ANDREW MARR:
Well the only person who’s probably under more pressure than the athletes themselves is the man who more than anyone else is responsible for making London 2012 happen. Lord Coe, Sebastian Coe, is Chair of the London Organising Committee of the games and he’s the one ultimately responsible for preparing and staging the Olympics, and presumably has to answer to the IOC if anything goes wrong. Sebastian Coe, good morning.

LORD COE:
No pressure there then. (laughs)

ANDREW MARR:
No pressure there at all. So much to talk about. Let’s start with one of the things that gets people hot under the collar is the tickets arrangements. I mean it’s said that almost two thirds of the tickets you know in the main venue for the top events are actually not available to the public; they’re there for the bigwigs and the corporate sponsors and all the rest of it. If so, that seems a very high proportion.
LORD COE:
Well remember 75 per cent of all the tickets available, 75 per cent of the 11 million tickets that are available are in the hands of the British public. And that’s a commitment we made at the very beginning of this process, and at the end of this process we will deliver it. But you’re right, there are some events - clearly the big ticket events - where actually a large chunk of the stadium, I hate to tell you, is of course taken up by media accreditations as well …

ANDREW MARR:
Yeah, yeah.

LORD COE:
… you know the 100 metre ceremonies and things like that.

ANDREW MARR:
Yes.

LORD COE:
But actually the most important promise that we’ve committed to was that 75 per cent of the tickets will be going to the British public.

ANDREW MARR:
It’s just that you know a lot of people perhaps when they get … if they’re lucky enough to get a ticket allocation at all and they find it’s for a no doubt worthy but somewhat obscure sport at an early stage will be disappointed and feel well I really hoped to go and experience the Olympics at its finest in the big stadium. Are you slightly disappointed by the number of ordinary people who aren’t going to be able to go there?

LORD COE:
No I’m not because, look, clearly when you have nearly 2 million people chancing over 23 million tickets, you know it’s not obviously the opening paragraph of a happy ending. There will be disappointment and I accept that. I’m a sports fan. I know you
know that there was disappointment. That’s why since the opening round of ticket sales, we have committed to getting as many people who were in those initial ballots across the land. That’s what Friday and Saturday this week were about. We know there were 20,000 people that didn’t get tickets in the first round, didn’t get tickets in the second round. That’s why we gave them the 31 hours, and at 11 o’clock this morning there’ll be you know a million people that will also have access to about 900,000 tickets. So we’re working our way through this. But I think the overall point is that there has never been a ticket in the history of sports tickets that has ever had such an extraordinary demand.

ANDREW MARR:
Yes.

LORD COE:
And we committed to three really important things. The first was to make sure that our venues were full, and ideally with people that sort of looked like they wanted to be there. We will achieve that. Affordable prices. Two thirds are under … you know £50 or under. If you look at any premiership match today that’s going on, that benchmarks pretty well. But of course as an organisation that raises a large chunk of our money from the private sector, we had to hit our revenue targets and we’re on stream to do that.

ANDREW MARR:
There is a sense, nonetheless, that there is a sort of corporate hangover over the games almost, that it’s a sort of IOC type game, and for a lot of people this is slightly symbolised by what appears to be a heavy-handedness about the use of even something like London 2012 - so you know a little local bakers who want to put London 2012 on their doughnuts.

LORD COE:
Yeah.

ANDREW MARR:
Or if I said this is the Andrew Marr London 2012 Show, you could have me collared
and led off.

**LORD COE:**
Well actually I probably couldn’t because of course the BBC are a rights holder. So in protect…

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* So I can say it as often as I like?

**LORD COE:**
Well in protecting those sponsors who come to the table with a lot of money to help us stage these games … Let’s be really clear about this - the operating budget is in large part … you know our ability to stage the games is in large part based on our ability to bring our sponsors to the table, and we’ve done that in forty-four extraordinary ways. Actually the BBC is a rights holder, so we would be protecting you from the thought that …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* From me.

**LORD COE:**
*(over)* … other broadcast… Exactly, your organisation from the thought that other broadcasters might actually …

**ANDREW MARR:**
*(over)* I see.

**LORD COE:**
*(over)* … be ambushing what you’ve actually paid for and helped us deliver.

**ANDREW MARR:**
But is it a little bit too heavy-handed when you’ve got neighbourhood bakers who simply want to put something on their doughnuts and they’re told they can’t?
LORD COE:
Our first port of call on this has always been education rather than litigation, and in large part that’s what we’ve done. But it is very important to remember that actually by protecting these brands, by protecting the companies that have actually put money into the games, we’re also protecting the taxpayer because if we don’t reach those targets then actually the taxpayer is the guarantor of last resort.

ANDREW MARR:
Now of course what you have to do is you have to you know deliver games which work and everyone says yes that was a success. But what about the longer term legacy because I mentioned at the beginning great for couch potatoes but there is a real worry you know that there’s not going to be enough of a legacy, we’re not a terribly sporting nation when it comes to young people … Kelly Holmes was talking about young people in playgrounds doing enough. Is there going to be something that this country will remember and will change the national attitude in any way to sport?

LORD COE:
That’s why I went to Singapore unashamedly. I could not see in my lifetime a better vehicle for encouraging, inspiring young people to take up sport. But you’re right, it is always a challenge. I’ve never … I’ve never doubted that the biggest challenge outside of delivering 26 simultaneous world championships over the course of 12 odd days, I’ve never doubted that the biggest challenge outside the project management was to make sure that in ten years time, in the unlikely event that I’m sitting on this programme talking to you about where we’ve got to, that we are able to look back and say, yes, more young people …

ANDREW MARR:
(over) It worked, yeah.

LORD COE:
(over) … yes more young people are playing sport; yes, that the community that we’ve already transformed in East London is still working and in a sustainable way; and that across any sliver of that legacy that we are delivering. But yeah, that’s the challenge. We hand the torch over actually at the end of these games. Whether or not
that happens is in large part due to local and national political energy. And I think a lot of things are in place. I spoke to 22,000 kids the other night …

ANDREW MARR: Okay.

LORD COE: … on the eve of the school games. Over 25,000 schools are involved.

ANDREW MARR: And because we’ve seen a very, very good fly on the wall documentary about this called 2012, I have to ask: do you know the difference between legacy and sustainability?

LORD COE: Yes I do, but I just don’t think your audience this morning would want me to go into great detail about that.

ANDREW MARR: I’ll bet they wouldn’t. Sebastian Coe, thank you very much indeed.

LORD COE: Thank you.

INTERVIEW ENDS