

Brisbane awarded 2032 Olympics

Brisbane to be third Australian city to host Olympic Games

● The Australian city was unanimously proposed as the single candidate for 2032 by the International Olympic Committee's 15-strong executive board in June

AFP | Tokyo

Brisbane was awarded the 2032 Olympics yesterday, triggering wild celebrations and fireworks as it became the third Australian city to host the Summer Games after Melbourne and Sydney.

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach confirmed the widely expected result after delegates voted 72 to five with three abstentions at the IOC session in Tokyo.

"The International Olympic Committee has the honour to announce that the Games of the 35th Olympiad are awarded to Brisbane, Australia," Bach said.

The announcement was greeted by cheers from the Australian delegates in Tokyo, while in Brisbane fireworks lit up the skies and crowds who had gathered for the vote went wild.

Brisbane's victory looked a certainty after it was unanimously proposed as the single candidate for 2032 by the IOC's 15-strong executive board in June.

"I'm so excited -- I have so much pride for my state, for my people. Never in my lifetime did I think that this was going to happen," said Queensland state premier Anna Palaszczuk.

"We've done it, Queensland! We've done it, Brisbane! This is fantastic, this is amazing -- to



People gathered at the river-side South Bank yesterday to celebrate Brisbane's winning bid

night is your night, enjoy."

Australia has already hosted the Olympics twice, in Melbourne in 1956 and Sydney in 2000, widely considered one of the most successful Games in recent history.

Hundreds of people packed Brisbane's Southbank riverside precinct for the announcement, watching the city's final pitch to the IOC on a big screen.

Rhys Cush, 24, one of those in the masked-up crowd, said he hoped to work at the 2032 Olympics and also attend as a spectator.

"I'm an extremely big fan. I even watched the softball this morning," he told AFP. "I'm super excited about having the Olympics coming here."

Lauren Granger, 42, said she hoped the 2032 Olympics would recreate the buzz of Sydney's successful 2000 Games.

"We flew down to Sydney and we were at the Olympics and it was just such a great experience for our family," she said.

"That was 20 years ago so we'd love to be able to relive that in

2032 with our kids."

'Historic day'

Home to about 2.3 million people and bookended by shimmering coastal sands, Brisbane is seen as more laid-back and less cosmopolitan than Australia's sprawling southern cities.

Venues will be spread across Brisbane and nearby towns in Queensland state, including the Gold Coast which hosted the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

There are hopes the Olympics will boost Brisbane's profile, making it more attractive to tourists who tend to use it as a jumping-off point for attractions like the Great Barrier Reef.

A report in The Australian newspaper said the Games will cost Au\$5bn, with the opening and closing ceremonies taking place at a redeveloped Gabba cricket ground.

"It's a historic day not just for Brisbane and Queensland, but for the entire country," said Prime Minister Scott Morrison.

"Only global cities can secure the Olympic Games, so this is



President of the IOC Thomas Bach announces Brisbane as the 2032 Summer Olympics host city



Australia becomes only the second country in the world, after the United States, to stage summer Olympic Games in three different cities

fitting recognition for Brisbane's standing across our region and the world."

The decision means the IOC has now secured hosts for the next three Summer Olympics, with Paris holding the event in 2024 and Los Angeles organising the 2028 Games.

The awarding of the 2032 Olympics was the first to take place with a new election method adopted in June 2019 in an attempt to counter application fees and a lack of serious bids.

Brazil's Formiga makes record seventh appearance at Olympic Games



Brazil's Formiga in action with England's Lucy Bronze

AFP | Tokyo

Brazil's 43-year-old Formiga wrote her name into the record books as the first women's football player to take part in seven Olympic Games when she took the field against China in yesterday's group opener at the Miyagi Stadium in Rifu.

Formiga, who made her Brazil debut at the 1995 World Cup as a 17-year-old, has played in every Olympic

tournament since women's football made its debut at the 1996 Atlanta Games.

The Sao Paulo midfielder is looking to finish her career with an elusive gold medal having won the silver in 2004 and 2008, while the 2016 Games in Rio ended in heartbreak when the home team lost their semi-final and the bronze medal match.

Brazil are in Group G along with China, Zambia and the Netherlands.

Britain's Hill out of Games due to COVID-19 positive



Britain's Amber Hill celebrates second place in the Women's Skeet Final

AFP | Tokyo

Britain's world number one shooter Amber Hill withdrew from the Tokyo Olympics on Wednesday after she tested positive for COVID-19 before departure, Team GB said in a statement.

Hill, who was due to compete in Olympic Skeet, said she was devastated.

"There are no words to describe how I'm feeling right now," said the 23-year-old, who was a finalist at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Games.

"After five years of training

and preparation, I'm absolutely devastated to say that last night I received a positive COVID-19 test, meaning I've had to withdraw from Team GB's shooting team.

"I will be back from this, but right now I need some time to reflect and take in what has happened."

Team GB said no replacement would be selected.

Hill, a silver medalist at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, was the most experienced athlete on the British shooting team.

Tokyo Games more relevant than ever, says Murray

AFP | Tokyo

Reigning champion and twice tennis gold medallist Andy Murray says an Olympics amid the COVID-19 pandemic is more relevant than ever, and that the Tokyo Games can provide hope for those who have suffered during the last 18 months.

The 2020 Games, postponed from last year, start in earnest with Friday's Opening Ceremony, and participants are set to compete at empty venues to minimise the risk of infections.

"The Games are the biggest competition in the world and as athletes we train hard for moments like this," Murray said in comments emailed to Reuters.

"Tokyo 2020 in 2021 is unique, falling during the pandemic and we have seen incredible resilience from athletes, fans and all those involved in making this happen."

"In so many ways, right now it's more important than ever that people around the world get to reconnect to the raw emotion of sport, watch incredible performances and celebrate the achievement of athletes coming from around the world."

The 34-year-old Murray has been working his way back to full fitness following hip-resur-



Andy Murray of Britain during training facing surgery in 2019.

Defending gold

He is excited at the prospect of defending his Olympics title for a second time having won men's singles gold at London 2012 and again in Rio de Janeiro in 2016.

"Leading Team GB at the Opening Ceremony in Rio was one of the highlights of my career, and winning in 2012 on home ground was an incredible moment," he said.

"Overcoming barriers and difficulties is what defines competing at this level, the ups and the downs.

"For those that are still experiencing the worst of the pandemic and others that have lost so much over the last year, this Games can be a beacon of hope."

Tokyo will be Murray's fourth Games, and the Scot is not giving up hope of adding to his medals, which also include a mixed doubles silver from London.

"My goal is to try and win a medal. Ideally a gold one for my country," he said.

"I know first-hand the impact that playing sport for a career has on your body. I know how difficult and frustrating that journey can be. I know the heartbreak of missing a major

tournament and the journey of recovery."

Swiss Roger Federer and Rafa Nadal are among a host of big names in tennis who have skipped the Tokyo Games, which is being held under strict health protocols to curb the spread of the virus.

"There are many athletes for whom 2020 should have been a crowning achievement, who will now not even make the rescheduled Games this summer. I truly feel for them," Murray added.

"It's no secret how much the fans support means to me and I have great sympathy for the crowds who won't be able to be there in person."

Olympic and Japanese officials have continued with the Games despite opposition from the citizens in the country to hosting more than 11,000 athletes, staff and media.



The Games are the biggest competition in the world and as athletes we train hard for moments like this

ANDY MURRAY