



# LIVE FROM THE 2020 TOKYO OLYMPICS

GRADES 9-12



**TV BROADCASTERS PLAY A CRITICAL ROLE IN BRINGING THE GAMES TO THE BILLIONS OF TOKYO OLYMPIC FANS. GREAT COVERAGE LETS VIEWERS FOLLOW THE ACTION AND CHEER ON THEIR HEROES. WHAT IF YOU WERE PART OF THE BROADCAST TEAM? WOULD YOU BE UP TO THE TASK?**



*Denny Morrison and Gilmore Junio,  
Long Track Speed Skaters*

## **BROADCASTING THE GAMES**

When you and your family sit down to watch the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, you will not be alone. There will be over 3.6 billion viewers in over 200 countries watching the Games with you. It will be the most watched sporting event in the world. It is also the most complex to broadcast. There are 33 sports, dozens of venues and over 60 network broadcasters.

## **THE BUSINESS OF OLYMPIC BROADCASTS**

With that many people tuning in, Olympic broadcasting is big business. The major television networks pay huge amounts for the rights to cover the Games. The Olympics give the networks the opportunity for large revenues through the sale of prime time advertisements to corporations. Being their country's Olympic broadcaster also enhances their reputation. For example, NBC paid \$7.65 billion US for the American broadcasting rights from 2014-2032. The money earned through the sale of these rights provides the funds that many Olympic sports depend on to survive.

Olympic broadcasting has come a long way since its early days. Over time, the demands of broadcasting to the world became too much for the local hosts who already had the mammoth job of organizing the Games. Ensuring that the quality of the feed and determining the placement of cameras at venues were too important to not get right. So, when the International Olympic Committee recognized that these demands had become too large a task for any one host country, they took action.



*Chloé Dufour-Lapointe,  
Freestyle Skier*



**SCHOOL PROGRAM**

In 2001, the Olympic Broadcasting Services was formed. They are responsible for the 7,000 professionals, 1000 cameras, and hundreds of thousands of kilometers of cables that are needed to cover the Games. Over the course of the Games, their cameras will shoot enough content for over 350,000 hours of Olympic TV coverage. The content that is then edited and repackaged by each of the networks who own Olympic broadcast rights. The content is uploaded to the cloud, so that editing can occur in the network's home studios.

Increasingly, more Olympic fans are watching the Games on the Internet through digital streaming. The 2016 Rio Olympics produced well over 200,000 hours of coverage on 250 digital platforms. Every camera angle, at every event was available for download. This means that viewers are no longer limited to only seeing the coverage that their broadcaster chooses. The fans can pick what they want to see and watch it for hours. This allows customized coverage.

## BRINGING THE GAMES TO CANADIANS

CBC has covered most of the Olympic Games since Canada had its first Olympic broadcast in 1956. They have the rights to cover the Summer and Winter Games through to 2024. While a job of this size demands a huge team effort, one of the more familiar faces of the Games for many Canadians is Scott Russell. Tokyo will be the 15th time he has covered the Games, and there's no better person to explain what happens behind the scenes at the International Broadcast Centre.

"My job is to bring the Olympics back home to Canada," Russell explains. "I am the traffic cop and scene-setter for television. As host, the biggest thing for me is to get people to the sport and then get out of the way."

Play by play at the venues is done by commentators with expertise in that particular sport. They are often former Olympic medalists or successful coaches.

"Once the achievements have been accomplished, I interview the athletes and give them a chance to reflect with the Canadian public back home."

There is a lot that goes into preparing to broadcast the Games. The technical staff will arrive in Tokyo three to four months in advance to build their set at the International Broadcast Centre. Russell will tour the city 100 days in advance to view the venues, film special features and get a feel for the city. He then returns to Tokyo two weeks prior to the Opening Ceremonies.

"I spend time acclimatizing to the local time zone and running through the rehearsals on the set," says Russell.

"It's important to get comfortable, because we are on the air 21 hours a day and I am personally on the air for seven hours straight."

His day will start at 3:30 in the morning. He will have a conference call with the CBC production team in Toronto to lay out the day ahead. With many Canadian athletes competing, they must decide which sports they should cover live. Sports with Canadian medal hopefuls, team sports with Canadian teams competing and popular sports like swimming, cycling and athletics often get priority.

## UNITING THE WORLD

The Olympic Games has the potential to unite the world, inspire youth and model values like excellence, friendship and respect. But these benefits depend on broadcasting. The coverage of the Olympics lets people follow the action and hear the stories of the athletes. It brings the Games to the world.



Courtesy of CBC

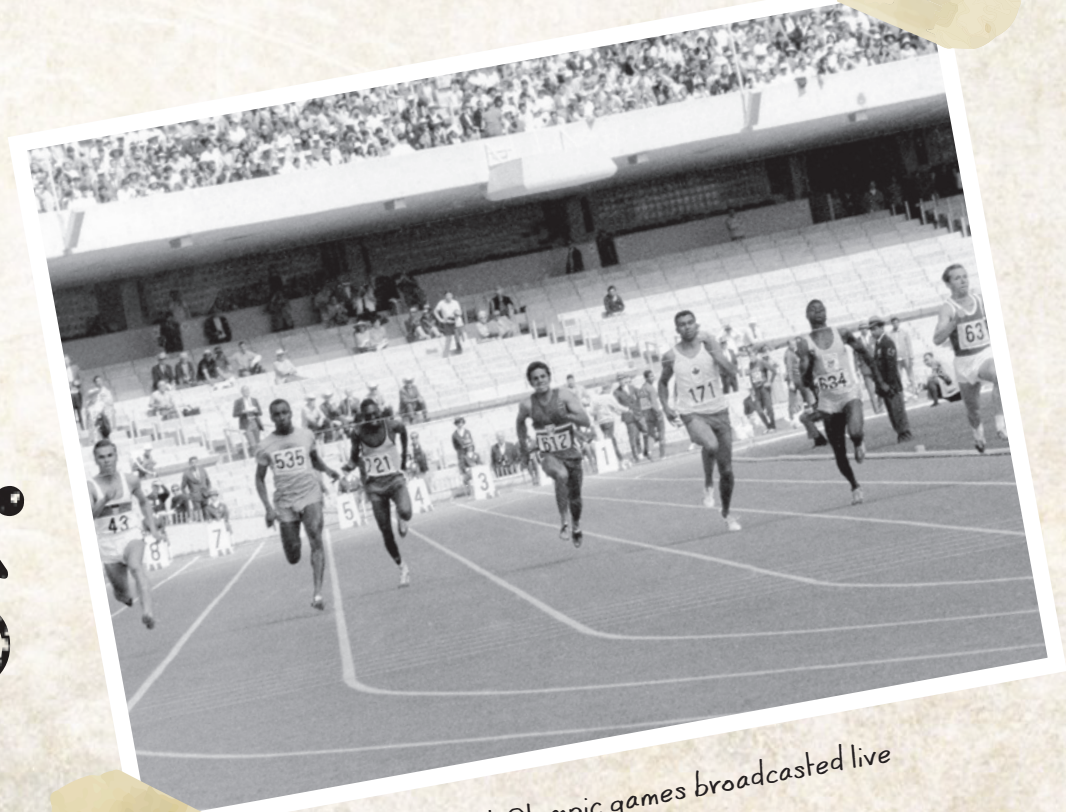
Scott Russell - Covered over 14 Olympic Games  
- Host of Road to the Olympic Games and  
Olympic Game Primetime



SCHOOL PROGRAM

# OLYMPIC BROADCASTING HISTORY

Watching the Games on television started in a limited form at the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games. Events were shown in some viewing halls through closed circuit television. The 1948 London Olympics had television coverage within the city of London, but it was not until 1952 when international coverage came to the Games. Television was brought to Australia for the first time in order to broadcast the 1956 Melbourne Games, and broadcasting rights were sold for the first time. But the technology didn't exist for the coverage to be live. Films were packaged up and flown to the viewing country. It wasn't until the age of satellites that live international coverage became possible. The 1964 Tokyo Olympics were the first Games to be broadcast live.



*First Olympic games broadcasted live*

## INSIDE THE INTERNATIONAL BROADCAST CENTRE

The International Broadcast Centre (IBC) houses the rights holding broadcasters from around the world. Some are massive like the NBC or CCTV (China). Others provide coverage for a whole continent or region like Europe (Euro Sport) or Latin America (América Móvil). Even nations as small as Montenegro have space in the IBC. Each of the over 60 broadcasters has their own set that reflects the look and feel of their nation or region's Olympic coverage.

It's like a small United Nations, with announcers and hosts dressed in their national clothing and speaking their native language. The broadcasters edit the feed provided by the Olympic Broadcasting Services to profile the sports and athletes that their viewers want to see.



## Talk About It!

Are digital and television Olympic coverage complementary to each other or will one eventually replace the other?

In your opinion, what makes good Olympic coverage?



### 1. THE OLYMPIC PROFILE

Athlete profiles are a highlight for many Olympic viewers. They want to get to know the athletes that they are about to cheer on. You and your team have been hired by CBC to produce an Olympian profile for the Canadian Olympic athletes of your choice.

Do your research! The audience will want to know more than just their sport performances. They will want to learn about their lives and motivations. They will want to get a taste for how hard they train, and understand what a day in their lives is like. Viewers want to hear the athlete speak about their values and how these have been formed by injuries and setbacks. Write a profile of that Olympian.

#### ACTIVITY EXTENSION

Work as a team to make a video or presentation of your Olympic profile. Designate people on your team to be the characters in the script. Use props, sets and costumes to bring your profile to life.

### 2. LIVE FROM TOKYO

Each day's Olympic coverage requires a series of decisions. Which sports or athletes get live coverage? What is shown if no events are occurring for a while? Who gets interviewed? What features get produced and when are they shown? How can you show as many Canadians competing for medals as possible?

As part of CBC's production team, your team has been assigned the role of planning the coverage for Day 12 of the Games (August 2nd, one of Team Canada's busiest days). **Working as a team, develop a plan for that day's coverage by following these steps:**

1. Examine the schedule found at <https://tokyo2020.org/en/games/schedule/olympic/>.
2. Determine what sports and events overlap. Map out which Canadian medal hopefuls will likely be competing on Day 12.
3. Decide which sports and events you will cover. Clearly describe how you have made these decisions.
4. Use the Olympic Coverage Planner to map out your day's coverage.
5. Write a script for the Olympic host to help them direct the coverage from event to event and keep Canadian fans glued to the action.

#### ACTIVITY EXTENSION

Use your plan to make a video or live presentation of the days opening five to seven minutes of coverage. Create a mock set and use costumes and props to make it look authentic.



SCHOOL PROGRAM