

## SALT LAKE CITY: SUN, FUN AND OLYMPIANS! by Dr. Brian S. Seaman, DC, FCCSS(C), FICC

The phone call came in June last year – right after our AGM at Digby Pines. Once again I was honoured to have the opportunity of representing not only chiropractic internationally, but Canada as well. The first order of business was to respond to the question from Cindy Hughes (our chief therapist) --- was I available? – OK, that took 3 seconds!

Next was setting aside time from clinic for the 4 days of the Olympic Team orientation which was scheduled for Calgary in September 2001; it turned out to be less than 2 weeks after "9-11"! The Orientation itself is a great experience and the team which went to SLC was fantastic. The Calgary meeting was some what of a family reunion. Many of the Canadian Olympic Association (COA) people I knew from the Pan Am Games in Winnipeg (1999), were there as well. There were 5 of us from the Medical Team who were teammates in Winnipeg. The other chiropractor for SLC was Dr. Greg Uchacz. Greg is the team doctor for the Canadian Skeleton and Bobsleigh Team.

Our SLC Medical Team (or "Health Care Team" as it is now officially called) consisted of 9 physicians (including 2 orthopedic surgeons), 12 therapists (ATs and PTs), 3 massage therapists, and 2 chiropractors (Greg and I). The Medical Team provided all the health care needs for the 157 athletes as well as the mission staff.

Orientation focuses on getting to know your fellow team members, team building and scenario preparation. The latter deals with a variety of issues which we could encounter while at the Winter Olympics, including security measures. We were all issued beepers at SLC for emergency purposes as well as being provided with Blackberries for wireless e-mail by the Canadian government (in the event that communications ever broke down due to terrorist activity).

Next Stop, SLC

February 3rd – Woke up at 3 a.m. and off to the airport by 4 a.m. Flew to Toronto, then Denver and finally SLC. As per usual, the US customs officer in Toronto was less than pleasant. However once I was in SLC, I was accredited. My accreditation had an "Infinity" designation which allowed me access to all of the venues as well as the Athlete's Village where we stayed. When I arrived in Athlete's Village (and finally made it through all the security check points) I had a brief orientation and tour around Athlete's Village with my roommate Dave Slover, who is a PT from Hamilton, Ontario. It was a long day; almost 24 hours.

I was very fortunate to be assigned to the "advance team" which is a group of the medical team which arrives early to assist with the set-up. In addition to myself, there was Cindy Hughes, Bob Foxford (CMO), Antoine Atallah (clinic manager), four therapists including Dave Slover and a massage therapist.

February 4th – Woke up at 6 a.m. – but that was Halifax time! I tried to get back to sleep and finally got up at 6 a.m. SLC time. The three hour time change created havoc for the first few days.

There were 2 eating areas, one in an existing dining hall, and the other in a huge tent which could probably cover a hockey rink. Included in the tent was a full scale McDonald's much to the delight of my daughter CJ who is 9 years old. When I told her there was a McDonald's in the Athlete's Village she was completely impressed - "That's so cool, Daddy!" She was even more impressed when she found out that it was free!

In the Athlete's Village there was an International Zone which had a coffee house (and they could make every type of coffee imaginable), a store, a post office, bank and even a Cyber Café which had been set up by ATT. Each member of the team was assigned an e-mail address, so that you could have access to e-mail. The cyber café even had video e-mail so that you could send messages home. The buildings were the old officers quarters of Fort Douglas.

February 5th – I was assigned to Park City for a few days. It was about 45 minutes from SLC and our base for the skiing and sleding events. Our first order of business was to set up the medical clinic in a house which was rented by the COA for the month of February. It was a beautiful location and the house provided excellent accommodations. There were 4 bedrooms, and everywhere you looked there were mountains. My house mates were two PT's; Wendy Epp (with free style skiing) and Russ Horball (assigned to biathlon and cross country skiing). Marty Deacon ("PC Mama") was in charge of the Park City house. We also had Dr. Jack Oliver with us, who is an orthopedic surgeon from British Columbia.

February 6th – Last night most of the Canadian Team arrived in SLC along with my colleague Greg. The athletes are gradually being assigned either to Athlete's Village, or the various sites in the Park City area.

February 7th – I had the pleasure of not only seeing the Olympic flame run by, but got an opportunity to hold it. The gentleman who had been running with the flame, was Mr. Dick Marriott (yes, of Marriott Hotels). Dressed in my Team Canada Roots gear, Mr. Marriott asked what part of Canada I was from. When I replied Nova Scotia, he immediately responded that he had loved the "Lighthouse Route". It truly is a small world!

Later that day I met Trevor Andrews who is a snowboarder from Falmouth, Nova Scotia. Trevor had been called in from Whistler, B.C as one of the other snowboarders had injured his knee and was unable to compete. Trevor made the finals and finished 10th overall. Well done Trevor!

February 8th – Opening Ceremonies Day! Unfortunately due to the security concerns, Canada was only issued 157 passes for Opening Ceremonies (one for each athlete) plus 6 passes for the Mission Staff. There were some passes which became available so each of our names was entered in a draw. Opening Ceremonies is a phenomenal experience! I had the opportunity of marching in Opening Ceremonies for the Pan American Games in 1999 – It is a tremendous rush! Anyway, Marty ("PC Mama") was selected to have one of the passes. Unfortunately – Park City was in the middle of a snow storm! So all the gang sat around and watched Opening Ceremonies on TV.

February 9th – What a great day. Up at 5:30 a.m. and at 6:00a.m., left with Jack and Wendy for free style skiing. The Women's mogul competition was being held. Up at the top of the mountain, I met a chap from the U.S. Special Forces (Green Berets). We chatted for a while and then he showed up a few minutes later bearing a gift – an unopened MRE (Meal Ready to Eat) – grilled steak! Right now it is sitting in the pantry at home in the event of an emergency – it is supposed to be good for 10 years!

Now you have to picture being at the top of a ski hill and despite my "infinity" accreditation, I did not have a "hill pass". But I had to get to the bottom of the hill. One of the electricians came by on a snowmobile and said he would take me down the hill. Now try to imagine this – going down a hill – a steep ski hill – on a snowmobile – without a helmet. And believe me, he was not pussy footing down the hill!

Once I got down to the bottom of the hill and was able to pry my fingers off the side bars of the snowmobile, I gradually made my way to my spot at the bottom of the hill. Todd Allison (team leader for free style skiing) and his coaches are fantastic group of people. They invited me to hang around with them for the day – right at the bottom of the hill. When you watch skiing on TV, you see the skiers stop at the bottom and wait for their scores. This is all pre-arranged with the camera crews. We were standing right there – the skiers were right in front of us with the cameras. It was a great day for the Canadian women. Jennifer Heil finished 4th; missing a bronze medal by .01 of a point. Jenn is only 18 years old and is the best of the women free style skiers.

It was also fairly cool, standing there for long periods of time. I even had my big Sorel boots on. I eventually had to go to the medical hut to get some hand warmers and stick them under the arch of each foot!

February 10th – Over the next 24-48 hours, there is a transition between events. The Canadian Medical Team also had a reception for all the health care workers in the Athlete's Village. I met the chiropractor for New Zealand, Dr. Randy Wilke, who actually practices in Calgary. He works with the New Zealand Bobsled team so was asked to be a member of their team. I also met medical staff from Great Britain, Sweden and Czechoslovakia.

February 11th – This was the day of the figure skating fiasco. Jamie Selé and David Pelltier handled the whole incident extremely well. They are both super people. Late that evening, I transferred back to Athlete's Village and Greg left for Park City the next morning.

February 12th – First day back in the clinic in Athlete's Village. Got to meet a lot of people including Dick Pound (of the IOC), Elvis Stojko and his coach Uschi Keszler, David and Jamie. The figure skaters were living on the same floor as the medical clinic, so we bumped into David, Jamie, Victor, Shae Lynn, Jennifer and Elvis almost every day.

One little tidbit from Athlete's Village – after the disappointing results which gave David and Jamie the silver medal instead of the gold, a number of the medical team (I believe Greg led this project) took sheets of paper and marked "6.0" on each of them. These were taped all over their door.

February 13th – The International Ice Hockey Federation President, provided the Canadian Medical Team with 10 passes to his private box. Five of us were able to go down and watch the Canadian Women beat Russia 7-0 (60 shots to 6). That evening I met Mario Lemieux, Ryan Smith and Ed Jovanoski.

Health care in the Athlete's Village was certainly an ideal situation – multi-disciplinary to say the least. Arranging for diagnostic studies was also an experience. I examined an athlete at 5 p.m., and felt that an MRI would be clinically indicated. The CMO agreed, and over supper I had a consultation with Nick Mohtadi who is one of the orthopedic surgeons on the Canadian Team (team physician for the Calgary Flames). At 8 o'clock that evening, I accompanied the athlete to the portable MRI which was at the host medical services clinic. By 8:30 the MRI was done and I was having a personal consultation with the radiologist. Now that's efficient health care!

February 14th – Happy Valentine's Day! Part of my duties involved opening up the medical clinic at 7 am every morning, for the remainder of the Games. The rest of the Men's Hockey Team arrives so we get used to seeing the likes of NHL stars around the village.

February 15th – It is announced that David and Jamie will be presented with the gold medals given the ever changing story of the French judge.

I met the third Nova Scotian on the Olympic Team, Al McInnis from Port Hood, Nova Scotia.

February 16th – Up early again, and took some time in the afternoon to go downtown to Canada Olympic Lodge. They also had a Roots store in the front part of the lodge where the "poor boy hats" were selling at a brisk pace. I was told that in Park City, the Roots store was selling 2000 "poor boy hats" a day!

I had dinner that evening with Dr. Laney Nelson who is a chiropractor who I was put in contact with through FICS (Federation Internationale Chiropractique Sportive). The portable tables which the CCS(C) graciously donated to the Canadian MASH Unit, were sent to Dr. Nelson's office along with our turtle necks and fleece vests from G2 Orthopedic Supplies. We went out to dinner at a restaurant where the salad bar is fantastic, and various types of meat are brought around to you on a skewer. It was quite interesting ---- rattlesnake (bland) and alligator sausage (spicy)! It was a great meal although there were no alcohol beverages served at that restaurant.

February 17th – Nothing spectacular today. Was pretty busy in clinic but the evening was capped off by an invitation by the New Zealand Medical Team for reception.

February 18th – Early in the day, Jamie dropped into the clinic with her gold medal that David and she were presented with the previous evening. Yep – I got to hold it – pretty heavy – about 1\_ pounds.

I watched the Canadian men tie Czechoslovakia 3-3 in hockey. At the hockey game I met Roger Jackson (former COA President) and Doug Clement (Sports Medicine physician).

February 19th – Met Pat Quinn. A lot of moves within the Canadian building with respect to the medical team. A number of the medical team (but not me) were shifted around due to athletes coming back into the Village after finishing the competition.

Women's Hockey team beat Finland 7-3 to advance to the gold medal game.

February 20th – Earliest start to the day yet – athletes presented to the clinic at 7:20 a.m.!

Was able to attend the Men's Hockey game to see Canada beat Finland 2-1.

February 21st – Gold Medal game for the Women – 3-2 over USA. Unfortunately I wasn't able to get down for the game. Spoke to Pat Quinn late that evening as he sat on "Pat's Bench" outside of the Canadian residence. Pat was very impressed with the composure of the Women during the gold medal game (in between puffs on a rather large cigar). What was interesting, in speaking to the girls after the game, is that they fully expected to have penalties called on them. They had experience with that American referee previously so knew what to expect.

February 22nd – Slow day in clinic. Not much going on. Things are starting to wind around the Village.

February 23rd – Tragically Hip concert for the Canadian Team and a few guests. Have to start to pack – ouch! Came with 1\_ bags; now have 3. Also have to start organizing for customs.

February 24th – Was able to attend the men's gold medal game in which Canada beat the USA 5-2. Thank goodness for "Infinity" accreditation --- tickets were being scalped for \$3000! The last 30 seconds of the game was an experience I will not forget. Many of us actually had chills as all the Canadians burst into singing "Oh Canada". After the Olympics, I read an interview that Al McInnis mentioned the players on the bench had heard all of us singing "Oh Canada".

When we got back to the Village, I was given a ticket for closing ceremonies; one had just become available from the lot which the Canadian Olympic Association had been given. It was a phenomenal show. Where else could you see such a line up of stars – Bon Jovi, Earth Wind Fire, KISS, Moby -- Wow! For those of you who saw the closing ceremonies, the big mechanical dinosaurs which were featured, were about 100-150 feet to my right. I could very clearly see the person inside each head that were controlling the movement.

It was a late night as we bid farewell to about half of our team who were flying out to Calgary at 2:30 in the morning.

February 25th – Time to finish packing. Athlete's Village is almost deserted. Many of the teams left last night after Closing Ceremonies.

Down to Canada Olympic Lodge at 5:30 p.m. for a reception. At 9:30 p.m. vans take us to the airport. At 1:30 am we are homeward bound. By the time I touch down in Halifax and get home, it is already been 30 hours with only a cat nap or two on the plane.

It was a fantastic experience and a tremendous honour to be able to represent our profession at an event such as the Winter Olympics. Hopefully, I will have the opportunity of participating at the Olympics again in the future – it's a great feeling to receive a phone call like the one I got in June of last year!

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