CHEFS DE MISSION FINAL REPORT

Within 60 days of the conclusion of the Arctic Winter Games all Chefs de Mission shall submit to the Technical Director of the Arctic Winter Games International Committee eight copies of a comprehensive final report evaluating the Games. The general intent of this report is to assist future Host Societies in their work. The format of this report shall be as follows:

Executive Summary and Recommendations

• Provide a synopsis of the general observations and recommendations that the Chef has made in the body of the report.

General Unit Management

• Provide a brief description of how the Unit was managed. Include any recommendations on changes to previous methods of operation that worked well. Include copies of organizational charts, job descriptions etc.

Team Alaska was managed much the same as for the 1996 Games in Eagle River, during my prior term as Chef de Mission. The only significant change from that Games was that our program was more decentralized by design. I had an outstanding Mission Staff, and I gave that staff quite a bit of responsibility in establishing procedures for selecting coaches and athletes. Each Mission Staff member was responsible for the selection process for 1 or more sports, although they could further delegate that process to members of the coaching staff, if they so desired (under my supervision).

Part of the reason for this was that this was my third Games, and my second as Chef de Mission, and I understood things well enough to know not only what COULD be delegated, but what there was to be delegated. As a rookie in 1996, I couldn’t delegate tasks I didn’t know about. The second reason for this was my other job responsibilities. I serve as Chef de Mission on a contract basis for the Team Alaska corporation. In addition to this contract, I have 2-3 other major clients, as well as other programs I conduct that produce income for me. For two of those clients, winter is the busy season. In addition, I am involved as a cross country official for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Utah, and that necessitated my absence from time-to-time (including 10 days in January). With all that going on, I needed a Mission Staff who would accept responsibility, and who would take the initiative when needed. Luckily, this Mission Staff performed up to my expectations.

Accommodations

• Provide comments or recommendations.

From all reports from coaches and athletes, accommodations were adequate. We had only a small number of problems:
1. Some of the Native Alaskans living at FH Collins felt that there were some denigrating remarks or negative attitudes directed toward them from the security staff. I discussed this with the Security people when this was brought to my attention, and I heard no complaints thereafter.
2. We had some conflicts between Alaska sport teams who were sharing the same quarters. I believe that in the most part this was caused by one team having an early morning schedule, and one team being able to sleep in. This may have been my fault for assigning these teams to the same room. However, I think it was partly due to having large numbers in a few rooms.
I did not like being given the responsibility to assign teams to various rooms. I hope that in the future the Host Society will do this. To really do the job correctly and to try to match teams of correct sizes with available spaces is very time-consuming, and I think the Host Society would have a better handle on things. Perhaps the Host Society could come up with a basic plan, then submit that to the Chefs for approval.

**Banquets**
- Provide comments or recommendations.

There were no sport banquets, but I heard several requests from the Arctic Sports people that they would like to have a sport banquet. I know their program is very full, and at the meeting I attended, some attendees didn’t seem to quite grasp the impossibility of adding events to the program and still having time for a sport banquet.

I did not hear complaints from people in other sports about the lack of a sport banquet in their respective sports.

**Catering**
- Provide comments or recommendations.

Food was good, and plentiful. The “grazing” management plan is definitely the way to go – this format really reduces tension and enforcement when people try to go in early, late, or too many times. Free in-and-out all day long makes it simple.

There were a few hangups with the early morning hours. Some of the hockey players were not admitted to the cafeteria in time to make their buses, although I guess this was straightened out after a couple of days. I guess the problem was that they were supposed to get a cold breakfast, but they weren’t admitted until the hot food was placed in service, even though the cafeteria was prepared to serve a cold breakfast several minutes before the hockey players were admitted.

**Ceremonies and Awards**
- Provide comments or recommendations.

Opening and Closing Ceremonies were very well-run. Everyone was very happy with the level of organization, and the spectacular performances and displays.

I heard many compliments on the awards ceremonies. I personally attended both on-site ceremonies and ceremonies at the tent downtown and both were very well done. I hope it was noted by those in attendance that the Alaskans removed their hats for all national anthems – both for the US national anthem and for those of the other units.

This was a policy that I really emphasized with our Mission Staff and coaches, and it is one I would like to see put in place across all units – maybe adopted as official policy by AWGIC. I believe that the simple act of removing ones hat for a national anthem creates an important atmosphere of respect for all participants.

**Communications**
- Describe how the Games communications system was utilized and provide any comments or recommendations.
We used cell phones for communications, and they worked fine. We had radios, but we only used them occasionally through the week. Although cell phones were a relatively major expense, they were invaluable. I strongly recommend that the Host Society be required to provide cell phones for all Mission Staff members as part of their obligations. At this point, with the size and complexity of the games, cell phones are a necessity, not a luxury.

**Cultural Program**
- Provide comments or recommendations.

Unfortunately, our cultural delegation pulled out at the last minute, and we did not participate in the cultural program, except as spectators. All who attended the Cultural Galas were very pleased with the quality of the performance and production. I also heard many positive comments about the art exhibit.

**Facilities and Equipment**
- Provide comments and recommendations on any sport or other facilities utilized.

The venues were, for the most part, outstanding. The only real problem was with the Dog Mushing course, and left to their own devices, the athletes, coaches and officials seemed to solve any issues to their mutual satisfaction. I heard positive comments about all the other facilities. It would have been nice to have a little more seating capacity in the Basketball venue, given the Yukon-Alaska matchups in the finals. However, I’m sure the tightly-packed crowd enhanced the atmosphere in both matches.

**Finance**
- Describe how the Unit raised the funds necessary to finance its' involvement in the Games. Complete the charts provided at the end of this section.

Team Alaska income sources:
- FY1999: $120,000US from the state of Alaska for Operations
- $30,000US from the state of Alaska for AWGIC dues (2 years)
- FY2000: $100,000US from the state of Alaska for Operations
- $140,000US (approximate) from registration fees paid by participants

**Forms and Publications**
- Provide one copy of all forms, publications and manuals developed and used by the Unit.

Attached are copies of our media guide, as well as copies of our registration materials.

**Insurance**
- Describe the insurance obtained for the Games and provide recommendations.

Team Alaska purchased a secondary coverage health policy for the week of the Games. This policy covered our team from the time they stepped on the buses in Anchorage or Fairbanks until the time they stepped off the buses 9 days later in Anchorage or Fairbanks. This coverage would only kick in when an individual’s own insurance benefits were exhausted, or, in the case of a team member who was without health insurance, would start with the first dollar. This policy cost the team about $1300US.

I believe that the Host Society should provide complete health care coverage for all participants for the entire week. The outstanding health care costs for any participant (not covered by the participant’s own
policy) who is injured during competition should be covered by a host society policy. Transportation to
and from the Games is the responsibility of each respective unit. However, once the participants are on-
site, I think the Host Society should take over

Media
• Describe the media coverage provided on your unit for the Games. Provide comments or
  recommendations.

There was quite good media coverage of Team Alaska. The main papers in Anchorage and Fairbanks
had extensive coverage every day. Both papers sent reporters to the Games, and those reporters were
very active in getting out to see many venues. In addition, the Anchorage television station with the
mobile transmission truck was on-site, broadcasting several reports each day back to Alaska.

Medical
• Provide comments or recommendations.

We felt that this was perhaps the weakest area of organization. It was difficult to get information from
Medical regarding injuries and minor health incidents involving Team Alaska personnel. In addition, we
were constantly called by the local hospital for insurance information for our athletes – information that
had been provided to the Host Society Medical people on the Host Society Medical Registration form.

Based upon the fact that Medical had that information, we wondered why they didn’t provide all the
information to the Hospital, or why the Hospital didn’t ask them, rather than us. If the Host Society has
the information, then they should be responsible for getting that information out. If that is not the case,
then the Units need to be informed more clearly of what the procedure is.

Team Booklet
• Provide eight copies on any Team Booklet produced.

Copies of our press guide will be forwarded to you.

Registration and Accreditation
• Provide comments or recommendations.

Registration and the registration process were outstanding. My hat is off to the organizers of this aspect
of the Games. Things happened fast, and our group was processed very quickly. In addition, the
accreditation badges were attractive and functional.

Having to submit the photos in advance ended up being wasted work because the photo-files were not
received on the CDs I sent to the Host Society. I didn’t learn this until two days prior to our team’s
arrival. At that point, I provided all the files to the registration people, but apparently it was too late to
use them. Had I been informed of this earlier, I would have been able to send down the files on another
CD.

Pre-submission of photo-files might work. However, it would be very helpful to have someone involved
on the receiving end who could give some phone support for processing photos in Adobe PhotoShop,
Corel Photo-Paint, and other popular graphics programs. Also, it would help to have the specific
instructions for posing, background, etc. earlier in the process. I had already received many photos from
our team prior to receiving those instructions. At that point, it was too late to go back and do it again.
Results
• Provide comments or recommendations.

The results program at these Games was the best I had witnessed. Results were more complete, and more timely, than at any previous Games I have attended. Web results were very useful, although sometimes not as timely as one would have wished. Also, there were some events for which results were never posted. It would be nice to have those results available.

One thing I have never seen, but which I believe should be an absolute requirement for all Host Societies, is a final results booklet which includes non-handwritten results for all of the events for the entire week. This book should be organized alphabetically, and should include all results from all matches and games – not just for medal matches. There should be included box scores for sports like hockey, basketball, etc. or their equivalent, complete results in all individual sports, and a final tally of medals won by Unit, both for each sport, and overall. This would be helpful for media purposes, as well as for historical purposes.

Security
• Provide comments or recommendations.

The Security organization at the Games was excellent. I had no unpleasant experiences with the security people during the Games, nor did I hear of any (with the exception noted above under the topic of Accommodations). I believe security did a great job, and they were discreet and unobtrusive. The Head of Security checked in with our office at least once each day to see if we had any problems or questions. The only incidents in which our athletes were involved were handled rapidly and effectively. No complaints.

Social Program
• Provide comments or recommendations.

The Host Society did an excellent job in providing outlets for social interaction among the participants. I heard very good reports from the mid-week dance, and I believe that the common areas provided for participants were used and were effective.

Sports
• Provide a brief summary of the Unit’s involvement in and any comments or recommendations on each sport.

Team Alaska participated in every sport offered. We fielded full teams for the most part, with these exceptions:
➢ Alpine Skiing. The Arctic Winter Games were scheduled in conflict with the major national championship event for skiers of these ages. Given the relatively small number of alpine skiers in the state, and a less-than-aggressive sport coordinator, we were short in a couple of age groups.
➢ Arctic Sports/Inuit. We had a few people pull out at the last minute in the Open Women’s class.
➢ Badminton. This is a perennial problem for us. There is no statewide organization, and few youth participants in the state. If we are to ever field full teams in badminton, someone will have to create a program somewhere.
➢ Short-Track Speed Skating. This sport is growing in Alaska. We had more participants than in some prior Games, and our performances were better. A new club has been formed in Fairbanks. I think in the future we will be able to field a full team, if not in 2002, then by 2004 or 2006.
Wrestling. The coach selected by our sport coordinator did a poor job with this sport, in some respects this was due to circumstances beyond the coach’s control. However, we were able to find a new coach who was very excited about the program, and the partial team that we did take to the Games performed very well. This sport should be in better shape in 2002.

We had difficulty fielding full teams in these sports:
- Alpine/Snowboarding. This was very last minute. In some respects, this was due to sport coordinator problems, in other respects, it was due to the lack of a good statewide organization.
- Men’s Basketball. The problem here was caused by the last-minute resignation of our coach. New coach and new team worked out great.
- Ice Hockey/Women. The major junior girls’ hockey tournament of the season was scheduled for the final weekend of the Games. That’s where most of our best players were during the Games. However, I felt it was very important to have a team at the Games, even if it wasn’t a great team.
- Ski Biathlon. See Men’s Basketball for an explanation.

Transportation
- Describe the system used to transport athletes to and from the Games. Provide comments or recommendations on the internal Games transportation system.

Team Alaska traveled to and from the Games using eight Holland America Westours buses – five departing from Anchorage, and five departing from Fairbanks. The trip over took about 14-15 hours from Fairbanks, and about 16-17 hours from Anchorage, including stops. The entire team (plus the Magadan team) stopped in Tok where they were fed by the Tok Community in the Tok School.

Although I had requested that the buses arrive around 12 noon, they arrived much earlier than that, which caused a few problems for registration. In addition, it caused us a few problems due to running up against the drivers’ time limits specified in transit regulations. However, everything worked out great on the way over. I would do this again for a Games in Whitehorse without a second thought.

On the way home, the buses left directly from the Closing Ceremonies. Fairbanks people were home by 9-10am, and Anchorage people were home by noon. My sense is that this was much simpler than having to go by plane.

Welcoming and Send Off
- Provide comments or recommendations.

The Welcoming organization did an outstanding job. Our group, after an all-night bus ride, were treated well, and seemed to enjoy, for the most part, the registration process. That’s quite an accomplishment, I’d say. The food and entertainment, and the atmosphere in the RCMP hangar, were all very good, and very effective.

As mentioned above, we departed directly from the Closing Ceremonies, so we have no basis for evaluating the Send Off.

Arctic Winter Games International Committee
- Provide any recommendations on how the Arctic Winter Games International Committee could improve the assistance provided to the units involved in the Arctic Winter Games.
The AWGIC website is useful, but it could be made more useful by including all Technical Package material as web pages, not just as downloadable *.pdf files. Many people, even after they’ve installed Adobe Acrobat, seem to have problems downloading those *.pdf files. In addition, if the Technical Package information was available on web pages, browsing those pages to get rules clarifications, to answer questions.

It would be a much more valuable resource in the time leading up to the Games, as I believe coaches, sport coordinators, athletes, etc. would access the information frequently. It would also be useful during the Games to answer questions, etc.

Team Selection Process

- Describe the process used to select team members including specifics on the trials process. Complete the attached form.

Team selection for Team Alaska sport teams varies tremendously from sport to sport. Some sports (cross country skiing and alpine skiing) have a well-established governing body with a tradition of having well-established methods of selecting coaches and athletes. Other sports, like snowshoeing, snowshoe biathlon, etc. have little tradition, and selection basically consists of solicitation by telephone. Because our sport structure is so irregular, and so different from that of the other Units, our procedures probably don’t resemble those of any other unit.

Our tryout numbers ranged from over 300 in cross country skiing to probably 6 in snowshoeing. Each year it is a goal to get more sport organizations involved in selection, as is the case with alpine and cross country skiing. However, when those sport organizations don’t exist, or are of low quality, it is necessary to use less formal means of selection.

Miscellaneous

- Provide any other comments or recommendations that will improve the operation of future Arctic Winter Games.

Ticketing

I did not like having to sell tickets to Opening and Closing Ceremonies, and to the Cultural Galas. We ate several tickets, but I felt that was preferable to not having tickets available for Alaska parents and friends who might want the tickets.

I think that the Host Society should handle all ticket sales, through either secure e-commerce or a 1-800-number ticket sales office. I think that there should be multiple ticket sales “openings,” with a portion of the tickets for all the major events put on sale at intervals. For example, 90 days prior to the games 25% of the tickets could go on sale; 60 days prior the next 25%; 30 days prior the next 25%; 15 days prior the final 25%. In this way, parents of athletes who are not selected until late can still have the option to purchase tickets.

Delegations that would like to purchase tickets should be able to do so, but I don’t think it’s fair to the Chefs to require them to deal with ticket sales in the final weeks leading up to the Games, nor to have to deal with tickets at the Games themselves.

Website
The website was very useful. I believe it was the best website yet for a Games. It was attractive, and navigation was relatively intuitive. My primary recommendation though, would be to put up all sport schedules at the earliest possible time – even draft schedules as long as they are labeled as such.

I received many calls from parents, coaches and athletes asking for schedule information, and I finally posted the schedules on the Team Alaska website.

**List of Sports**

The list of sports included in the Games should be ordered the same by the AWGIC and by the Host Society. The lists used this year differed, making for inconsistencies and difficulties when looking things up on any list that was sorted by sport. For example, the IC lists Snowboarding under Alpine Skiing (A), but the Host Society listed Snowboarding under “S”; the IC lists Dene Games under Arctic Sports (A), but the Host Society listed it under “D”. It doesn’t so much matter which way it’s listed, but it should be listed the same by both parties.

This is a nit-picking point, to be sure, but it’s a small detail which I believe would make the program seem much more professional.

**Phone Directory**

The small phone directory we received was not as useful as it could have been. Everyone I spoke with seemed to have difficulty finding the number or party they wanted, when they wanted. I don’t have any specific recommendations on how to organize such a book, but it is an important detail. One thing that might help would be to have a large poster with an organizational chart on it including the division heads and key players, with phone numbers listed in the appropriate locations. This would have helped me out tremendously in many instances.

**Maps**

It would have been very useful to have a large, poster-sized map of the Whitehorse area in each Mission Office which included a schematic diagram of the main thoroughfares and the locations of the sport and cultural venues on that grid. This would help the Mission Staff’s get up to speed more quickly upon their arrival.

**Mission Offices**

The Mission Offices were the best I have ever seen. The Host Society set a new standard, which I hope all future Host Societies will be required to match. The offices were spacious, well-lit, and well furnished. If I had a single recommendation, it would be that there be some secure storage nearby for locking up cartons, containers, excess inventory, etc. when not in use.