



DMITRY MIKHAILOV: OUR MAIN TASK IS TO ENSURE A HIGH STANDARD OF BROADCASTING

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INTERVIEWS

Deputy Director General of the Executive Directorate for Sports Projects, Dmitry Mikhailov, who is responsible for supervising broadcasting and mass media services, told us how exactly this great sports event will be broadcast throughout the whole world and what countries will be able to follow the success of their favourite athletes in real-time mode.

No one says that 4.5 bln people will be following the competitions at the same time

– We often hear that hypothetically 4.5 bln people are supposed to be watching the 16th FINA World Championships. What is this statistics based on?

– This statistics is based on the following: the percentage of broadcast live and re-run audience, the percentage of audience following the news about the Championships and discipline-related sports event. In sum, this number reflects the audience from the whole world which will follow the competitions in their own way. No one says that 4.5 bln people simultaneously will start watching the Championships on TV (smiles). It is an overall number of an interested audience.

– Is it a bit higher than the Barcelona 2013 figure?

– We are not setting the records here. According to the Barcelona 2013 statistics, 4.5 bln people are likely to watch our Championships. We may say this number is based on their data. However, with the interest to the forthcoming Championships from television broadcasting companies increasing, this number is likely to be higher. Or in other words we do not expect the audience less than 4.5 bln. Why? Two years ago there were about 70 television and radio broadcasting companies, this time there are almost 90. That is why the interest in the Championships is unlikely to decrease, but as for increasing I'll comment on that only after the end of the Championships supported by broadcast reports.

– Is it true to say that these 90 television and radio broadcasting companies represent not only sports-oriented countries but also the ones which have rather recently gotten on the sports track?

– Right holders of all television and radio companies from the whole world, from all the continents will work at the Championships except for Antarctic Continent of course. To be precise, Asia is represented by very interested companies from Thailand, Hong Kong and the Philippines. Latin America consists of Brazilian company and one Argentinian company that broadcasts in neighbouring countries: Chile, Bolivia and Costa Rica. In Africa? Tunisia, for example. Australia has also acquired the rights. Europe and North America are sort of frequenters in the mass media market.

Basing on only the total overall of right holders we can suppose that mass media companies are so much excited about the upcoming Championships. The figures are twice higher than the ones of the previous tournaments. For instance, there were supposed to be no more than 400 mass media representatives at the Championships but as of today there are already more 800 accredited mass media members from 15 countries.

– Have you already met all of them?

– Last autumn we had a meeting with international television and radio broadcasting companies touring them around two sports venues – Aquatics Palace and Kazan Arena Stadium; we also showed them certificates of temporary facilities. Considering all the provided services during the Championships (accommodation, transport) they were due to take the final decision concerning the number of their representatives at the Championships. According to the twice-high figure we got we believe they liked it all (smiles).

Electric power will be sufficed even for the small neighbourhood

– What does IBC stand for? It seems to be a crucial part of your department.

– IBC is an International Broadcasting Center which produces international television signal. It is kind of an essential element of every major international event. TV and radio transmissions from all the sports venues first will be collected in that center, later on they will be sent to the whole world. We even dare to say that IBC represents a center tremendously responsible for providing the whole world with glorious image of the upcoming Championships.

– *Do you have an idea of how much equipment will work in the Centre?*

– It is difficult to give a proper answer because no international partner is aware of how much luggage with equipment they will take to Kazan. Some equipment will be brought by the host broadcasting company, some more will be brought by the rights-holding broadcasters who have decided to deliver broadcasts right from the Championships venues. Only upon their arrival we will learn about the exact quantities. The thing is that IBC is a temporary facility of 3,000 m² indoor areas expected to function to its full potential. I can say the Centre will use 1.2 megawatt (MW) of electricity in total. While a common private home is considered to use up to max 15 kilowatts (kW), electric power use by IBC will be equal to that by a small community.

– *Who has selected the host broadcasting company for the Kazan 2015 FINA World Championships? And what was the process?*

– FINA did select the host broadcasting company. Given that they relied on a successful cooperation at the previous events. Unfortunately, they had no experience of collaborating with Russian broadcasters, that's why a company from Europe was chosen.

No worries Russian spectators will not miss out on broadcasts

– *It does not mean that the Russian audience will miss out on the Championships broadcasts, does it?*

– Of course not. The largest media corporation in Russia, VGTRK, is the rights-holding company on the territory of Russia. Consequently, Rossiya 1, Rossiya 2 and Sport 1 TV channels will provide live stream and recording coverage of the Kazan 2015 Championships. As far as I know, VGTRK permits the local TV channels – TNV and Kazan television and broadcasting companies – to cover the tournament in the local news. So there is no need to worry. As you see, even the locals have an opportunity to tell about performance of our country-men and women.

– *Progress does not stand still. What technical novelties in broadcasting network can surprise the upcoming Championships?*

– Yes, it is true. Absolutely all events will be broadcast in HD format and such latest generation hardware as Super SM broadcasting cameras, which allow to run slow motion replays and show tiny details, will help broadcasting. Subsea cameras will be also widely used. Some cameras will be installed at high points especially for panorama views of Kazan and its beautiful architecture and address plans of the sports venues.

– *I suppose, long ahead of the World Championships kickoff you have had a concept of where, what and how many cameras your department and the host broadcaster will request to have. But how was it possible to make at the Water Polo Arena, the place which served as a parking lot just a half a year ago?*

– First of all, directors of the broadcasting company apply to a traditional allocation of cameras by sports discipline. Second of all, they pay attention to peculiar features of a venue. And one more important thing is their creativity potential. This accounts for beauty and interesting details of sports venues and competitions themselves.

Both temporary and permanent sports facilities have their unique architectural looks, but were erected according to rigid FINA rules and regulations. Such constant values as swimming pool, height of constructions, distance to decks hardly differ from venue to venue worldwide. Aware of these data, you can make calculations and design projects. A year before the Worlds we already had a clear vision of these venues. For the last nine months we have been busy implementing these ideas including this parking lot (smiles).

– *How many cameras will operate at each sports venue?*

– Twenty five cameras will broadcast swimming and synchronised swimming, simply, because these events are held at one and the same venue – Kazan Arena Stadium. At the Water Polo Arena twelve cameras will cover the group round, their number will increase up to 18 for the final stages. Fifteen cameras will be located in the Aquatics Palace and the Kazanka Venue will broadcast open water swimming and high diving competitions from 11 and 12 cameras respectively. About twenty cameras will be owned by the rights-holding broadcasters.

Without TV even the largest tournament takes risks to go down in history of the host city only

– *Was the Universiade experience an advantage for the FINA World Championships preparation given that not all aquatics sports were represented in the FISU Games?*

– First, the Universiade turned out to be that platform for polishing our organizational skills. Second, ANO Sports Broadcasting (Panorama brand – V.D.) with a technical base and an experienced staff was created for the FISU and Olympic Games in Russia. The Panorama staff already have these two large global

tournaments behind their backs and will be recruited by the host sports broadcaster again, for the World Championships this time. That's why, Russia and particularly Kazan still benefit from the foundation basis formed at the Universiade and the Olympics.

– There is an opinion that requirements for quality of broadcasts and pictures for the FINA World Championships are regulated in a more rigid manner than at the Universiade, for example. Did you pay attention to this when you first read the requirements?

– Yes, I did. The FINA requirements are stricter, in fact. However, we recognise our full responsibility. Without TV any, even the largest competitions will become history of the local citizens only. Another thing is, if a tournament is broadcast worldwide, it is eagerly discussed in every nook and cranny on the planet. So our common goal is to organise the best broadcasting.

As far as the requirements are concerned, it became easier for us to work when every step, every requirement were spelled out in advance. FINA treats this issue very seriously. Understanding their expectations, we are easier to compromise with our partners.

The Whims of nature are not up to us. As to the rest, everything is perfect for them

– During the last visit to the Kazan Arena Stadium, Secretary General of the Executive Directorate for Sports Project, Ranko Tepavcevic showed how easily and using the shortest way, journalists can get from the press tribunes right to the Mixed Zone. What about other venues?

– Mixed zone is a place where rightsholders and non-rightsholders work together at the same place but their activities will be regulated. For example, it is not a usual thing to happen at the major sporting events but at the Championships the broadcasters will be privileged a bit, they will be the first ones to take an interview, followed by non-rightsholders, journalists and representatives of information agencies.

– You are quite right. This doesn't happen a lot at Russian International events.

– It is an international practice that is going to be carried out at the 16th FINA World Championships. They are quite strict rules to follow but both Mixed Zone managers and the Host Broadcasters staff will make sure to put them through giving the first right straightly to the broadcasters.

As for the route arrangements from the Press tribunes to the Mixed Zone it is completely alleviated within every sports venue. I believe journalists as well as the broadcasters will feel comfortable working at the Championships bringing us only positive feedback. Let's not get ahead of ourselves but speak according to the situation (smiles).

– As for the feedback. Most of the time commentators like poking fun at the Organising Committee for example complaining about not so good places in the stands. Do you expect something like this to happen?

– Commentators will enjoy the most favourable places in the stands, it is either next to the finish line or the central sector. They definitely have certain advantages. Moreover basically we already know how exactly TV and radio broadcasters will be placed, where they will be seated and tried to let our partners know that.

The only thing that we are not able to take control of is the weather. It is unlikely to predict whether it's going to shine excessively or rain cats and dogs. However, fortunately or not the whims of nature are not up to us. As to the rest we did our best in providing the encouraging environment for our commentators to work and air live full of positive emotions.

Vsevolod Dvorkin, Press Office of Organising Committee for 16th FINA World Championships



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