

The XXXth Olympiad has closed, exceeding all the expectations of the International Olympic Committee. Praise for London's third hosting of the Games has been lavish and IOC president Jacques Rogge said 'it had refreshed the Games in many aspects'...

So who won the Olympics?

Dropping your programme at the start of the 100-metre race clearly wouldn't have been a sensible thing to do. By the time you had picked it up, you would have missed the race. No matter how fast it looked on a TV screen, the reality in the stadium made it seem much faster.

So Usain Bolt won the dash again (and again and again – he picked up another three Golds to go with his three from the Beijing Olympics), this time in 9.63 seconds, wearing his Puma kit; his Jamaican colleague Yohan Blake came second in 9.75 seconds, wearing Puma, too, while US sprinter Justin Gatlin came in third in his Nike kit, with a time of 9.79 seconds.

WSA doesn't usually worry too much about time but in this case any advantage that Gatlin would have had if wearing his Nike TurboSpeed suit wouldn't have made any difference to the result. The claimed 0.023 seconds improvement over the length of the race wouldn't have been sufficient to change his medal from Bronze to Silver or Gold. It is said that Nike has spent 12 years improving US track gear in its Project Swift. Its Project Swift apparel has incorporated over 1,000 hours of wind tunnel testing and insights from some of the fastest athletes in the world. The new Nike Pro TurboSpeed collection is not only Nike's swiftest track apparel to date, it is also the most sustainable, the company claims.

"The key to our design principle is superior lightweight performance. The innovations that we have utilised in these new designs can help make the athlete faster," said Nike Creative Director Scott Williams. (After 1,000 hours of wind tunnel testing, they discovered that the dimpled aerodynamics of golf balls could work on track suits, and so they fitted patterned patches on the suit forearm and leg.) Winning US sprinter Allyson Felix on the day did not wear the suit but happily claimed Gold wearing a crop top and shorts.

But what if the US sprinters had worn the suits and they had made a difference? Would governing bodies in the athletics world have to

US athlete Allyson Felix sporting Nike's full-body TurboSpeed suit and Volt running shoes in acidic yellow-green, part of the colour spectrum used by other brands for their running shoes, too.

 Nike





Packed stands: despite media claims about empty seats in the first days of the Games, organisers sorted out the problem very quickly: most had been allocated to official Olympic bodies as demanded. One of the sections which looked empty from a distance were those allocated to the media representatives themselves.

 WTP

rethink their rules and regulations? After all, those concerned with swimming memorably banned the LZR swimsuits for their performance-enhancing properties. Thinking back to that change in the rules, it was predicted that there would be a dearth of new Olympic swimming records in London. Notwithstanding the gloomy forecasts, 2012 came up with 19 new records, Olympic and/or world. Not bad, when you consider that there were only 32 events in the pool.

High visibility footwear

Watching the Olympics unfold, you subconsciously felt that more athletes from the 204 competing Olympic-recognised countries and bodies around the world had decided that the fashionable colour was a bright acidic yellow/green shade. While Nike was not a sponsor of the 2012 Olympics, its rival adidas certainly was and that meant Nike's presence at the Games was promotionally restricted. However, footwear is considered as equipment and outside the control of those brands supplying the national teams.

The footwear that caught the eye was worn by Nike-sponsored athletes. Known as 'Volt', the shoes stood out against the red track in London, with a very visible Nike 'swoosh'. The company claims that the human eye is most sensitive to the yellow/green zone so the shoes the Olympians wore reflected more light than nearly anything else on the field. Other companies were also playing in the yellow/green part of the spectrum, but not quite so successfully. Happily for Nike, the Olympic 5,000 and 10,000 double Gold medal winner, Mo Farah of Team GB, wore their Volt spikes, which allowed the brand to come out with spoiler promotional material focusing on the lower half of the athlete, thus

avoiding the adidas branding. According to some reports, more than 400 athletes wore the Nike trainers in the Olympic stadium, and of those 25 picked up Gold medals.

It appears that the trainers are individually tailored to specific events and utilised Nike's Flywire technology, a featherlight woven fabric that provides a dynamic sock-like fit combined with a lightweight spike plate. As the company puts it, Flywire technology consists of strategically placed filaments that function like cables on a suspension bridge and offer support precisely where it's needed. These strong filaments are applied to a minimalistic shoe upper, reducing weight to create Nike's lightest footwear. Paper-thin fabric covers the top of the foot, with the Flywire technology attaching to the outsole and holding the foot in place.

Smiles all round

Adidas sponsored Team GB, which performed beyond expectation, and came third on the overall medal table after the US and China.

This must have worked beyond adidas's wildest dreams, as the United Kingdom fell overwhelmingly in love with the Olympics and every newspaper filled untold numbers of pages with images of Great Britain's sportsmen and women winning precious metal. And everyone had adidas branded on their vests.

According to the company, it had an amazing 2012. Just look at the figures. "Our presence in and around the Olympic Games was fantastic," said Herbert Hainer, CEO of the adidas Group. "It translates into record Olympic merchandise sales and a record year for the adidas Group in the UK. This clearly sets the stage for us to achieve market leadership in the UK by 2015."

Sales in the UK for the adidas brand were up 24% currency-neutral for the first half of 2012,



The artificial surfaces of the hockey pitches performed well; designers decided to change the colour from traditional green to blue to make the yellow ball more visible.

London 2012

spurred by demand for Olympic and Team GB products. Olympic licence product sales in the UK were up 250% compared to Beijing 2008. On a global level, adidas Group sales rose 11% on a currency-neutral basis or 16% in euro terms to €7.3 billion for the first half of 2012.

As Official Sportswear Partner of London 2012, adidas led the way at the Olympic Games by outfitting more than 70,000 Games Makers with sustainable products, supplying kit for 3,000 athletes competing in 25 out of the 26 Olympic Sports and by working together with 11 National Olympic Committees, among them the most successful Team GB for over a century. Herbert Hainer continued: "I can only admire the enthusiasm Great Britain brought to these Olympic Games. I am proud that adidas has been able to contribute to the phenomenal success of London 2012 through our support of Team GB and iconic athletes like Jessica Ennis and Sir Chris Hoy."

Certainly the Team GB cyclists, who included Chris Hoy, had a very successful Games, to the extent that the French raised questions about whether any of the cyclists were using new secret technology (see separate article in this issue). One aid available to the team, however, was some wearable electronics. Fibretonic had provided its Heatwear FIR fabric heating technology for use in the adidas Adipower apparel that could be used in their 'Hot Pants' to warm the muscles of the riders before they trained or raced. The smart textile technology is a seamless, lightweight, breathable, 100% fabric system and can be integrated into any apparel form for targeted body warming.

Mr Hainer's reference to the Games Makers is interesting. What helped make the 2012 Olympics in London so successful were the 70,000 volunteer Game Makers. They went out

of their way to be helpful in every conceivable way, ensuring that the near 250,000 spectators who went to the Olympic park every day smiled and enjoyed themselves. (They even managed to make clearing security a happy experience, in total contrast to the unsmiling security officials seemingly found at work in every airport around the world.)

Although the legacy of the Olympics will only be fully assessed in some years' time, it is worth noting that since the Games began on July 27, more than another 100,000 people around the UK have pledged volunteering time. This could be good news for adidas, as no doubt many of the new generation of volunteers to assist sporting endeavour at any level across the country would have been made more aware of the brand.

Wrapping up the Olympics

While the sports brands have been competing among themselves, one major worldwide Olympic partner has been using its products and solutions to ensure the athletes could compete and spectators enjoy the experience: Dow, the official chemistry company of the International Olympic Committee through to 2020. Its involvement covered everything from the artificial hockey surface to the external fabric panels surrounding the main stadium.

The artificial grass for the London 2012

Gold medal winning cyclist Laura Trott wearing adidas 'Hot Pants' that utilise Fibretonic's technology for warming muscles before training or racing.

adidas





Main Olympic stadium wrapped in high-tech polyester panels produced with the aid of Dow Chemicals.

 London 2012

hockey pitches were the result of a multi-party technical collaboration, with Dow's polyethylene resins being used by Tapex, a leading sports yarn manufacturer in Australia. The use of linear low density resins in the yarn component of the artificial turf pitches helped create soft, safe and seemingly perfect playing surfaces for the 76 matches at the Olympic Hockey Centre. The yarn was then converted into rolls of Poligras by Advanced Polymer Technology Australasia. The design, installation and maintenance of the turf at the Olympic Hockey Centre was provided by Sports Technology International.

While many of the millions who tuned into or went to the Olympics, only some would have appreciated that Dow was responsible for the external wrapping of the main stadium. The fabric wrap of over 300 individual panels, each about 25 metres high and 2.5 metres wide, was made of lightweight polyester fabric with a low-density polyethylene coating. Sustainability was also one of the words associated with the Olympic park and the wrap used fewer raw materials to manufacture, was 35% lighter and had a lower carbon footprint when compared with conventional materials. UV-curable inks replaced conventional inks to cut emissions during printing.

The stadium was designed for change after the Paralympic Games end, when its capacity can be altered as required. One of the changes will be to the external wrap. Of the hundreds of fabric panels many will be recycled; some will go to a project that provides vocational training for former child soldiers in Patongo, Uganda, and others to a welfare initiative in Rio de Janeiro, host of the next summer Games in 2016. Others will be re-used for youth projects in Britain, while the remainder will be ground down and recycled into new construction material. If the projects deliver the expected results, Dow can expect to receive more requests for charitable assistance.

So who did win the Olympics? In all probability it was London itself, which provided some of the most memorable venues and iconic backdrops ever used to create 'the greatest show on earth'. Oh, and the volunteers. 



NO. 1101 1102 1104 1107 1140





**Waterproof
Seam Sealing Tape**

**Decorative
& Protective Film**

**Adhesive Film
& Specialty Tape**

*Ideal Solution
with SEALON*



www.i-sealon.com