

Nuzman was a member of Brazil's volleyball team at Tokyo 1964



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Carlos Arthur Nuzman, president of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games Organising Committee

Described as the “Seb Coe of Brazil”, Carlos Arthur Nuzman is an experienced sports administrator who combines highly polished political nous with an understanding of what it takes to compete at elite level. A lawyer by profession, Nuzman was a key member of the Brazilian volleyball team at the 1964 Tokyo Summer Games.

After a 15-year playing career, Nuzman's first taste of sports administration came when he was named president of the Brazilian Volleyball Confederation (CBV) in 1975 – a role he held for twenty years. During

his time at CVB, he oversaw the golden era of Brazilian volleyball, which culminated in the men's team winning Olympic gold at the 1992 Barcelona Games.

OLYMPIC APPOINTMENT

Nuzman's successful reign steering the CVB didn't go unnoticed and in 1995 he was appointed president of the Brazilian Olympic Committee (COB). In his new role, the ambitious Nuzman set out to convince the Brazilian government that hosting the Olympic Games would benefit not just sport, but also raise the nation's profile on the global stage and provide a

boost to its aspirations of becoming an economic powerhouse.

After two failed bids (Rio was a candidate city for the 2004 and 2012 Games) the Nuzman-led Rio bid team proved that third time can indeed be lucky. On 2 October 2009 the International Olympic Committee announced Rio as host of the 2016 Games and Nuzman went, overnight, from leader of a bid city to president of the Organising Committee of the 2016 Olympic Games.

GAMES WITH BENEFITS

A month before the Games, Nuzman's views remain pretty much the same that they were more than two decades ago, when he first set out on the long journey to secure them. “Rio 2016 will bring opportunities and benefits to society as well as unprecedented improvements in urban development,” Nuzman says.

“It will boost development not only in Rio de Janeiro, but all over Brazil. The Games will make an entire nation's dream come true.”

He is convinced that the Rio Games – the first ever Olympics to be held in South America – will also benefit the Olympic family, by introducing it to a new continent and by proving that smaller nations can deliver successful, smaller scale Olympics.

“Rio fought for the honour of being an Olympic city because we wanted to expand the frontiers of the Olympic movement,” Nuzman says. “We wanted the first Games in Brazil, in South America, so people could witness Olympic history in a new region of the world.”

“The Rio Games will also be on a smaller scale than previous ones – such as Beijing 2008 and London 2012 – as we understood that we shouldn't try and repeat the giant scale of those Games. With Rio, the Games have to returned to a previous time, when it was possible for cities and countries in any region of the world to become hosts.”

POLITICS AND SPORT

Nuzman is confident that there is one aspect of the 2016 Games which will be on a par with London, however – the creation of a lasting legacy post-



The Olympic Torch has been all over Brazil on its final stretch to Rio

Games. A large area of Rio's landscape has already been transformed by Olympic infrastructure and, says Nuzman, there won't be any white elephants.

“We decided to organise Games that are economically sustainable and in keeping with current global conditions,” he says. “We are committed to the transformation of Rio because, for us, the core mission of the Games is to deliver a tangible legacy.”

The well documented economic difficulties, which have led to a deep recession and resulted in the governor of Rio declaring a “state of financial emergency” just 49 days before the beginning of the Games, haven't deterred Nuzman either.

“The Games will confirm that Brazil will always come out of trouble stronger than before,” he says. “We will put on a great Games and Rio 2016 will help our people to feel more confident.”

For Nuzman, the Olympics epitomise how sport and politics can be equally effective in delivering positive change. “Sport and diplomacy share values and contribute to social equality in the same magic way,” he says. “For me, the power of words equals the explosion of energy of an athlete in crucial moments of competition and the grit and determination of an Olympian equals the stamina of a negotiator.

“Sport and diplomacy, in their respective moments, have halted wars.”

The Rio 2016 Olympic Games will run from 5 August, the date of the opening ceremony, until the last day of competition on 21 August. ●