

Thumb's up from sailors



"Everything is different. There has been a lot of development since 2006. All the streets are clean and many new buildings. Really nice."
"It will be a fantastic event for sure."
— Daniel Slater, New Zealand

"I was here last August for a test event, and everything went well. The city is very nice in the places I have seen. Also I find the facilities are more fixed up."
— Kalle Torlen, Sweden



"I hope the weather is fine during the coming competition. Hopefully, there will be enough wind and less fog."
— Carolina Flatscher, Austria

"I will just do my best, and see what happens."
"I do appreciate the efforts of the Chinese in cleaning the water."
— Tania Calles, Mexico



"Qingdao is a nice city and a lot of work has been done with many changes showing. We really appreciate the efforts you have made to welcome us."
— Sebastien Godefroid, Belgium

"This is my sixth time in Qingdao. It's much cleaner and the venues have improved a lot. I can see the Qingdao sailing committee has worked really hard to prepare the venue and make everything look perfect."
— Ulrike Schuemann, Germany



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Yacht teams set sail for gold

By Ju Chuanjiang and Zhao Ruixue

The ocean waters off the coast of Qingdao have been dotted with boats for several months now as hundreds of sailors from home and abroad ready for the world's greatest sporting stage — the Olympics.

Most of the competitors participated in two test events for the Olympic sailing competition held in Qingdao in 2006 and 2007.

Since March, nearly 700 sailors and coaches have been training at the Qingdao Yinhai International Yacht Club, a marina close to the Olympic course, to familiarize themselves with the water conditions.

Chinese President Hu Jintao inspected the Olympic sailing center on July 20 and wished sailors good results in the coming competition.

"We are quite satisfied with the conditions here," Gary Bodie, head coach of US sailing team, said to President Hu.

The Chinese sailing team will have 18 members competing in all 11 events.

"We still have a lot to improve, but team members are in good condition at present. I hope they can give their best," said Shen Zichen, leader of the Chinese Yngling-class team.

Co-coached by Americans, the Chinese team looks to a better performance, Shen said.

By taking part in several international competitions in the United States and France, Chinese sailors have learned from their counterparts and amassed racing experience.

Sailors from other countries also vow to impress the world.

"Everyone here is trying to do his or her best, so the competition is really tough," said Sebastien Godefroid from Belgium. "We are working to win a gold medal, but I will still be happy with less than that," Godefroid said.

The 18 competitors from France have a tight schedule every day — body-building, boat-fitting and studying tactics in the morning and hard training on the sea in the afternoon.

"We have been training here for a long time. We eye medals in Star, Tornado and women's



Sailors train for upcoming races.

Photos by Ju Chuanjiang

RS:X," said Alain Champy, head of the French sailing team.

Spain ranked second with a total of three medals at the 2004 Athens Olympic Games. Altogether 16 Spanish competitors will compete in 10 events this year.

"We aim for four medals in this Olympics," a Spanish coach said.

Equipped with complete facilities such as professional berths, body-building centers and cafes supplying both Western and Chinese food, the Yin-

hai yacht club provides a good environment for the sailors to have a good training.

"It is a great venue. Everything is fine. The marina is ready. Just need a little bit of wind here," said New Zealand Coach Nenad Vialli.



On the course at dusk

Sailing center 'one of the best'

By Zhang Xiaomin

The Qingdao Olympic Sailing Center, the sailing venue of the 29th Games, is winning plaudits from sailors and officials from around the world.

"This is the best regatta venue to any Olympics we've had. The Qingdao government must be very proud of supplying such an excellent venue," said David Kellett, vice-president of International Sailing Federation (ISAF).

"The center is very nice. I have been to many Olympics. It is one of the best venues," said American Luther Carpenter, coach of the Laser Radial team.

Located on Fushan Bay, near the seat of municipal governmental residence and Qingdao's May 4th Square landmark, construction on the sailing center started in 2004 and was completed this April, according to Sun Lijie, secretary-general of the Qingdao

Olympic Sailing Committee.

The city of Qingdao invested 3.28 billion yuan in the project — including 1.7 billion yuan for relocation of the Beihai shipyard.

The 45-hectare center includes the Qingdao Olympic Village and separate state-of-the-art centers for athletes, administration, media and logistics.

Its 534-m-long main breakwater can accommodate nearly 10,000 spectators, the first of its kind in the world.

Many innovative techniques and environmentally friendly and energy-saving materials were used in construction of the center.

Its marina has top-class pontoons without stakes that can maintain position whether the tide is at ebb or flow.

A heat exchange system using seawater maintains the temperature in the media center. Solar energy provides hot water to the athletes and the logistics centers. Public

lighting uses 168 solar-energy lamps and 41 lamps powered by windmills that have become a tourist magnet.

With a French-made drinking water system and advanced environmental monitoring equipment imported from the United States, the center ensures a comfortable and eco-friendly environment for international sailing competitors, according to Sun.

Officials and sailors applauded its barrier-free facilities during the 2008 International Federation for Disabled Sailing (IFDS) Qingdao International Regatta held in May.

"I am very impressed with the center's facilities. They are amazing. Everyone can use them easily," said Serge Jorgensen, president of the IFDS.

"It has three 60-m-long pontoons, barrier-free lifts and special passages ensure the disabled an easy access to every functional building," Sun said.

As teams prepare for glory, sponsors grasp wider market share

By Zhang Ying

As the curtain went up on the Beijing Olympics yesterday signaling the start of competitions on the field, another race has long been underway in the business community as companies grapple for a share of Olympics benefits.

One is Haier Group, whose boat with the appliance giant's trademark and Olympic logo set out to sea from Qingdao's Olympic Sailing Center late last December.

It is the only white home appliance sponsor of the Beijing Olympics.

As part of its marketing effort the Qingdao-based multinational started the "Haier Olympic Gold Family" to recruit volunteer families in 40 Chinese cities that will receive and showcase traditional Chi-

nese culture to foreign friends during the Games.

Haier also plans to build primary schools named after Olympic champions as part of the national charity Project Hope.

Another Qingdao giant, Tsingtao Beer, is locked in fierce competition with Beijing-based Yanjing Beer to top the industry.

In 2005 Tsingtao announced it will be a beer sponsor of the Beijing Olympics the day after Yanjing Beer signed on as sponsor of the Games.

Both of China's beer giants view the Games as crucial to winning greater market share.

Athletes, officials and visitors from all over the world can see the Olympic emblem and Tsingtao Beer's logo of "Passion, Dream, Success" in every corner of Qingdao.

"Beer is a kind of passionate

culture, which is closely connected with sports," said Jin Zhiguo, president of Tsingtao Brewery.

Tsingtao began an "Olympic Caravan" in 2006 that covered 180 Chinese cities over two years.

Partnership with the Olympics has enhanced Tsingtao's brand value and helped the brewery reach a 13 percent year-on-year increase in sales and a 30 percent growth in annual profits over the past three years.

Intelligent transportation products developed by Qingdao Hisense Group outpaced its competitor from Germany, the global giant in automation, to win the bid on Olympic public transportation in Beijing, greatly promoting the reputation of the Qingdao-headquartered firm.

Serving the Beijing Olympic

Games with advanced proprietary technologies appears to be a pivotal Hisense strategy to expand its market in this Olympic year.

Hisense Group secured the rights last year to provide high-definition digital TVs for the Beijing Olympics. It then launched a global marketing strategy to simultaneously introduce its flat panel TVs in 200 cities in China, the United States, France, Australia and South Africa.

Many Qingdao-based enterprises making yacht equipment and offering training became suppliers and service providers to the Games.

More companies, not only in Qingdao, but also in other cities in Shandong province have joined in the battle to win bigger market shares by taking advantage of the Games.

Shandong Taishan Group is

supplying more than 170 kinds of equipment for six sports to the Games and its trademark will be seen often on Olympic fields. The company was also a supplier to the Athens Olympic Games in 2004.

The latest assessment shows that Taishan's brand value climbed to 11.8 billion yuan from 980 million yuan in 2004.

"The 2008 Olympic Games are a golden opportunity for all Chinese enterprises. They should grasp it and get into the broader global market," noted Dong Yanling, a professor in Shandong Economic University.

Qingdao's hotel industry also benefits from the city's host role for Olympic sailing.

A two- or three-fold average increase is expected in local hotel room prices, according to the Qingdao Tourism Bureau.

Boats used by race organizers ready at Qingdao Port

