

GAWDA Goes To The Olympics

Ever wonder what kind of fuel goes into the Olympic torch? How about the amount of welding joints used in an Olympic stadium? These facts show how important the gases and welding industry is to the Olympics.

- In order to ensure a steady flame, the Olympic torch contains a sophisticated gas-release regulator valve which releases gas at a consistent rate.



Beijing National Stadium, "The Birdcage"

- The torch fuel for the 1956 Melbourne Olympics used a combination of magnesium and aluminum that produced scalding debris, injuring runners' arms.
- The 1972 Munich Olympics used the first liquid fuel torches, storing the fuel as liquid under pressure and burning it as gas.
- The fuel being used for the torch in the 2008 Beijing Olympics is entirely propane.
- Air pistols and air rifles used for shooting competitions at the summer Olympics use compressed air or carbon dioxide.
- Beijing's National Stadium (nicknamed "Bird's Nest") required more than 45,000 tons of steel, 100 welders, 130 welding joints with a combined seam length of roughly 600 meters and 4,400 lbs. of welding rod to build.

- When “Bird’s Nest” was built, welders had to work with numerous types of steel and use downward, vertical and overhead positions when welding.
- “Bird’s Nest” took over four years to build.
- The National Aquatic Center—a building resembling soap bubbles that was constructed for the Beijing Olympics—consists of a steel frame covered in a Teflon-like outer membrane material called Ethylene Tetrafluoroethylene (ETFE).
- The steel frame of the National Aquatic Center consists of over 12,000 spherical nodes that are welded at the joints and required 6,700 tons of steel and 1,300 tons of welding rods.
- Praxair China is providing the oxygen for Beijing No. 3 Water Works, the supplier of fresh drinking water for the 2008 Olympics.
- Lincoln Electric welding supplies were used on the bobsleds for the U.S. team during the 2006 Torino Olympics.

- Speedo’s LZR Racer swimsuits (being worn by the U.S. swim team for the 2008 Beijing Olympics) are constructed using an ultrasonic welding process that eliminates seams.
- During the second leg of the Beijing Olympics torch relay, the torch was carried by Chinese senior welding technician Feng Dongbo, who works in the Daqing oilfield, China’s largest oil source.
- Air Products is fueling hydrogen-powered buses to shuttle athletes and visitors at the Beijing Olympics.



Web Site of the Month

www.usoc.org

Usoc.org is the official site of the United States Olympic Committee. Visit the site to find out how the U.S. teams fared, view photos of events and share your thoughts on the 2008 Olympics via its message board.

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