

JULY 2024

Olympics: From Best/Worst Openings to AI Impact

They say that artistic expression is subjective and that everyone has their own creative style. And that may most accurately describe the **Paris Games** opening night ceremonies that we experienced on Friday evening.

Here in the United States, the Olympics broadcast opened with a four-minute production by renowned storyteller Steven Spielberg.

Many with artistic flair described the Paris extravaganza as a **creative pageant of epic proportions** with its chicness and nod to high fashion while critics with opposing viewpoints lambasted the ceremony as **an embarrassment and over-the-top massive disappointment** because it focused so much on Paris and French culture and so little on the athletes.

Paris faced a huge challenge to begin with as it would be compared with two of the most spectacular opening ceremonies: Beijing in 2008 and London in 2012.

Viva la difference!

The elements that follow are those that boldly stood out. Use your own perspective to make your case for a vote of excellence or a vote of disappointment:

- Two of the world's elite musical divas - **Lady Gaga and Celine Dion** - thrilled the audience with their performances. Lady Gaga sang and danced to "Mon Truc En Plumes".
- Rather than parading all of the athletes and dignitaries in the traditional setting of a stadium, the Paris Olympic organizers chose **to stage them on boats floating down the Seine River and arriving at the base of the Eiffel Tower**. The creativity was admirable **but** what was missing was the thunderous volume of cheering from an audience in a large stadium.
- At the end of the **Olympic Torch ceremony**, French soccer ("football" to be technically correct) **Zinedine Zidane** transferred the torch to tennis legend **Rafael Nadal**, winner of 14 French Open championships. He carried the torch and handed it off to **Serena Williams**, holder of three French Open titles, who then passed it to nine-time Olympic track medalist American track star **Carl Lewis**, who then forwarded the torch to Romanian gymnast **Nadia Comaneci**, who scored the first-ever perfect 10 in an Olympic gymnastics competition. She then gave the torch to French tennis great **Amelie Mauresmo**, who carried it to the Louvre. From there a series of French Olympians and Paralympians carried the torch to **Charles Coste**, who at the age of 100, is the oldest living French Olympian.



- The final lighting of the Olympic cauldron was an extravaganza as two famous French three-time Olympics gold medalists carried the torches from Charles Coste. They lit the cauldron, which then floated away as the base of a hot air balloon – the most spectacular moment of the ceremony. As **Celine Dion brought the crowd to tears as she performed an emotional rendition of “Hymne à l’amour,” from the Eiffel Tower.**
- **Arson and vandalism** led to the massive disruption of the Paris train system, thus preventing huge numbers of attendees from watching the opening ceremony in person as they missed the live ceremony.
- **The Olympic Village** that houses the athletes offers cramped quarters, shared bathrooms (in one case, two bathrooms for 10 female athletes), and no air conditioning. Hardly a first-class experience for the convocation of the world’s greatest athletes. Many have moved to hotel accommodations.
- **Rain** – which would have created havoc with any venue – also put a damper on the evening’s ceremonies.

Rather than address the major controversy of the ceremony, I defer to the late broadcast legend **Paul Harvey**. He once carried a story about a stalker at a major sporting event and stated, “The stalker hopes that broadcasters such as I will mention his name. I will not give him that honor or distinction.”

The lesson we learn here is that **everything** is subjective. The creative advertisement that some of your customers praise loudly is likely to offend others. We live in a polarized world in every sphere of influence

Best Olympics TV Commercial

Kudos to Uber for launching a campaign that blends its delivery and rideshare apps. [Adweek reports](#) that the 90-second (and VERY expensive) commercial, which debuted in the Opening Ceremony, opens with **Lou Reed's "Perfect Day"** and scenes of people bummed out by canceled plans with the message "Sometimes showing up makes all the difference."

The message segues into the **Beatles classic, "I Wanna Hold Your Hand"** with a series of joyous moments that show people connecting in a variety of ways that make you smile or even shed a tear.

What a brilliant way to showcase both Uber and Uber Eats!



Or you miss your best friend



Uber



Uber
Eats

Go Anywhere. Get Anything.

Olympics Highlights AI Voice of Al Michaels

Celebrated sports icon **Al Michaels** is now bringing daily Olympics highlights into your home... Well, sort of.

NBC Universal has contracted with Michaels, who has one of the **most recognized** sports voices in America, to license his voice for daily Olympics recaps for subscribers on the Peacock streaming platform.

According to CNN Business, the 10-minute packages include events updates, athlete backstories, and other personalized content based on individual subscriber preferences.

Some AI experts report this is the future of Artificial Intelligence at its best. NBC Universal claims that there could be as many **as seven million (yes, 7,000,000) different ways** to customize the 5,000 hours from live coverage.

Al Michaels is the voice of Thursday Night Football on Amazon Prime and he has broadcast past Olympics on both NBC and ABC. He is best known for calling the **1980 Miracle on Ice Hockey Game** when the amateur American team upset the professional Russian team. His unforgettable line: **"Do you believe in Miracles? I do!"** is among the most famous in the sports broadcast industry.



Olympics Safety: Mayor Jumps in to Prove a Point

It's no secret that the Seine River has experienced a high degree of pollution throughout recent years, with the water testing unsafe for human beings in the past few weeks.

This has led to serious concerns for Olympic swimmers competing in the triathlon and marathon swimming events. It was the same concern that organizers experienced with the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio.

To prove that appropriate sanitation measures have been taken to clean the river for the athletic competition, [USA Today reports](#) that **Paris Mayor Anne Hidalgo** took the plunge on July 17 and swam a distance to affirm her personal and professional commitment to the safety of the Olympians.

There's no word yet if she has contracted any illnesses as a result or if she glows in the dark. Let's hope NOT!



Fans First: Southwest Airlines Prioritizes "Swifties"

Southwest Airlines knows how to sell tickets and create loyal fans. [USA Today reports](#) that the carrier is elevating its service to **Taylor Swift** fans this fall.

When Taylor's **Eras Tour** returns to the U.S. this fall, Southwest is offering additional flights to her performance cities. And check this out: Some of the flight numbers match lyrics in some of her songs such as:

- **Flight #22** from Baltimore/Washington to Fort Lauderdale/Hollywood
- **Flight #1989** from Nashville to Miami

According to Southwest, "Southwest is excited to welcome Swifties and looks forward to celebrating with them as they hit the road to see one of the most successful female artists of all time!"

Success occurs when opportunity meets preparation. What are you doing to leverage timely opportunities that are relevant to your customers' wants, needs, and concerns?



TIEBREAKER Sprinter Took His Foot Off the Gas Too Soon

British 16-year-old sprinter **Jake Odey-Jordan** won the 150-meter sprint in the European Championships on Saturday, July 20. But there's a major problem with this:

THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS A 150-METER SPRINT!

[Check out this YouTube video](#) that shows Jake far ahead of the competition at 150 yards before he shut down his speed and relaxed. To his shock, half of his competitors passed him in the last 10 meters.

Lesson learned: When you have built a lead or reputation in sports or business, continue working with intensity to finish your own race.

