

USOC considers whether to bid for future Games

By John Powers, Boston Globe

To bid or not to bid? And if so, for the summer of 2024 or winter of 2026?

That's the task for the U.S. Olympic Committee's working group, which will make a report to the board in December.

The last two American bids for Games, for 2012 and 2016, were disasters, with New York going out in the second round and Chicago rejected before its mayor had entered the convention center for the vote.

Now that the USOC and the International Olympic Committee have resolved their revenue-sharing dispute with a long-term agreement, the major roadblock is gone.

The IOC clearly would love to have an American candidate, if only to jack up US television rights fees.

But with the cost of a bid around \$50 million and trending higher, the USOC understandably is reluctant to put up another also-ran entry.

"If we don't think we can win, we will not bid," chief executive Scott Blackmun declared after the recent board meeting.

The Americans haven't hosted the Summer Olympics since Atlanta in 1996 and haven't bid for the Winter Games since Salt Lake City hosted in 2002.

With the next two winters slated for Europe (Sochi, Russia) and Asia (Pyeongchang, South Korea) and Munich and St. Moritz both possible candidates for the 2022 edition that will be awarded in 2015, the geopolitical rotation would favor a bid

for 2026; and Salt Lake City, Denver, Lake Tahoe-Reno, and Bozeman, Mont., all have expressed interest.

More likely, though, would be a bid for the summer of 2024, especially if a European city (Madrid or Istanbul) gets the 2020 nod next year. Though the USOC could put up Chicago or New York again or the intriguing possibility of San Francisco, the competition would be stiffer, with Toronto, the next Pan American Games host, likely to be in the chase as well as 2012 runner-up Paris, which would be celebrating the centennial of hosting the 1924 version.

“It’s possible that we could come to the conclusion that a bid does not make sense for a variety of reasons,” observed USOC chairman Larry Probst.