THE 2012 LONDON GAMES

2012 Olympics
Participating countries: 204
Athletes: about 10,973
Sports: 26
Opening Ceremony: July 27, 2012
Closing Ceremony: August 12, 2012

Paralympics
Participating countries: 164
Athletes: 4,294
Sports: 20
Opening Ceremony: August 29, 2012
Closing Ceremony: September 9, 2012

ENTHUSIASM OF THE STARS

The London 2012 Olympic Games were among the most exciting Games in the history of the modern Olympics, with audience participation that went beyond the most optimistic expectations. The thousands of people who accompanied the Olympic torch in its 27-day throughout the whole of Britain were just the beginning of what then happened during the competition days, especially at the Olympic Stadium. In fact, it had never happened that tickets to see the athletic competitions were sold out in the early hours of the morning. The 80,000 spectators in the Olympic Stadium have been able to enjoy exceptional performance by the athletes, especially in the speed races held on a Mondotrack, which recorded great times in all the finals. An outstanding track and great audience was the secret that allowed athletes to surpass themselves. “We have done everything possible in order to provide the best environment for athletes to compete. Everything has been designed with the primary objective of offering them the opportunity to give their best at a crucial moment in their lives,” said Seb Coe, Chairman of the London 2012 Organizing Committee.

A FAST TRACK

To allow athletes to perform at their best, the Organizing Committee wanted the Olympic track to be a Mondotrack, and upgrade the version of what was in Beijing in 2008 that had given excellent results. The Olympic track has lived up to expectations, becoming the scene of memorable
performances, including three new world records: that of the Kenyan David Rudisha in the 800m final, the U.S women 4x100m relay breaking the record set by Germany in 1985, and one by Jamaica's men 4x100m relay that has fallen below 37". To these must be added the Olympic records made by Usain Bolt in the 100m, and by the Australian Sally Pearson in the 100m hurdles. All finals showed fast times. For example, in the 100m, seven athletes out of eight raced under 10". Those results have been positively affected by the technology and tests done in designing the Mondotrack. “The surface is so textured that the grip is total - said the Olympic champion Edwin Moses on the Daily Telegraph pages -. You can run even if it rains and reduce your times by at least 5/10 of a second.”

HIGH-LEVEL BASKETBALL FLOORING

Mondo’s commitment to London 2012 was not limited just to the supply and installation Olympic Stadium track. Other flooring solutions were developed by the Italian company to be used in other sports, during the Olympics: basketball, one of the most spectacular and followed competitions of the Olympics, in both versions including wheelchair basketball. The matches of both disciplines were held at the Basketball Arena and North Greenwich Arena, and were played on a Fast Break System 2 Wood surface. This portable wooden floor has been specifically designed for high level competitions and is appreciated by the event organizers for both its ability to optimize athletic performance, and for the short time necessary to assemble and dismantle it. Positive comments came from the players, who appreciate the homogeneity of the court and the fact that the surface offers optimal performance across the entire surface.

A NEW EQUIPMENT RANGE

As an official supplier of all sports equipment for athletics, Mondo has provided a new line of high competition equipment, which was used in the various disciplines of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games. The new range includes obstacles, pyramids lane markers, scoreboards and measuring instruments, equipment for the high jump, distance indicators, disc trolleys, holders for hammer, weight and javelin. One of the most talked about equipment during London 2012 was the relay baton used by the Jamaican men's 4x100m relay team, who won the gold medal and set a new world record. The scene of Usain Bolt reluctantly forced to give the baton back to the judges at the end of the race impressed everyone, including Mondo staff that decided to deliver to the Jamaican champion the yellow relay baton used in the final, as a gift for his 26th birthday, August 21, 2012.

MONDO AT THE SERVICE OF THE OLYMPICS

During the Olympics and Paralympics, Mondo took care of all the logistics and technical support, by providing a team of on-site technicians in London for the duration of the Games. The Mondo technical team of highly qualified professionals provided support in specific sports: athletics, basketball and handball. "During the Games, every day a group of technicians were present either at the Basketball Arena or the North Greenwich Arena to ensure everything was working perfectly – recalls Ignacio Mercado, head of the technical team -. Part of our job was to control, for example, the height of the baskets and position of the boards, so that the games could play in perfect conditions. With this continuous monitoring, no problem was found. "We had two people always present during athletics at the Olympic Stadium to continuously monitor the equipment before it was placed on the track." Mondo provided the same meticulous equipment control and technical support during the Paralympic Games. "During the Paralympics we provided assistance in athletics, basketball and wheelchair rugby, in goal ball and volleyball." says Ignacio Mercado.

THE IMPORTANCE OF SPEED, NOT ONLY ON THE TRACK

One of the attributes that the organizers mostly appreciated from Mondo’s technical support team was their quick intervention, particularly in some extremely difficult situations. “One of the most challenging tasks in the Olympic Stadium was the set-up and dismantling of all the obstacles on the track for the different races. We had to remove and put back the equipment four times during the nine days of the competitions and each time, three hours were required. It is a job that must be done very quickly and with extreme equipment control,” said Ignacio Mercado. The most challenging situation that the Mondo technical team faced during both the Olympics and Paralympics, was the change of tournament venues from day to day, an operation that took place at night and needed to be done within a few hours. “During the basketball tournament, after the first group, we had to move equipment from the Basketball Arena to the North Greenwich Arena. With less than ten hours we had to move the flooring, baskets and all the equipment from one facility to another. We started immediately after the end of the last game at the Basketball Arena and we finished installing the new arena just before the start of the quarter-finals,” says Ignacio Mercado.

THE PARALYMPICS AS THEY HAD NEVER BEEN SEEN BEFORE

One of the main objectives of the London 2012 Organizing Committee right from the beginning was to organize the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games at the same level. This goal was achieved when you consider the public’s participation, media interest and presence on the Internet that is essential today to determine the success of an event: Throughout the Paralympics there were as many 1.3 million tweets that had the topic “Paralympics”, 25 million visits to the event’s official website and 5.8 million visits from the Olympics site to the Paralympics site. Another objective was to promote the idea that the Paralympics were centered on skill and not on disability, and on what people can do, not on what they cannot do. Research conducted in Britain immediately following the closing of the Games showed that this result was achieved. 80% of the respondents stated that the London Paralympics have shown first the ability of the athlete and not his disability. In addition, 74% agreed that the Paralympics have shown the world that we should treat them with respect and equality, not just as people with disabilities (in June this percentage was 52%). In light of this data, the statement uttered by Seb Coe during the Paralympic Games’ Closing Ceremony is more than justified: “I’ll do more sport in the same way and we will not think of disability in the same way.”

NO WASTE

The slogan of the Organizing Committee in implementing the systems and structures that have hosted the London 2012 Games was “sustainability”.

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Respect for the environment is a primary goal, from the non-random choice of the place where the Olympic Park was created. The industrial and degraded area in Stratford, an area East of the British capital, has been completely transformed, to become one of the greenest areas of the city. The Olympic Park in London, where the Olympic Stadium and the Olympic Village, including the Aquatics Center, and the Velodrome, the BMX Circuit and the arenas where hockey, handball and basketball were played will remain as a legacy to the community with its cutting-edge sports facilities, cycle paths and, after conversion of the Olympic Village, new residential complexes. We have tried to avoid any waste, which is why we chose to use many existing facilities and to build new ones by using about 90% of the materials recovered from the waste produced by the demolition of buildings in the area. Some structures used for the Games will be dismantled at the end of the Paralympics, and will be reused in the future in other places. However, the permanent systems will undergo changes to be used by the whole community.