



The Sydney Olympics under the double symbol of the struggle for the rights of the Aboriginal people and modernity respectful of the environment

The first Games of the 21st century are held in 2000 in Sydney, Australia, awarded by the IOC in 1994. According to a study by the international consulting firm KPMG Peat Marwick, the organisation of the Games was expected to create 156,000 jobs in the 14 years of preparation and inject A\$7.3 billion into the economy. A boom for Australia that has several advantages- very rich natural resources and geographically close to the region of the world which at the time experienced the fastest expansion- South East Asia.

According to IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch, "These Games have been the most successful in modern Olympic history." They are also the last of his presidency. Australia was then a country whose two-thirds of exports consisted of agricultural and mining products. Low world prices and protectionist policies have led to an uninterrupted decline in living standards. The Sydney Olympics changed the image of Australia that opened to the rest of the world, boosting tourism.

For a French public, the Games are associated with the defection of their French athletics champion, Marie Jo Perec, who cracks under considerable media pressure. The media organized a remote duel between her and the Australian champion, Cathy Freeman, of Aboriginal descent, who carried the flame at the grandiose opening ceremony, which will obtain a sparkling victory in the 400 m final, where the public of the stadium, Everything acquired for its cause, blazes for its heroine..

The emblem of the Australian Olympics is an athlete, with typical Australian shapes and colors. The boomerangs, the sun and the rocks, the colors of Sydney Harbour, the beaches and the unique Australian landscape and its first inhabitants, the aborigines. Lightning turns the silhouette of the Sydney Opera House into a trail of smoke from an Olympic torch .

The Sydney Olympics are very topical. For the first time, we witnessed the «burn out» of a champion, Marie Jo Perec, who confessed several years later that she had experienced a severe depression. We will only talk at the Tokyo Games, in 2020, during global Covid, about the psychological torments that the champions are going through thanks to the American superstar of gymnastics, Simone Biles, who will explain with honesty her withdrawal in full competition by teams of the JO-2020. A posteriori, in 2007, a second scourge of high-level sport is evoked- doping with the confession of American sprinter Marion Jones who creates, after Ben Johnson, Canadian sprinter at the Barcelona Games in 1992, one of the biggest scandals in the history of the Games. In both cases their medals are removed.

Once again, the Games allowed us to tackle problems that escape the only sports world- mental health (a public health problem with Covid) and respect for the rules and its opponents with fair play.

- (1) Bénédicte Halba , « Australie » in « Conjoncture 1996 », Nouveau bilan économique, politique et social du monde, Bréal Editions, Rosny : 1995.
- (2) JO de Sydney, Larousse- article téléchargé le 20 juillet 2024-
[https://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/JO de Sydney 2000 XXIV e jeux Olympiques d%C3%A9t%C3%A9/185485](https://www.larousse.fr/encyclopedie/divers/JO_de_Sydney_2000_XXIV_e_jeux_Olympiques_d%C3%A9t%C3%A9/185485)
- (3) Documentaire de Mickaël Gamrasni « Olympiques ! La France des Jeux”, France, diffusé le 16 juillet 2024 sur France 2
- (4) Site officiel du CIO- <https://olympics.com/fr/olympic-games/atlanta-1996/logo-design>
- (5) Bénédicte Halba , « Dopage et sport », Les essentiels Milan, Toulouse : 1999.

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