



THE WUKESONG CULTURE AND SPORTS CENTER IN BEIJING

Area: **168,000 sqm**
 Capacity: **18,000 people**
 Height: **70 m**
 Beginning of construction: **March 2005**
 End of construction: **August 2007**

(China)

FROM THE HORIZON IT LOOKS LIKE A HUGE GOLD BAR LYING ON A 168,000 SQUARE METER SURFACE. IN FACT, THE WUKESONG CULTURE AND SPORTS CENTER IN BEIJING IS A CUTTING EDGE SPORTS FACILITY THAT, FOR THE FIRST TIME IN THE HISTORY OF THE OLYMPIC GAMES, HOSTED THE ENTIRE 2008 OLYMPIC BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT UNDER ONE ROOF FROM THE EARLY STAGES THROUGH THE FINALS.

THE INITIAL DESIGN AND CHANGES

The initial design, presented in 2003 at the "Municipal Planning Commission" in Beijing unveiled a structure completely covered with LCD panels. "A stadium that looked like a giant television" said **Burckhardt & Partner** of Zurich. They are the architects of the project and it was this idea that prompted them to become the top choice of the committee. "Olympics for the people" was one of the mottos of Beijing 2008 and what could be more enticing to people than a stadium that allows all to see the event taking place inside? However, once construction begun, it became apparent that the cost to transform this idea into reality was not the best option. The Architecture Research Institute of Beijing has changed the material covering the surface of the structure to a special glass with low radiation. To accommodate the idea of a "green" Olympics, the exterior was coated with alloy aluminum columns that reflect 80% of infrared heat. The stadium was also equipped with a rainwater recycling system and solar panels to enhance the LED lighting at night. In addition, by installing fans on top of the coating, ledges and roof, the stadium can take advantage of natural ventilation without wasting energy.

A WORK THAT LEAVES ITS MARK

"In the area dedicated to the Olympic Games there are 10 sports disciplines" said the architects from Burckhardt+Partner of Zurich. "One of the most spectacular is the basketball court with its 18,000 seats inside a cube 70 meters high and a floor area of 130 meters. The roof covering the stadium is suspended at a height of 12 steel structures reminiscent of the basketball hoop". In fact, anyone coming out of the Wukesong subway which is located in front of this building can not avoid being amazed. Seven floors overall: three underground and four above ground. All seats are padded to ensure maximum comfort for spectators sitting for long periods of time. For those who do not mind paying more, the second floor offers 45 luxury boxes, 29 large and 16 small to watch the show from a prime location. From every side of the galleries you can still enjoy the event presented on the big screens that hang from the ceiling. This is the first system of HD LED panels mounted to the funnel that can meet the needs of high-level international competitions, like those required by the NBA (National Basketball Association).

THE SPOTLIGHT

If from the architectural point of view it is easy to be charmed by the complexity and at the same time, the simplicity of this structure, sports fans must realize that for us the focus of attention is really the "court", on which the heroes of the basketball will compete in front of the audience. And speaking of the court, without a doubt, the quality and the skill with which it was built for the Culture and Sports Center is perfectly in line with the rest. It is designed to meet the strict criteria imposed by the NBA, drawing on the advice of the FIBA Study Center. The request was really simple: the court had to meet all the requirements of the best world athletes. The flooring that would best make this was the **Mondo Fast Break System 2**, officially approved by FIBA and commented by its General Secretary, **Patrick Baumann**: "this is a very high level court that has significantly contributed to the success of exceptional basketball tournaments during the Beijing Olympics".



