salt Lake City 2002** emblem combines a snow crystal, and a sun rising over a mountain. The colors; yellow, orange and blue; represent the varied Utah landscape.



The **Nagano 1998** emblem suggests a flower, with each petal representing an athlete practicing a different winter sport. It can also be seen as a snowflake and was referred to as the "Snowflower".



The **Lillehammer '94** emblem incorporates a stylized aurora borealis with snow crystals.



The **Albertville '92** emblem suggests the Olympic flame in the colours of the département de la Savoie in France, the stripes representing the national colours.

Arms of Savoie



The **Calgary '88** emblem is a stylized, pentagon-shaped, snowflake and maple leaf comprised of five large and five small "Cs" to symbolize both Canada and Calgary.

Black & White Calgary "arms" adopted in 1902 after a local contest. Arms were coloured in 1984



The **Montreal 1976** Summer Olympics were the only ones ever held in Canada. The central emblem consists of the Olympic Rings mounted on an Olympic podium, the centre of which is the athletes' track, the focal point of the Summer Games. It can also be viewed as a graphic interpretation of the letter "M" which stands for Montreal. The red and white colours are likely derived from the Saint George's Cross on the civic coat of arms.



Assumed arms of Montreal

Heraldic Themed Olympic Medals

1912 Stockholm Summer Olympics - Winner



Obverse: Two female figures crowning a young victor in the Olympic Games with a laurel wreath.

Reverse: A herald proclaiming the Olympic games, holding a trumpet and standing in front of a bust of Pehr Henrik Ling, the founder of the Swedish system of gymnastics. Note the three crowns of Sweden's Lesser Coat of Arms on his tabard.

Winner & Participation Medals

There are two types of medals which may be given to Olympic athletes, Winner Medals and Participation Medals. Winner Medals are the gold, silver, bronze medals presented to all winners of Olympic events during the playing of the gold winners' national anthems. Participation Medals are souvenir medals given to all accredited athletes who competed in events, as well as to officials attending the Games.

There have been some very well designed medals in both categories since 1896, but only five include heraldry; the Winner

Medals for the 1912 Stockholm Summer Olympics, and the Participation Medals for the Summer Olympic Games of 1928 in Amsterdam, Winter 1936 in Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany, Summer 1956 in Melbourne, and 1964 and 1976 in Innsbruck. The Innsbruck medals were identical except for the date.



1928 Amsterdam Summer Olympics - Participation



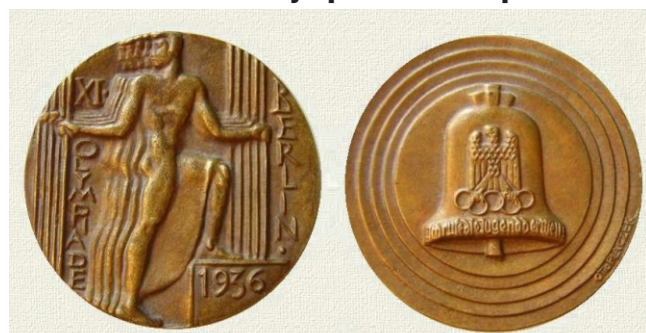
Obverse:

Nude male and female athlete on podium holding torch over Olympic flame.

Reverse:

Nike over Marathon Tower, Arms of Amsterdam between two hemispheres above date.

1936 Berlin Summer Olympics - Participation



Obverse:

Five athletes, representing the five continents, pulling the ropes of the Olympic Bell.

Reverse:

Olympic Bell embossed with traditional German Eagle holding Olympic rings within five concentric circles.

1956 Melbourne Summer Olympics - Participation



Obverse:

Olympic motto within circle of athletes marching in pairs.

Reverse:

Olympic rings over Melbourne coat of arms.

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1964 & 1976 Innsbruck Winter Olympics - Participation



Obverse: Innsbruck city view, Austrian Alps in background.

Reverse: Olympic emblem above Innsbruck coat of arms (Blazon: Gules a two tower bridge Argent).



XXI Winter Olympic Games Vancouver 2010



There were 82 countries participating in 86 events at the 2010 Winter Games which were neatly divided between those on snow and those on ice. The snow sports consist of **Skiing** (downhill, cross-country, jumping and freestyle) and **Snowboarding**, introduced at the 1998 Nagano Winter Games. The ice sports include **Curling**, **Sledding** (bobsled, luge and skeleton), **Skating** (speed, figure and ice dancing), and **Ice Hockey**. Canada won three medals in Skiing, three in Snowboarding, two Curling, three Sledding, thirteen Skating and two in Hockey. Overall we finished with 14 gold medals, 7 silver and 5 bronze, for a total medal count of 26, our best performance ever.

Our athletes set an Olympic record for the most gold medals won by any country at a Winter Olympics, breaking the record of 13 set by the Soviet Union in Innsbruck in 1976 and tied by Norway in Salt Lake City in 2002. The Canadian press immodestly proclaimed that, with this win, "Canada owned the podium", and our Olympic athletes became national heroes. There is no official winner of the Olympic Games; the IOC simply publishes the medal results. However, Europeans consider the winner to be the country with the most gold medals whereas in North America it is accepted that the country with the most medals overall is the winner. Whether Canada was first or third really doesn't matter, our athletes excelled, and it was an unforgettable event for both Canadians and visitors. ▼

Olympic Hockey - Canada's Passion

The Puck Stops Here

Of all the winter sports, it is hockey that mostly captures the attention of Canadians. Prime Minister Stephen Harper, an avid hockey fan, summed up the way Canadians feel about hockey when he congratulated Canada's 2010 Women's Hockey Team Captain, Hayley Wickenheiser on the team's gold medal win in the final game against the U.S., and said ".....every medal is great at the Olympics, but we know which medals Canada is passionate about". Not to devalue in any way the other gold medals Canada won at the Winter Games, but some fans were heard saying they would trade them all for Hockey Gold.

The last event of the 2010 Winter Olympics was the Men's Gold Medal Final Game between Canada and the U.S. It was the big event that Canadians were waiting for. The Olympic Broadcast Media Consortium reported that 22 million people or two thirds of the Canadian population were watching when Sidney Crosby scored that overtime goal, winning gold for Canada. It was the most-watched television broadcast in Canadian history! This, for most Canadians, was the perfect ending to the Winter Games and signaled the start of celebrations across the country.



Heraldry Dominates Olympic Hockey Emblems

Hockey puts all other Winter Olympic sports to shame as competing teams proudly display their coats of arms on their uniforms. The jerseys on the adjoining page demonstrate the commitment of most hockey nations to use their coats of arms to identify their national teams. Of the ten European teams competing, only Norway opted for "Argent a bend 'Norge' Gules" which was a poor choice compared to "gules a lion rampant Or, crowned and bearing an axe with blade Argent", one of the most ancient arms in Europe. Even Belarus did its best, using their Soviet style emblem, complete with red star. Many in Belarus would like to revert to their traditional arms but they first need to solve the problem of differencing it from the arms of Lithuania, of which Belarus was once the eastern part.

Team Canada opted for a new maple leaf design when the Canadian Olympic Committee would not exempt them, as it had in the past, from uniform regulations forbidding the use of logos worn at other international events. This meant they could not use their familiar hockey player/maple leaf emblem on their jerseys.

The Team USA logo was disallowed for the same reasons and the team used a wordmark and added a star on each shoulder of their jerseys.



Con't Page 5 - Jerseys

Con't from Page 4 - Olympic Hockey

Jerseys of the Twelve Competing Teams



Gold Medal - Canada



Silver Medal - USA



Bronze Medal - Finland



See page 4 for preferred, but disallowed emblems for Canadian and US jerseys



4th Slovakia



5th Sweden



6th Russia



7th Czech Republic



8th Switzerland



9th Belarus

Belarus still uses the Soviet era emblem



10th Norway

Oddly, Norway chose not to use their coat of arms



11th Germany



12th Latvia



Olympic Red Mittens Most Popular Souvenir

At the 2010 Winter Olympics the maple leaf was everywhere and was definitely the dominant emblem. All our athletes wore it somewhere on their clothing or uniforms, as did thousands of spectators crowding the streets of Vancouver and Whistler. The single most popular “must have” souvenir of the Games was the coveted Hudson’s Bay Company’s red mittens, with over 3.5 million pairs sold before and during the games. It was the perfect souvenir with both the maple leaf and the Olympic rings, in the national colours, and lightweight to pack for the trip home. In October, HBC stores began carrying newly designed red mittens with white maple leaves which will undoubtedly find their way into Christmas stockings across the country. ♥



Security at the 2010 Games

To ensure public safety during the Winter Games, the Integrated Security Unit was formed to augment local police forces. With over 6,000 RCMP and municipal police officers participating, this was largest security operation in Canadian history, involving about 10% of the law enforcement population in the country. They did an outstanding job and were a friendly, visible presence on the streets. This also provided us with a unique opportunity to see police officers from every part of Canada, wearing their respective uniforms, badges and shoulder flashes, working together to make the Olympics safe. Displayed are just a few of the emblems of the 118 participating police departments. I discovered they were quite happy to provide their spare shoulder flashes as souvenirs to those who asked. ♥



Photos: C. Larsen

Sponsors' Emblems

In any sampling of Olympic emblems we need to take a look at the many ways Sponsors have used logos and trademarks to show the public their support of the Olympic Games.

It has been reported that the revenue from the worldwide broadcast rights for the 2010 Winter Games exceeded \$1 billion, with almost as much being earned from sponsorship and advertising fees, a significant contribution to the Winter Games operating budget.

VISA has been the exclusive card and the official payment system of the Olympics since 1986. Coca-Cola has been the Official Non-alcoholic Beverage Sponsor and part of Olympics since 1928. Coca-Cola and VISA are Worldwide Sponsors and both have renewed their IOC contracts to 2020.



Omega -
Official Timekeepers
of the Olympic Games

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Official Sponsor
since 1976



Official Jewellery Supplier



Official Banking Partner



Canada Post was
the Official Supplier
of postage stamps
and produced
several sets with
Olympic themes.



Protecting the Olympic Brand IOC Remains Constantly Vigilant



If you think about it, all the IOC has to offer is the Olympic Brand, as they have no facilities in which to hold the Games, or money to finance them. The host cities have the facilities to hold the Games but without the Olympic brand, they have little appeal to the nations of the world to send their athletes. Corporate sponsors are willing to pay handsomely to connect themselves to the world's best known and most prestigious brand. It's a perfect three-way partnership which grows ever more successful with each Olympics. It brings into focus the power of the rings, the torch, even the words "Olympics" and "Olympiad", to make the Games possible. No wonder the IOC is so diligent in protecting their brand.

Following are some examples of the challenges the IOC faces to ensure that their sponsors derive maximum benefit from their association with the Games and not those who would take advantage of the opportunity without contributing to the event.

Lululemon Athletica

Lululemon Athletica is a dynamic, fast growing company, founded in 1998 and headquartered in Vancouver. They have grown to over 100 stores across Canada, the US, Australia and Hong Kong and describe their business as "making and selling athletic apparel for yoga, running, dancing, and most other sweaty pursuits". Part of the company mantra is "Dance Sing Floss Travel". They design their range of clothing "in house" and are confident about their future.

They soon attracted the attention of VANOC (the Vancouver Organizing Committee) when they tagged the 2010 edition of their new winter clothing line, "Cool Sporting Event That Takes Place in British Columbia Between 2009 and 2011". It didn't take VANOC long to figure out what "cool sporting event" the tag might be referring to, and start applying the terms "ambush



marketing" and "rogue advertising" to the company's actions. VANOC's commercial rights manager commented, "We expected better sportsmanship from a local Canadian company than to produce a clothing line that attempts to profit from the Games but doesn't support them or the success of the Canadian Olympic team."

When I visited the store to see for myself what was going on, I saw smiling customer's happily lining up at the cash registers, holding their purchases of toques, hoodies, t-shirts and mittens, apparently unconcerned about Lululemon cashing in on the Olympics by designing a marketing campaign that was based on the Games, but without payment of any sponsorship fees. A store representative commented that it was never their intention to have their marketing strategy viewed that way. He said, "We did our homework and we are very confident that we are operating within the letter of the law". He did not comment on the issue of corporate ethics or good corporate citizenship, but did say that Lululemon had bid to be the official outfitter of Canada's Olympic team, but had lost to the Hudson's Bay Company. The Bay had won the contract for supplying the Canadian team with clothing and luggage for the 2006 Olympic Games in Torino as well as 2008 Beijing, 2010 Vancouver and 2012 in London. He said Lululemon would like to bid again in the future if they got the opportunity! I wonder what the chances of that might be.

Olympia Restaurant

The Olympia Restaurant is a small family owned business, located in Vancouver's West End, and they have been serving Greek food and pizza at that location for over 20 years. In 2004, six years before the 2010 Winter Olympics were scheduled to begin, VANOC discovered that the restaurant displayed the Olympic rings and torch as part of their signage, and that was a problem because only official sponsors who have paid for that right are allowed to use Olympic emblems. The Olympia's owners were shocked and dismayed when VANOC asked them to remove the rings and torch from the signage over the restaurant entrance, as well as from the windows, menus, napkins and pizza boxes.



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Con't from Page 7 - Protecting the Olympic Brand

In discussions with the restaurant, I was told the owners refused to comply, pointing out they had been using the emblems for two decades and felt they had a right to continue to do so, feeling "there must be a grandfather clause, or something to protect us".

A letter was received from VANOC's lawyers advising them that if they did not comply, a court order could be obtained and they could face heavy penalties or even time in jail for non-compliance; in addition the business could be shut down. The owners were steadfast in refusing to remove the emblems and circulated a petition throughout the neighbourhood and sent it to VANOC. Soon the media got involved and the issue became quite high profile.

That seemed to be a turning point as the owners never heard from VANOC again, but they did say that they were uneasy right up to the time the Games started as they were unsure what additional steps VANOC might take. There is little doubt the courts would have had to respect the IOC's rights over the emblems and the business would have had to remove their signage. The issue had a happy ending for all concerned. VANOC had made their point in the community and the business was allowed to remain open with Olympic emblems over the door and

on their menus, napkin and pizza boxes. No doubt the other sponsors saw that this was not a case of "ambush marketing" and were satisfied with the outcome. I was told there was a modest increase in business during the Olympics!

The Legend of the Five Rings

The Legend of the Five Rings is a role playing game that originally used five interlocking rings as a game logo.



With the Summer Olympics coming to Atlanta in 1996, The United States Olympic Committee sued Wizards of the Coast, an investors group who owned the game. The problem was that the game used five interlocking rings as a game logo, and under the Amateur Sports Act of 1978 and the Trademark Counterfeiting Act of 1984, all

Olympic symbols were protected. The court ruled in favour of the USOC recognizing their rights to any symbol consisting of five interlocking rings. The "Wizards" had to find a new logo, which they did, and it would seem that this did not harm the value of the game which they later sold at a substantial profit. ♥



The Olympics - Looking to the Future

The next two Olympic Games are works in progress at the present time. Committees have been formed in England and Russia, planning is well advanced, construction work is in progress and the 2012 and 2014 Games are on their way to becoming a reality. Their emblems are starting to be seen in the host cities as the cycle continues.

2012 London Summer Games

"The jagged emblem, based on the date 2012, comes in a series of shades of pink, blue, green and orange and will evolve in the run-up to the Games. It shows the numbers 2012 in a design aiming to appeal to today's Internet generation. It is an invitation to take part and be involved."



2014 Sochi, Russia Winter Games

"Sochi2014.ru" is the only Olympic emblem to include a web address. The mirror of "Sochi" and "2014" 'reflects' that Sochi is a meeting point between sea and mountains. As the main component of the Sochi 2014 emblem, the Olympic rings sit large and in color to show that this is a symbol of progress for the Olympic Movement."



3034 Earth Olympic Games

As to how the Olympics might evolve in the future, an episode of "Futurama" suggests an interesting possibility. This award winning, animated, science fiction sitcom, produced an episode based on the "Earth 3034 Olympic Games" and was cheeky enough to depict seven interlinked coloured rings representing the planets of the "Interstellar Olympics Federation". It's certain that no one from the U.S. Olympic Committee was watching or there might have been serious repercussions, but it seems the show missed their radar screen.



Although there won't be an "Interstellar Olympic Federation" any time soon, we do know that the Olympics is firmly established on this planet, and looks to be around for some time to come. Can anyone doubt that humans, being the highly competitive creatures that we are, will continue to send their best athletes to compete in the ultimate international forum for the honour of their country? New emblems will be created, flags will fly, medals with new designs will be awarded, and the crowds will cheer, and perhaps someday, the Olympic flag will even fly on other planets. ♥

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