



#13 - Forever first

Nacer Zorgani: Hi, this is Nacer Zorgani; I work for Paris 2024 in the Volunteer Programme. What is the Volunteer Programme? What do volunteers do, what are their roles, what are their assignments? To answer these questions, to talk about the programme, to talk about the volunteer experience, join me with the men and women who have taken part, are taking part and will be taking part in the Games. Welcome to “In the Volunteer's Uniform”!

And we're continuing to bring you up-to-date with the preparations for the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games through news from the Volunteer Programme. And what's the news this summer?

Marseille is in the news! Marseille will host the first event in the Paris 2024 test programme. Let's talk about what a test programme and a test event are.

But that's not all: Marseille will be returning to its ancient colours, its Ancient Greek colours, I should say, with ceremonies and celebrations, as well as sporting competitions...and to tell us about them rather than you having to listen to me for ages, Delphine Moulin, Director of Celebrations for Paris 2024, Adèle Stern, Project Manager coordinating everything that's happening in Marseille, and Nicolas Novarra, Manager in charge of the Olympic sailing events, are all here. Thank you for joining us!

Together: Hello Nacer!

Nacer Zorgani: Let's start with you, Adèle and Nicolas. You're joining us live from Marseille remotely, so can you tell us what's going to happen there?

Adèle Stern: Yes, of course, Nacer, so we have three major highlights in Marseille during this Olympiad. The first one, which is happening tomorrow as we speak, from 7 to 16 July 2023, is the sailing test event, with over 1,500 people expected to attend, including 348 athletes. It's going to be a real competition.

The second major highlight of this Olympiad will be the arrival of the Olympic Flame in Marseille, which will be lit in Olympia and then set sail for Athens aboard the Belem, arriving in the Old Port of Marseille on 8 May 2024, before, of course, beginning the torch relay through the 66 stage towns.

Then the third major highlight is, of course, the two Olympic events, i.e. the Sailing events from 28 July to 8 August, with 12 days of competition and 330 athletes, and the Football Tournament from 24 July to 6 August, with 10 football matches at the legendary Stade Vélodrome.

And just so you know, we've also got six football matches in Nice from 24 July to 5 August. And, you can count on us to keep the South of France abuzz with the excitement of those Games!

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you very much, Adèle, and as you said, Delphine Moulin, in charge of the Celebrations, I'd like to turn to you now, because before we start talking about the test sailing events, I'd like to start by talking about a symbolic moment during the Games, which is the Olympic Flame's presence in Marseille! Can you tell us more about it?

Delphine Moulin: So, yes, the flame is a bit of the magic of the Games, it's the flame that we're going to bring back and that triggers the celebrations in the host country.

So we're going to pick up this flame in Olympia, which is lit by the rays of the sun. It will make a short trip in Greece and from there it will take a boat from Piraeus. And it will make a crossing on the Belem, the famous three-masted ship.

So why the Belem? Because the Belem is historic, everybody loves it and it's also a boat that made its maiden voyage in 1896, the same year that the modern games were relaunched by Pierre De Coubertin...In short, a lot of history, a lot of symbols.

And for this arrival in Marseille, well, Marseille is all about the link with Greece, the link with the Mediterranean. There are lots of stories to be told here, and we're obviously going to be throwing a big party in the second largest city in France, with the same festive spirit.

Adèle Stern: To add to what Delphine said about the festivities and celebrations, Marseille is very accustomed to hosting these major sporting events and festivals.

For example, the Breakdancing World Championships, last April, the *Pétanque* World Championship, which also takes place every year, the Rugby World Cup in the autumn, and an international music festival held on the Prado Beaches.

Marseille has shown that it can host major sporting and cultural events, and will also be able to host the world's biggest sporting event, the Games.

Nacer Zorgani: In the Marseille style! We'll see you at the Old Port to celebrate, but in the meantime, we have to get ready, and to prepare, there's what's called a test event. What is a test event, and in particular a sailing test event, Nicolas?

Nicolas Novara: Well, Nacer, a sailing test event is an operational rehearsal that will be, I would say, purely technical. In the case of sailing, it will be the first Paris 2024 test event to be organised on the same site as the Olympic competitions.

We'll be welcoming the same number of athletes as during the Olympic event, so this is a rehearsal that will serve to deliver the best possible competition in a year's time, but also to the athletes.

And so it can be the best possible competition in a year's time, we're talking about 10 events, 10 podiums and 1,400 people on the Marina site in Marseille. So we can't wait to get started!

Nacer Zorgani: Which site are we talking about for the sailing events, Adèle?

Adèle Stern: We're talking about the Olympic Marina, which is the competition venue for the sailing test event this year, and which will be the venue for the Olympic regattas in 2024.

It's right in the heart of Marseille, close to the Prado Beaches, along the Corniche Kennedy, which Marseille residents love and which is one of Marseille's landmarks.

It's got a sea view, of course, because you have to have a view of the boats, and most importantly it's close to the Olympic Village, which will be housed in a hotel right next to the Olympic Marina, which will become a place open to the public, to the people of Marseille, after the Games, which was not the case before the Games.

Nacer Zorgani: Exactly what type of event will the Marina site in Marseilles be hosting? For people who don't know sailing, like me, for example?

Nicolas Novara: There will be 10 Olympic sailing events. Five new disciplines that will be skipping over the water, because for the first time during the Paris 2024 Olympic Games, we'll have five foiling disciplines that will be skimming over the water!

These are some pretty exceptional disciplines: Windsurf foiling, kitefoiling and Nacra-17, which are going to add a particularly spectacular vibe, and we can't wait to be able to start showing the whole world these new sailing disciplines, which are pretty crazy!

Adèle Stern: For the uninitiated, the foil is a sailboard like a traditional windsurfer, with a wing underneath that allows you to be much higher up in the water. So it's quite spectacular because it allows you to go very, very fast, as there's no friction, and it makes for a spectacular and innovative competition.

Nacer Zorgani: Why was Marseille chosen for the sailing events?

Nicolas Novara: The city of Marseille has always looked to the sea. But it was also felt that sailing isn't sufficiently promoted here. And it's true that this is a fantastic opportunity to showcase Marseille's waterways.

It's an exceptional setting, sandwiched between the island of Frioul, the Calanques National Park, the beaches of Marseille and the nearby town of Bonne-Mer.

So it's a fantastic setting and a body of water fed by the dominant banks that you all know, the famous Mistral wind that blows through Marseille all year round, giving us conditions that are just as perfect for a sailing competition.

It's going to be a multifaceted body of water, a body of water that's going to require all the athletes to be as technically proficient as possible in order to be the best they can be, and it's also an opportunity to showcase this harbour to the whole world.

Marseille is not yet recognised in the same way as Sydney in Australia, Auckland in New Zealand or San Francisco, but it has everything it takes to be one of the new capitals of Olympic sailing and sailing in general.

Nacer Zorgani: So that was the first dress rehearsal for the sailing. There was also the grand arrival of the flame on this famous three-masted ship that you mentioned earlier, Delphine, an arrival, a celebration, but also the torch relay, a departure?

Delphine Moulin: Exactly, this famous prologue is when we set foot in France, in Marseille, and it's an incredible moment because it's when we really get the flame back and it's from there that it's going to set off on the roads of France for more than two-and-a-half months.

And the aim of the Torch Relay is really to get the regions as involved as possible, to get all the generations involved, so that people can see this magic and really experience the Games, get involved, get mobilised and finally be completely ready to support the Olympic and Paralympic Games afterwards.

And so all these torchbearers - there will be more than 11,000 of them on the Olympic and Paralympic Torch Relays - are all people with extraordinary stories, who are involved in their community, who do things related to sport and to the land, collectively, and we really want to tell their stories. So, first and foremost, it's a human adventure.

Nacer Zorgani: But you can't talk about Marseille, you can't talk about this arrival, this flame, without talking about the other flame that makes the hearts of the people of Marseille beat a little faster, which is football. Adèle, what's going to happen? Because football is a mystical, religious subject in Marseille, what's the plan for the football?

Adèle Stern: Yes, mystical, mythical. Of course, Marseille is a historic football town with 10 French league titles for Olympique de Marseille and that historic Champions League victory the year I was born, the 30-year anniversary of which we celebrated this year!

And I'll spare you the maths, it was 1993, that iconic triumph. Here, L'OM, football, match nights, it's really something that is a key part of the life of the people of Marseille and represents the spirit that we too would like to instil in the Games - this spirit of sporting celebration, sharing, inclusion and diversity and, of course, everyone will be welcome for these 10 matches at Marseille's stadium!

So 10 matches in a fortnight of competition, and what's more, it's quite funny, because once again we'll be the first, because we'll have two matches on 24 and 25 July. Before the opening ceremony of the Games, which will take place on 26 July!

In fact, what's interesting is that there's parity in this tournament, so we'll have five men's teams and five women's teams, which is really important for Paris 2024. There will also be two France matches on 24 and 30 July, save the date! And six matches in the pool phase and four matches in the quarter-finals and semi-finals. So we're expecting a really big crowd in the stands and in the famous South and North Ends, which are particularly popular with the Marseille fans!

Nacer Zorgani: We're going to talk about the Games, we're also going to talk about volunteers because, as you know, we're in the Volunteers Programme. I'm going to ask you a question about your experience of volunteers, an anecdote, a memory, an interaction with a volunteer during a test event in your past experience of the Games, if you have one that stood out for you?

Delphine Moulin: I've been through a lot of games. This is my eighth time, so I can speak from experience. For me, the volunteers...it's not even that they improve things, it's that they create the experience for all the spectators and also the athletes and the media, all the people who experience the Games, because they bring that smile, that welcome, that attention that people don't necessarily have because things can always get a bit rushed...

And for me, that's what volunteers are there for, they're there to be in contact with others, they're there to meet people, and for multicultural encounters, because the Games are obviously an

international event, so it's marvellous to be able to be with them and it changes the experience of us organisers completely.

Nicolas Novara: Yes, it's true that I was lucky enough to take part in the Beijing Games, and I was very close to the athletes because I was coaching a national team at the time.

And then, when you're an athlete, when you're a coach, you're driven by performance and results. Your days aren't always what you'd hoped for, and sometimes you come home a little worn-out, a little frustrated. It's difficult; you haven't performed as well as you'd hoped.

But when we come back down to Earth, they're there, they're happy to see us, so we get our strength back, we get our energy back, and it's true that these volunteers are still the best image of the Olympic Games we can present, wherever we are in the world and whatever the culture, I'd say.

Nacer Zorgani: Thank you very much, thank you, Delphine, thank you, Adèle, and thank you, Nicolas, for being with us. See you in the next episode, see you soon.

Delphine Moulin: Thank you very much!

Nicolas Novara: Thank you, Nacer!

Adèle Stern: Thank you!