

The dream "Deaflympics" nightmare

By Marc Brassard from Le Droit

While broadcasters Olympics Vancouver pandering good times in this competition a year later, those who were to participate in Deaflympics in Slovakia this week will finally not have the chance to create their own memories.

This is because these Olympics for the Deaf have turned into a nightmare when they were canceled at the last minute on Friday.

David Joseph and his teammates have learned curling the bad news while they were taking place in an Air France bus to take them to Montreal for their flight to the Old Continent, buses that had turn back just a few minutes after their departure.

"My teammates, our coaches and I were really disappointed. We had a lot of misery to believe all that! It was unthinkable to see an international event to be canceled one week in advance! ", said Joseph, a Franco-Ontarian now residing in Aylmer, in an email exchange.

"We trained hard until our departure. We were all very excited to go. Under the eyes of family members and friends, we left with full of joy, then our journey only lasted 20 minutes. I learned the bad news of our chef de mission while our coach got a call from a travel agency. One of our teammates (Third, André Guillemette) was from the airport of Quebec, but at the registration desk, he received the bad news. He was rather angry and frustrated, "he added.

This is understandable. But at least they have not typed some seven hours for nothing, as members of the team of ice hockey, which was to confront the United States yesterday lifted the curtain on the tournament - Canada should have a delegation of 41 athletes in total, are also represented in alpine skiing and snowboarding. They were landed in Vienna, Austria, last Wednesday for a training camp.

Pursuit

The cancellation of the 17th Deaflympics, held in winter and summer alternately since 1949, prompted the International Committee of Sports for the Deaf in a lawsuit against the organizing committee of the games that were scheduled in the city of Vysoké Tatry, Slovakia. The Athletic Association of the Deaf (CASS) said it has spent more than \$ 100 000 in travel expenses of some of his delegation of 62 people in total.

"The players had to pay 25% of costs, or \$ 1,800, while the ASSC covered the remaining 75%. But we were fortunate to have many sponsors to pay \$ 1,800, mainly for the Deaf Foundation of Quebec, "said David Joseph, who had taken leave from his job as a financial analyst for the federal government to take part in the competition (he decided to take vacation anyway, unlike three of his teammates).

His team, completed by the lead, Michael Cyr and the skip, Michael Raby, also in the Aylmer sector of Gatineau, in addition to an alternate, Guy Morin, Gatineau, and coach Denise Hoekstra, Ottawa, had qualified for the Deaf Olympics by winning the 31st Canadian Curling Championship for the Deaf last April in Richmond, British Columbia.

The competition in Slovakia should give them the opportunity to defend their gold medal win at the last Deaflympics in Salt Lake City in 2007. They were also crowned champions of the 2009 World Championship. "We had one goal: to win the gold medal in Slovakia ... We followed our game plans to improve ourselves for four years and it's a big pill to swallow hard when we finally realize we're not in Slovakia," he said.

In closing, I guess you're asking me the same question about curling played by deaf people: how do they communicate if they do not hear the cries of "Hurry, hurry hard"?

"Instead of shouting, we make hand gestures to know what we must do. There are codes that we have established to ensure good communication. Of course, there is a small disadvantage compared to people who can hear screams," I replied very simply David Joseph.