

Sailing in Qingdao

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Will the Olympic sailing competitions help turn Qingdao into a sailing city?

If words alone could transform a coastal city into a "Sailing City", then Qingdao should already have a flourishing sailing scene. Judging from the number of sailings boats out on the water, that's not (yet) the case.

It was therefore very encouraging to see how Qingdao's hosting of the 2008 Olympic sailing competitions resulted in several remarkable achievements that can only help to promote sailing in our city.

Sources say that more than 30,000 Olympic volunteers provided services to athletes, officials, tourists and people from other circles, during the Olympic sailing competitions. On shore, thousands of people followed the sailing competitions from the audience breakwater, the first-ever spectator platform of this kind in Olympic sailing history.

That's a lot of involvement and active participation from a lot of people, so if just a fraction of this interest in the sailing events translates into an interest in sailing, Qingdao should soon see many more people enjoy sailing here.

The sailing competitions themselves delivered memorable moments and great advertisement for sailing in Qingdao.

For the first time China won an Olympic sailing gold thanks to windsurfer Yin Jian's thrilling performance in RS:X Women. History was also made when Xu Lijia won China's first bronze in Laser Radial.

Fierce gusts and choppy seas contributed to thrilling medal races in the 49er and Tornado classes. The 49er race evolved into a demolition derby where nearly all the 10 boats capsized at least once and two boats failed to finish. If you missed that thrilling race, you can watch it from these two YouTube video links:

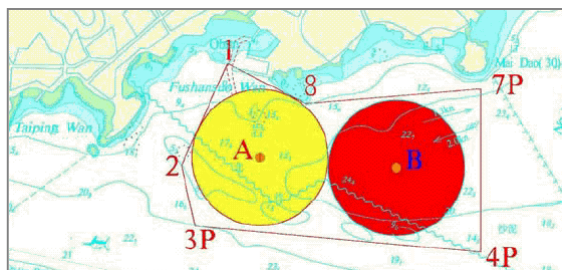
<http://tinyurl.com/4xh4c9/> (Danish commentary) <http://tinyurl.com/3ldovz/> (German commentary)

Jacques Rogge, the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), is himself an accomplished sailor and has been competing in three Olympics from 1968-1976. When visiting Qingdao during the Olympics Rogge was impressed by what the city had presented to the world, and noted, "What you have achieved is outstanding".

Now let's hope the \$430 million Qingdao has invested in the Olympic marina will leave us with a facility that we all can enjoy, and that the generated interest in sailing truly can turn Qingdao into the "Sailing City" it aspires to be.

It's time to get back out on the water..!

Restrictions on local sailing was in place before and during the Olympic sailing competitions, but these restrictions were to a large extent lifted on August 25.



During the 2008 Paralympic Sailing Competitions (to be held from 6-17 September) one is only required to stay well clear of the two racing areas, A and B, shown on the map (left). That's a small sacrifice compared to the situation in recent weeks.

Have fun on the sea, and when back on land, why not go and cheer on your country's Paralympic sailors? A record 80 athletes representing 25 nations will be competing in three boat classes at the Paralympic sailing events in Qingdao.

Here are a few links to more information about the Paralympic sailing events in Qingdao.

Paralympic boat classes: <http://tinyurl.com/3f3z34/>

Participating nations in each class: www.sailing.org/24411.htm

Sailing schedule and racing areas: <http://tinyurl.com/4p6wfs/> (see page 13-14 of the PDF document)

"Wind-Catcher Sailing Club" is now "Qingdao International Sailing Club"

The club was the most active small-boat sailing place in Qingdao (until the end of 2006) when the people behind it decided to tear down "the old" and start constructing a whole new complex. The new place is scheduled to open beginning of September. Location information, contact details, and photos available here: www.sailweta.com/isc/



See also:

Where to sail in Qingdao: www.sailweta.com/sailing-in-qingdao/

Links to previous sailing articles: www.sailweta.com/sailing-articles/

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