

Passing the torch to Rio

INTERVIEW WITH LORD COE OF RANMORE

CHAIRMAN, LONDON ORGANISING COMMITTEE OF THE OLYMPIC AND PARALYMPIC GAMES



SEBASTIAN COE is a double Olympic Champion and 12-time world record holder in athletics. He won gold in the 1500m and silver in the 800m at both the Moscow 1980 and Los Angeles 1984 Games. He retired from competitive athletics in 1990 and became a Conservative MP and Private Secretary to William Hague. In 2002 he was made a Peer – Lord Coe of Ranmore. He received a knighthood in the 2006 New Year’s Honours List. He is also a Vice-President of the International Association of Athletics and controlling shareholder of The Complete Leisure Group, a non-executive director of AMT-Sybex Group, and Chair of the Sport Honours Committee.

Eduardo Paes, Mayor of Rio de Janeiro receives the Olympic flag at the London 2012 closing ceremony

How do the London 2012 Olympics relate to their successors to be held in Rio in 2016?

Well, there are many things which will be similar. For example, aside from staging the actual Games, every OCOG is responsible for a wide range of activity in the run-up to and during the Games, including a series of test events, the Opening and Closing Ceremonies and, of course, the Torch Relay.

But every Host City will do things differently. Some examples include the number of venues that will be used (and whether these are new or temporary), where the venues are located, how the Athletes’ Village is built, located and run and what sponsors they have.

That is what is so wonderful about the Olympic and Paralympic Games – every Games will try and do something different and make their own mark. We have definitely learnt from previous Games and tried to take the best from each – such as the forensic eye for detail from Beijing, the party atmosphere from Sydney and the regeneration successes from Barcelona – but we know that the London 2012 Games were different simply because London is different.

We wanted to put on a Games which reflected what London and the rest of the UK has to offer. London is such a fantastically diverse and international city and

we have had a real opportunity to showcase the energy and creativity that emanates from the UK.

Of the lessons that have been learnt for the London Olympics, which one do you believe is the most relevant to Rio de Janeiro’s plans

There are several different pieces of advice I would give to Rio 2016 as well as any future Host City. The first is that you have to have a clear vision and make sure that all the work you do is aimed at delivering that vision. We were very clear in our bid that we wanted to inspire young people around the world to choose to participate in sport and that we wanted to leave a lasting legacy after the Games.

I would also say that having a great working relationship with all your stakeholders, government and partners is very important. We have been hugely fortunate in that we have had cross-party political support over the last seven years and government departments, whether local, regional or national, have all been extremely supportive and have played a key part in helping us deliver the Games. All our sponsors have also been critical in helping spread the message about London 2012 to millions of people around the world.



Finally, I would say that it is important to try and get sponsors on board as soon as possible after you've won a bid but also think very carefully about the types of partners you will need and what kind of services you need them to provide.

But ultimately every Host City will need to decide what is best for their city and country.

What opportunities do you see for UK companies and organisations in the run-up to Rio 2016?

I think there is a great opportunity for British companies and organisations to get involved with the Rio 2016 Games. UK Trade and Investment has been working on ensuring that companies are aware of the opportunities in sports and infrastructure which will arise from Rio hosting the 2016 Games. Given that Rio 2016 shares many of the same goals that London 2012 had – such as delivering the most sustainable Games possible – I believe there are some fantastic opportunities for British companies to get involved. UKTI also hosted the Global Investment Conference this summer with 200 CEOs from the world's largest investment firms attending and the British Business Embassy offering some great networking opportunities with sponsors, corporates, bid and host cities.

What is the importance and the implications of the 2016 Olympic Games going to Brazil?

Giving Rio the opportunity to host the Games is a fantastic opportunity for Brazil and the continent as a whole. It is great to see that the Games in 2016 are going to a part of the world that has never hosted the Olympic and Paralympic Games before – providing

an extraordinary opportunity to transform the lives of 200 million South American young people through the power and influence of sport.

Rio also shares our vision to inspire the youth of the world and we were very happy to see that they also put young people at the forefront of their bid. We have had a great working relationship with Carlos Nuzman and his team and I am sure that Rio will put on a spectacular Games and really showcase to the world what Brazil can do.

What will be the legacy of London 2012 and what will be the return on the significant investment?

Over the last seven years, the East End of London has undergone unparalleled regeneration. With 75p in every £1 spent on the construction of venues being invested in the long-term regeneration of the area, the Games have brought a generation's worth of investment in just a few years. From the outset, we were clear that this wouldn't simply be about a few weeks of sport – it would be about leaving a real social, economic and sporting legacy which people could benefit from for decades to come. Eight years ago, the area where the Olympic Park is based had been left alone economically for nearly 60 years. After the Games, we are leaving behind a brand new community with new sporting facilities, new homes, improved transport links and the creation of new jobs. I don't believe we would have seen that transformation of the east London area if we hadn't won the bid. I'm proud that sport has created that momentum and that the Games have made this all happen. E

There is a great opportunity for British companies and organisations to get involved with the Rio 2016 Games



Seb Coe sprints away from Steve Cram to win the the 1500m Gold Medal at the 1984 Olympic Games