



Athletes, volunteers and children celebrate the successful completion of the Olympic sailing competition at the closing ceremony in Qingdao on Saturday.

Ju Chuanjiang

Olympic regatta sails into history

► IOC president Rogge says sailing event most successful

By Guo Xin

QINGDAO: The Sailing Regatta of the Beijing 2008 Olympic Games came to an end with a spectacular farewell party on Saturday, marking the conclusion of what International Olympic Committee (IOC) President Jacques Rogge called a "most successful" event.

The Beijing Olympic orga-

nizing committee also praised the effort in a letter sent to the Qingdao Olympic Sailing Committee, expressing appreciation for the enormous effort and organization required.

Altogether 400 athletes from 62 countries and regions with 272 sailing boats completed 117 races in nine classes at the Olympic sailing competition. Eleven gold medals were awarded in Qingdao.

The Chinese sailing team won one gold and one bronze, setting a new record in competitive sailing for China.

"We presented the world a unique and high-class Olympic sailing event and Qingdao deserves the world's trust and the favor of history," said Xia Geng, mayor of Qingdao, at Saturday's party.

The event drew wide acclaim from 108 VIP groups, including officials from the International Sailing Federation.

Among the achievements cited were the design, building and operation of the Qingdao Olympic Village, which provided an excellent living environment for athletes.

"This time in Qingdao I saw such a beautiful Olympic Village, which was still under construction a year ago. Great changes also took place in the city with many new, nice buildings," said Gilbert Felli, IOC executive director.

More than 200,000 spectators visited Qingdao's theme park and breakwater—the first of its kind in Olympic history—during the competition, while six observation boats accommodated 6,323 passengers.

More than 1,800 venue volunteers together with 1,000 city volunteers and 10,000 from the public sector donated their time and effort for the competition.

Publicity and media operations went smoothly as 25 media outlets from 20 countries and regions had operations at the Olympic regatta. Almost 300 accredited journalists from China and abroad covered the races.

A multi-dimensional security system on land, sea, air and under the water operated well throughout the event. A

delegation from Britain—host of the 2012 Games—came to Qingdao to learn more about the Olympics security.

Richard Bryan, director of the delegation, said Qingdao did a good job.

"London will hold the next Olympics. We hope that we will have more chances to communicate with Qingdao organizers and take some of that experience back to London," he said.

Chinese sailing gold medalist Yin Jian said simply: "Qingdao has been a great blessing to me."

Athletes, officials enjoy stay in Qingdao

By Zhang Xiaomin and Du Shu

QINGDAO: International sailors and officials have enjoyed their stay in this city along the coast of Shandong province.

When there was no race, they traveled around Qingdao sight-seeing, shopping and enjoying a taste of Chinese culture.

Even for those who competed in the 2006 and 2007 test events, the city offered new experiences.

"The city has changed a lot. The Olympic Village is perfect. Now it's like we are queens," said Athena Frai, a windsurfer from Greece who has been to Qingdao three times.

"I like buying things in the market. They are cheap. Every time I came here, I bought different things, typical Chinese goods like fans and clothes," she said.

French silver medalist Julien Bontemps gave thumbs-up to the environment.

"The city is well arranged. I like it very much. The seaside is very beautiful," he said.

Cypriot windsurfer Andreas Carioliou bought electronics.

"It's cheaper than in my home," he said. "And I bought authorized Olympics souvenirs."

Some people fall in love with the Chinese food. Nicco Mittelmeier of Germany said "some of the food is so special—I enjoy it a lot."

Deshopol Phuanukoolnont, coach of the Thai team, appreciated the kungfu tea performance.

"There is a natural taste in the Laoshan green tea. I will take some to my friends," he said.

"The village is fantastic. Everything is comfortable, and it's really nice. The people are very nice, very kind and very helpful. I'm really happy here," said Irina Hentschel Mendez, captain of the Mexican team.

The folk art area in the Olympic Village is a popular site for recreation. Sailors and officials sampled Chinese culture and bought artwork for relatives and friends. They also wrote Chinese characters with traditional brushes.

ISAF: Regatta a roaring success

By Zhao Ruixue

QINGDAO: "The Olympic sailing competition has been a tremendous success," Goran Petersson, chairman of the International Sailing Federation (ISAF), said at the farewell party for the Olympic sailing competition.

"Qingdao has played an important role in popularizing sailing in China—and in all of Asia," Petersson told China Daily.

"The commitment of the sailing committee and the city was important. They put a lot of effort behind this, not only to deliver this very successful event, but also to build for the future," he said.

Petersson said he agreed with assertions that China is not yet a top sailing nation, but showed more than promise in Qingdao. "There is every reason why sailing will be just as big in China as in any other country with a significant coastline."

"I am sure that Qingdao will be very competitive in becoming a prominent sailing center that hosts many international events," Petersson said.

Sailing is far from over in Qingdao, with two world-renowned yacht races signed on for stopovers in the port city.

The Volvo Around the World Race will arrive in Qingdao next February and the Clipper Around the World Yacht Race will call on Qingdao during its 2009-10 and 2011-12 seasons.

Petersson heaped praise on the venue, volunteers and the Olympic Village.

"The venue is outstanding. It is a very, very high-quality marina and very organized. I was impressed the entire time I've been here. A lot of city volunteers. Everybody is friendly and interested."

"I can't remember that I've seen that anywhere—the friendliness and commitment of the people here. All of these things together are very impressive," Petersson said.

Despite the outstanding venue and friendly volunteers, some sailors complained about light winds and strong currents. Two days of races were cancelled or delayed due to the lack of wind during the 13-day competition.

"Sailing is always dependent on the weather. Perfect conditions are very difficult to find. The important thing is that the organizers can cope with the conditions. They (the organizers for the Olympic sailing event) have shown they can do that," he said.



Foreigners enjoy Tsingtao beer at the Beer Street in Qingdao during the Olympic sailing competition.

Ju Chenghao

Lure of the wind, the sea—and Tsingtao Beer

By Huang Yanhong and Zhang Ying

QINGDAO: As fierce Olympic competition attracted the world's attention and a huge influx of spectators along Qingdao's breakwater, beer was the choice for celebration along downtown Qingdao's Beer Street.

"I came here for the beer. It's very good, with a different flavor," said Graham Rainey from London. "I like the atmosphere very much. It is much more relaxed and peaceful than Shanghai," he said.

Beer Street boasts a combination of libations, leisure and food, along with a carnival and entertainment. Sixty bars and restaurants of various European styles are clustered along the

street where guests can quaff fresh Tsingtao Beer produced by the brewery nearby.

Relatives of three American Yngling women sailors enjoyed the brew after the team finished seventh.

"We drink Tsingtao Beer back in the States, too, but it tastes even better and fresher here," said Kristin Burkhart from Boston.

Another member of the party, Michael Howes, said the group attended the test event in Qingdao last year and found the street after a Chinese friend recommended it.

"Fortunately, this year all the relatives are here to cheer our girls. Drinking here is a kind of enjoyment for all of us," he said.

Qingdao's grand sailing event

benefited bars and restaurants all along the street.

Jin Shiqiang, boss of Yushui Restaurant, told China Daily that they had more guests than ever, including many foreigners.

"I hired some university students, especially those who can speak English," he said.

A beer club in the Theme Park inside the Olympic sailing center attracted foreign athletes every day.

Justin Landon and David Crees, sailors from the Royal Victoria Yacht Club in London, came to Qingdao to cheer on their national fleet. They also drank at the club with friends.

"I like Qingdao so much with the Olympics, so we decided to get friends together and enjoy ourselves here," said Landon.

"The beer is wonderful. It is the best in China for sure," noted Crees. "And it is fantastic to join with locals."

Tsingtao Beer is now sold in more than 80 countries and regions across the globe.

Seventeen consecutive Qingdao International Beer Festivals have been hosted in the city since 1991, with more than 5 million visitors from home and abroad arriving each year.

The 18th festival this year will be held from September 19 to October 5, with the slogan "Qingdao Toasts with the World."

Over 80 international beer brands will participate in the festival, with increasing numbers of foreign tourists also expected to join the gala.

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