

Team USA Comes Together

Qingdao, China - August 1, 2008 - The final phase of our Olympic Journey began in San Jose, California last weekend as we joined other athletes from Team USA and our fellow sailors in the US Sailing Team for final processing and briefings before leaving for China. We all stayed in the dormitories at San Jose State University while we completed all

the formalities attendant on Olympic participation. It was a lot of fun going back to school with such a great group of motivated people. The US Olympic Committee took over the Student Union and we were assigned shopping trolleys to trundle around the various distribution points where we received our official clothing and two duffel bags to contain it all. There was everything from the formal Ralph Lauren blazers, white slacks and Team USA scarves for the opening and closing ceremonies to Nike leather jackets and gear, plus Polo clothing including sweats, shirts, socks and shorts. There were medical checkups, fittings for our Olympic rings, and briefings on what to expect and how to conduct ourselves. It really brought home the realization that the last push to the Olympics had started.

The next day we enjoyed a series of functions at the St. Francis Yacht Club. The most famous yacht club in San Francisco is situated on the bay-front at Crissy Field, with the fog curling under the Golden Gate Bridge to the west and the city waterfront stretching out to the east. It's a fabulous location, made better on the day we visited because the Laser Class was racing its national championship in front of the club, with Lasers and Laser Radials close tacking up the Crissy Field shore against the tide. There was a special function just for us and AlphaGraphics, the new sponsor of our sailing team. It was great to meet with them and receive their best wishes. From there we went on to the other end of the club for a cocktail party with club members and the sailors from the Laser championships. The highlight of the evening was a formal dinner with club members and team supporters.

Early the next morning we arrived at San Francisco Airport to board the United Boeing 747 taking us to Beijing. We had all been instructed to wear our Nike jackets so it wasn't hard to find the Team USA members, including sailors, rowers, kayakers, weight lifters and athletes from several other disciplines. SFO is famous for its security delays but we got the VIP treatment with our own special boarding line. We felt like rockstars. United is a US Olympic Team Sponsor and at least half the plane's passengers were team members on their way to China.

After a very long day of travel it was good to get back to Qingdao and settle into our rooms in preparation for the three weeks that lie ahead. Since getting here we've been hard at work preparing equipment and training, but not doing much actual sailing. Typhoon Fung Wong, which hit Taiwan and caused considerable damage, has been passing offshore bringing huge waves and strong winds which are now beginning to abate.

It seems as if we've been in China most of the summer, although after our last training session here we each returned to our home towns for a welcome two-week break. It was nice to relax and wind-down a little, although there were still plenty of details, calls and visits as we worked our way through our individual checklists. The Grosse Pointe YC honoured me with a farewell party and fundraiser with a Chinese-themed dinner that attracted more than 100 well-wishers and was a huge success. On behalf of all our team, I want to personally thank Grosse Pointe YC and its members, Michael Mitchell of Michigan Fitness Clubs, Bob Liggett with Grosse Pointe News and Big Boy restaurants, Jim Anderson of Urban Science, Jim Morrow and Dan Bracciano.

Today the format of our reports is changing a little in order to comply with International Olympic Committee requirements

for all athletes. The IOC wants to protect the commercial interests of its sponsors and thus we're not permitted to post photos of sailing action or provide you directly with official results. However, we'll provide you with all the links to official photos, results, and other items of interest on this special Team 7 Qingdao Olympic Blog page. If you want to tell your friends and family about our reports, they can find them at <http://www.team7sailing.com/content/blogcategory/20/36/>.

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