

Australia and the Olympic Games

The Berlin Olympics 1936

The Games



The New Media – Television

The first television coverage of a sports event was at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. This innovation was part of the German government plan for the presentation of the Olympic Games to the world. Radio had been the main type of immediate coverage for the world prior to television with photographs used for newspaper articles. Film had been used to record the events but took time to develop and distribute. Television was the new communication medium. It would be used most effectively world-wide in twenty years time at the 1956 Melbourne Olympic Games.



Focus

Explore the importance of television for the 1936 Olympic Games?



Activity

Who was in charge of the television telecast?

How many outlets were there in Berlin?

What was the importance of television for the Berlin Olympics and future sports events?

Television

The German communications company Telefunken was advanced in the technology for radio and now television communications. A month before the Olympic Games Telefunken had demonstrated a large screen projection television based on a cathode ray tube. The new German government supported these developments.

Hitler had acknowledged the power of images and film as a way of promoting his political ideas and his party. He had commissioned Leni Riefenstahl to film The 1934 Nuremberg Nazi party rally and a full scale production of the Berlin Olympics and she co-ordinated thirty three film cameras to capture the 1936 Olympic Games. It would take her about eighteen months to finish the film Olympia. Television offered immediacy to his most important city.

The television coverage of the Opening Ceremony and events was nothing like it would be in 1956 in Melbourne or the international coverage at later Games. These were television pictures for Berlin and the athletes had a hall in their village for live coverage of events.

http://www.earlytelevision.org/1936_olympics.html

Other Sources

Official site: <http://www.olympic.org/berlin-1936-summer-olympics>

Television history: <http://www.tvhistory.tv/1936%20German%20Olympics%20TV%20Program.htm>

http://www.earlytelevision.org/pendleton_paper.html