

Inside Beijing National Stadium

Although the 2008 Beijing Olympics will take place at many distinctive and groundbreaking venues, it's hard to think of a more impressive structure than the home of the 2008 Summer Olympic Games Opening and Closing Ceremonies-National Stadium.

Located on the Olympic Green, National Stadium provides seating for nearly 100,000 spectators, and is going to be home to some of the 2008 Beijing Olympics' most important events. The National Stadium is memorable for its "Bird's Nest" design, which gives it a distinctive and modern look. Also, the National Stadium has a number of amenities and features for visitors, including a shopping center as well as a remarkable "green area" on the outside of the stadium.

Among the important athletic events that will be presented at National Stadium are the always-popular and historic track and field events. The tradition of track and field at the Summer Olympics is a perfect match for the modern, yet majestic appeal of National Stadium.

It's only appropriate that Beijing's National Stadium, the site of great competition, was itself born of the same competitive mentality. In 2002, a design competition was won by Herzog & de Meuron, award winning architects who had an early vision that closely matches what we see in Beijing today.

In March of 2004, construction began, although for a brief time that year, construction stopped due to worries of high costs. In the end, the stadium was completed successfully and on time, and now, National Stadium is poised to house some of the most important and closely watched moments of the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing, China.

Along with many other venues of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, National Stadium is environmentally friendly. The stadium is equipped with over 1100 solar panels that will help defer energy costs and coal usage, eventually projected to save over 900 tons of coal over their 25-year lifespan. A glass curtain of sorts also helps National Stadium conserve energy, by limiting heat transfer and providing conditions for more energy efficient lighting.

Completed at a cost of over 500 million dollars, the amazing National Stadium required over 22 miles of steel, but according to many in the architectural world, it was all well worth it. Many have singled out the National Stadium for praise due to its swooping, looping design and its immediate distinctive appeal. One of the most amazing aspects of National Stadium is that it combines

remarkable function with impeccable design in a way that is virtually unrivaled by venues of its type.

As mentioned earlier, National Stadium will host some of the most incredible moments of the entire 2008 Beijing Olympics. The always popular Olympic soccer tournament will be decided on the grounds of the stadium, as will track and field and other athletic events. Most importantly, the tradition and pageantry of the Opening Ceremonies (as well as the Closing Ceremonies) will take place at National Stadium. It's only fitting that the 2008 Beijing Olympics should begin and end at such a marvelous venue.

An amazing amount of hard work, brilliant and creative design, and planning has gone into the construction of National Stadium. The effort that has been put into the construction of this architectural wonder may even match that of the athletes who are striving to compete inside its walls this summer.

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