

Torino 2006

*XX Olympic Winter Games
February 10-26, 2006*

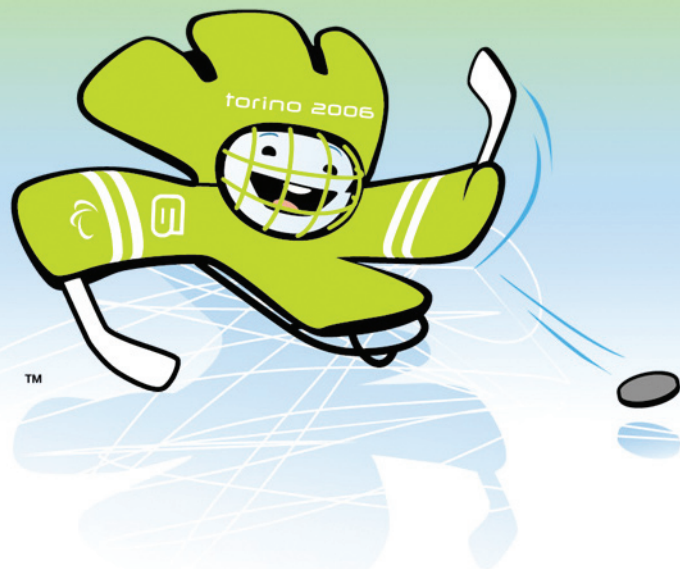
OPENING CEREMONIES

An unparalleled show which will keep over two billion viewers glued to the TV screens: On the evening of **February 10th 2006** starting from 8pm the first unforgettable emotion with the Opening Ceremony for the XX Olympic Winter Games of Torino 2006, at the Olympic Stadium.

The values of brotherhood and dialogue between people and their cultures, making the Olympic Games such a unique sporting event, will be celebrated by athletes marching and waving their national flags and colours. The Italian style and creativity will be expressed through amazing settings, mass-choreographies, astonishing light installations and a memorable soundtrack.

CLOSING CEREMONIES

The Closing Ceremony, programmed for **February 26, 2006 at 8pm**, will join athletes and spectators in a joyful and passionate embrace, renewing the appointment for the next edition of the Olympic Games.



ICE HOCKEY

Stick, puck, skates. Strength, stamina, power...

Two goals, one referee and two linesmen, an ice rink from which the hockey puck never exits.

The fast rhythm, the physical contact playing an integral part of the game and a super passionate stadium urging the players on.

Then, an emotional release, the oldest shout in the world: goal!

HOCKEY AT THE OLYMPICS

Men's ice hockey has been an Olympic discipline since the Olympic Summer Games in Anversa in 1920. It was subsequently introduced to the Olympic Winter Games in Chamonix in 1924.

The first four editions witnessed the domination of the Canadians but after the war the Soviet team started to impose their authority up until the beginning of the nineties. Since then, the European teams have dominated the podium at the Olympic Games. Sweden in 1994, and the Czech Republic in Nagano in 1998 (the first Olympics open to American NHL professionals). At Salt Lake City in 2002, Canada beat the USA in one of the most memorable matches ever held.

Women's ice hockey was added to the Olympic Sport Programme for the 1998 Olympic Winter Games in Nagano: the USA defeated the favoured Canadians. At the 2002 Olympic Winter Games in Salt Lake City, the Canadian reversed their fortunes by defeating the favoured team from the USA for the gold medal.

ICE HOCKEY IN ITALY

In Italy, ice hockey was born on the frozen lake of the Valentino Park in Torino in 1911, before spreading to other northern parts of the country. In 1923 the first artificial field was created in Milan, on which the Milan Hockey Club and the Red and Black Devils Hockey Club started to play the following year.

These two clubs monopolised the championships from the very beginning. From then on, with changing fortunes, they competed for the championship against clubs from the Veneto and Alto Adige regions (Bolzano, Cortina, Merano, Asiago, Gardena). Having experienced a difficult period in the last few years, Italian ice hockey is now undergoing a relaunch in preparation for Torino 2006, with the rebirth of hockey clubs throughout the north of Italy.

