

NOT EVEN THE SECOND CITY

Knockout stuns Chicago, ends 3-year quest for Games

BY LISA DONOVAN

Staff Reporter/ldonovan@suntimes.com

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COPENHAGEN — Mayor Daley's Olympic bid team not only lost the race for the 2016 Games, it came in dead last — a stunning defeat for the city and a popular president who hopped on Air Force One overnight to make the final pitch Friday for his adopted hometown.

"I was shocked, I was disappointed, I couldn't believe it," Daley told reporters in the Danish capital Friday night after the loss. "Everybody doesn't get gold."

But Rio de Janeiro did, riding the wave of sentiment that it was time to take the Olympics to a continent where they've never gone before. Like Chicago, competing cities Tokyo and Madrid fell out of the race during successive elimination rounds.

"Rio ran away with it," said Ed Hula, who runs the venerable Olympics Web site aroundtherings.com

He said the other three cities easily could have hosted the Games, but officials from those cities never answered why they should. "Rio did that," he said.

Chicago's loss ended a three-year marathon to win the Games — one that saw some serious hurdles in the final months. Those included public outcry after Daley announced he would sign the standard Olympics host city contract, putting taxpayers on the hook if the Games lost money.

A series of community meetings quickly followed, persuading the City Council to back the agreement, but still leaving some residents skeptical.

The mayor said Friday night he didn't think that the public outcry over the host city contract was a factor in the International Olympic Committee vote.

And momentum seemed high for Chicago going into Friday's vote, observers say. President Obama flew in early in the morning to help first lady

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Michelle Obama and Daley make a final, formal pitch to the IOC at the Bella Center, Copenhagen's version of McCormick Place.

The president talked about the city's diverse, global face, one that would welcome the world to an Olympics in Chicago. "That's not just the American Dream. That is the Olympic spirit. That's why we see so much of ourselves in these Games."

While the president claims Chicago as his adopted home, wife Michelle grew up on the South Side and shared with the IOC her fond memories of watching the Olympics on TV with her father. The first lady also talked about how her father, an athlete, battled multiple sclerosis

and pushed his children to not take their athletic skills for granted.

"He believed that his little girl should be taught no less than his son. So he taught me how to throw a ball and a mean right hook, better than any boy in my neighborhood," she said, noting that her father taught her the very lessons of the Olympics and other sports competitions: "My dad taught us the fundamental rules of the game, rules that continue to guide our lives today: to engage with honor, with dignity, and fair play."

In the end, Chicago's pitch just wasn't enough. The Second City went out in the first round of voting, garnering just 18 of the 94 IOC votes.

While Chicago 2016 CEO Patrick

Ryan wasn't expecting Chicago to flame out so quickly, if at all, he called the first round of IOC voting "dangerous."

"You just don't really know, the first round is always dangerous," Ryan said. He said he didn't know what went wrong.

"To use a sports metaphor, 'We had a great team, we had a great plan but it wasn't our day to win today,' " said Ryan, a Daley pal. "We fought a good fight. That's the way it goes."

The president and first lady were on Air Force One, bound for the U.S., when they got the news. The president later praised the bid and said he was glad to be there for



Mayor Daley and Chicago 2016 Chairman Patrick Ryan present Chicago's Olympic bid Friday in Copenhagen. | FRANCK FIFE~AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Chicago and the United States.

Daley seemed rankled when asked what the loss might portend for a six-term mayor.

"It's not about Rich Daley. It's never about Rich Daley. You try to make it everything about Rich Daley. This is about America," he said.

Looking at the globe, he said he believes bidding for the 2020 Games wouldn't bear fruit because the IOC will likely want to move the Games out of the Western Hemisphere once the Rio 2016 Games are over.

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