



## ATHENS OLYMPIC STADIUM

### Olympics

Opening: **August 13, 2004**

Closed: **August 29, 2004**

Athletes participating: **10,625**

Nations participating: **201**

### Olympic Stadium

Field Size: **105 m x 68 m**

Capacity: **69,618, 68,079, 55,000**

The press box: **480**

Year of Inauguration: **1982**

Stadium Area: **127,625 sq. m.**

Renovations: **2002-2004**

Roof Design: **Studio Santiago Calatrava Vals**

Project Installation: **Construction Cimolai Armando, George**

**Romano Studio**

Covered area: **54,350 sq.m.**

Dimensions: **260.3 m x 208.8 m**

Total weight: **18,000 tons**

(Greece)

THE 2004 ATHENS OLYMPICS WERE SPECIAL NOT ONLY BECAUSE IT MARKED THE RETURN TO THE COUNTRY WHERE MODERN OLYMPICS BEGAN IN 1896, BUT ALSO BECAUSE OF THE NUMBER OF IMPROVEMENTS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE IN EQUIPMENT AND SPORT SURFACES.. FOR EXAMPLE, THE SPORTFLEX SUPER X PERFORMANCE TRACK WHICH WAS PROVIDED BY MONDO FOR THE OLYMPIC STADIUM.

### A MAGNIFICENT STRUCTURE

Prior to the need to modernize the **Olympic Stadium** for the 2004 Athens Games, the stadium which is situated in the Greek capital was seen as a majestic structure. Designed in **1979** and built in 1980, the stadium represented one of the most interesting architectural works of the period, due to the series of 34 columns that were designed to support the stands. When completed, the most striking feature of the new stadium was the four pillars equipped with hanging lights which adorned the stage. Each pillar measured 62 meters in height. The project was completed in **1982**, and in September of the same year then-President Konstantinos Karamanlis inaugurated the new Greek structure at the European Championships in Athletics, which was the first major sporting event hosted by the Olympic Stadium. The structure remained virtually unchanged until the summer of 2002 when preparation for the 2004 Olympics commenced. The renovations involved not only the stadium, but also the entire **Athens Olympic Sports Complex**.



## THE NEW OLYMPIC STADIUM

The most important and most striking aspect of the Olympic Stadium was the addition of the lavish roof, which turned the structure into a true architectural artwork. By applying the laws of physics to its lightweight design, the Spanish architect **Santiago Calatrava** designed a roof that looks like a huge network of steel pipes and blue glass. The huge structure measured 304 feet long, 206.7 feet wide and 72 meters in height, weighing a total of 18,000 tons.

Despite the criticisms and skepticism surrounding the initial project, the complex was finished just in time for the opening ceremony of the Athens Olympics. The project was completed July 30, 2004, just two weeks before the Games, and it had a major influence on the work being done on the track and equipment being set-up inside the stadium. "Work on the installation of the roof slowed our progress and we had to work overtime in order to finish on time - recalls **Andrea Vallauri**, Head of Mondo Sport Division. We managed to complete while the athletes were arriving. The intricate problems caused by the installation of stadium roof delayed the completion by at least four months."

## MORE LIGHT ON THE TRACK

The roof, designed to withstand winds up to 120 km/h, consists of two half-shells that once put together, leave an open area which is the playing field. It's interesting how the structure rests on only four points where the arcs intersect, having no contact with the existing system. Made of polycarbonate, the transparent part of the roof provides optimal conditions for athletes and spectators during the competition and also improves lighting and filming conditions accordingly. Calatrava had initially thought about using transparent glass panels, but eventually decided on a special polycarbonate which is much lighter than glass. As for the Olympic track, Mondo provided the **Sportflex Super X Performance** surface. "It was a novelty - Vallauri remembers - because at that time we changed the wording and even the design of the underlying alveolar had been modified slightly, to further improve the product. The organizers also asked us to slightly change the red color of the track, making it a bit 'darker'. The final product used for the Olympic Stadium track was the latest evolution of Sportflex Super X, which was then used until the 2008 Beijing Olympics, where Mondo introduced Mondotrack.

## ATHENS OLYMPIC SPORTS COMPLEX

The Olympic Stadium is located inside the **Athens Olympic Sports Complex**, in the area of Marousi, which is also known as OAKA (initials of the name in Greek).

In addition to the stadium, this area houses four sports facilities, along with other facilities dedicated to the sport. This complex formed the heart of the 2004 Olympic Games. The Indoor Hall during the Games was the largest indoor facility to be used, hosting gymnastics competitions and the finals of the basketball tournament, the **Aquatic Centre**, the **Velodrome** and the **Tennis Centre**. The construction of the complex began in 1980, after a rather long development period. The Velodrome and Aquatic centers dedicated to treating were inaugurated in 1991, the Indoor Hall in 1995, and the Tennis Centre in 2004. As with the Olympic Stadium, the remaining structures of the complex were **OAKA** renovation project by architect Calatrava. Its main objective was the search for harmony and homogeneity of the different structures from an architectural point of view. Among the interventions there was the creation of four new squares that represent the inputs Oak, with a common area, the Agora, inspired by the meeting place of the ancient Greeks. Was built the Plaza of the Nations, a sort of outdoor amphitheater that can hold more than 300,000 people and, at the edge of the square, was fitted to the Nations Wall, a tubular steel sculpture designed so as to move in a wavelike which has now become the symbol of all the sports complex. Within the intervention of the World dell'OAKA was massive. "In addition to the runway for the stadium, we have also supplied the the two training tracks, all paths between the training tracks, the warm-up area and the main runway. Have been used 30,000 square meters of synthetic sports flooring," says Vallauri.

To connect the two tracks of training the athletes had the main runway along the walkways that are covered by the regulations with the same material as the main runway. The athletes, in fact, walking with spikes, must be able to move safely.

## A TOTAL COMMITMENT

At Athens 2004, for the first time Mondo also provided facilities for athletics. "We have produced a new series called Athens - Vallauri said - with a drawing and a special look, and those models were used in subsequent years until the World Championships in Daegu 2011, when we used a new series. The next series, which will be used during the 2012 Olympics, will be called London ". The excellent relationship established between the company and the Italian Organizing Committee has allowed Mondo to offer a complete package of products and equipment, including services. "The relationship with the organizing committee was very good. We faced very skilled people. For us it was the first Olympics in which we have provided technical assistance: we have dealt with the cleanliness of the camps, runway and equipment, we did the repairs of the materials when necessary, and so on. It 'was a much appreciated 360 ° service made possible because of the excellent relationship established with the Organizing Committee," said Vallauri.



