

EXTRAORDINARY PARTICIPATION AT MEXICO'S JUNIOR OLYMPICS 2009

By Naty Jaime

Tijuana Baja California, June 2009: This year's Junior Olympics hosted 450 young archers giving way to one of the most rich and complex national youth events in Mexico to date. The large amount of participation required the use of 4 fields in the Tijuana Training Center used simultaneously to accommodate the event.

The Youth division, ages 17-18, took up field 1, the Training Center's Established Archery Field, with its biggest group of participants who benefited from the close range of other services available for the event such as medical services, bow shop, event's administrative center and judges headquarters who managed a great part of the event's logistics.

The Training Center's Baseball Field was adapted to become archery field number 2 for the Cadet division, ages 14-16, which enjoyed ample room for the event as well as additional designated practice targets.

The Cub division, ages 11-13 was accommodated at the Training Center's Shot Put field. It's important to note that this new category had a strong show up and displayed many close and intense moments among the youngest shooters who all demonstrated the sportsmanship that will no doubt become the bright future of athletics in Mexico and the world.

The newly re-established Young Adult category, ages 19-22, managed to fit in the relatively narrow Track and Field area of the Tijuana Training Center where they were able to exhibit their athletic skill which was absent at last year's Jr. Olympics but proved that these young archers are nearing the peak of their development with which they will represent Mexico worldwide at international events.

PRACTICE DAY

Wednesday, June 3: 4 Hotels were assigned to hold the 450 archers and over 200 additional people attending the tournament. The 25 delegations arrived almost 2 days prior and immediately integrated themselves at their respective archery fields for official practice. The four archery fields were ready to receive the archers fully equipped and ready for competition. 140 targets were needed to accommodate all the archers. A vast tent cafeteria was needed to provide services to all the athletes at the Training Center and the administrative body at the Training Center provided all necessary services to feed accommodate and transport all the participants of this Jr. Olympics.



Field 1, Tijuana Training Center Archery Field, where the Youth archery division competed.



Field 2, Baseball field for the Cadet Division.



Field 3, the Shot Put Field where the Cub division, with its largest number of participants competed.



Field 4, Track and Field area for the Young Adult category.

140 targets were needed to accommodate the four archery fields at Mexico's Jr. Olympics 2009.



The cafeteria tent with its 1,100 capacity, provided services to all the athletes, coaches and technical staff assisting Mexico's Jr. Olympics 2009.



Archers warming up prior to the start of the tournament.



Official Practice took place without delay despite the complexity of the event.

FIRST DAY OF COMPETITION

Thursday June 4: The first day of competition was undoubtedly the longest day especially the Cadet and Junior categories who had to finish a full FITA in one day in order to select the top 8 archers for a Round Robin and the top 3 archers in each category and division will try and find a ranking at the Junior World Championship in Ogden, Utah.

The first day of the event received a visit from the Governor of California, Lic. Jose Guadalupe Osuna Millan, as well as the National Sport Minister "CONADE" Lic. Bernardo de la Garza who was accompanied by the Athletics Institute Director M.C. Saul Castro Verdugo and the President of the Archers Association of Baja California Lic. Guillermo Martinez who took a tour of the event facilities and congratulated the event organizers and hosts on their excellent job successfully putting together an such complex and large scale event that had not yet been seen in Mexico.

During the tour Ing Naty Jaime, Vice President of the Archer's Association of Baja California, explained the rules and dynamics of the event, giving details of the FITA round, Olympic elimination round and the jobs carried out by the judges who have played a vital role in the success of the event. During the visit the Governor and his guests stopped by to speak with some of Baja California's Compound Cadet archers Elesban García, Guimar Rodas, Hernán Delgado and their assistant coach Alexis Santacruz. They also expressed their satisfaction at seeing how the sport of Archery in Mexico has grown at such an impressive rate and praised Mexico's performance at international events as outstanding for which they pledged to continue their support for programs to further the development of the sport at all levels.



Lic. Guillermo Martínez, President of the Archer's Association of Baja California, Lic. Bernardo de la Garza Director of the CONADE, Naty Jaime Vice President of Archer's Association, Lic. José Guadalupe Osuna Millán Governor of Baja California and MC. Saúl Castro Verdugo Director of the Athletic Institute of Baja California on a visit during the archery events at Jr. Olympics



Governor of Baja California Lic. José Guadalupe Osuna Millán congratulating young archers Elesban García, Guimar Rodas, Alexis Santacruz, Hernán Delgado, for their efforts during Mexico's Junior Olympics and encouraged them to continue progressing in the sport and committed himself to provide continuing support for this sport.

SECOND DAY OF COMPETITION

Friday June 5: The second day of competition proved to be less lengthy but no less strenuous as the judges, organizers and archers began first thing in the morning accompanied by a number of parents, relatives, friends and spectators from across the country to support their teams for which cheers could be heard from stands provided at each field throughout the day.



The Archery field was practically full from participants and spectators in the Cadet categories.



Attendants to the event had an opportunity to view and purchase the newest archery products provided by Robin Hood Archery who always makes an appearance at important national and international events.



Parents and family members come from various areas from around the country to cheer on their children and teams.

THIRD DAY OF COMPETITION

Saturday June 6: During the 3rd day of competition was full of activity with two shifts of competition. The first shift was Team Eliminations rounds followed by Mixed Team Eliminations. A mixed team is a new addition to the Olympic events which adds a new dimension of diversity and excitement where one male and one female archer in

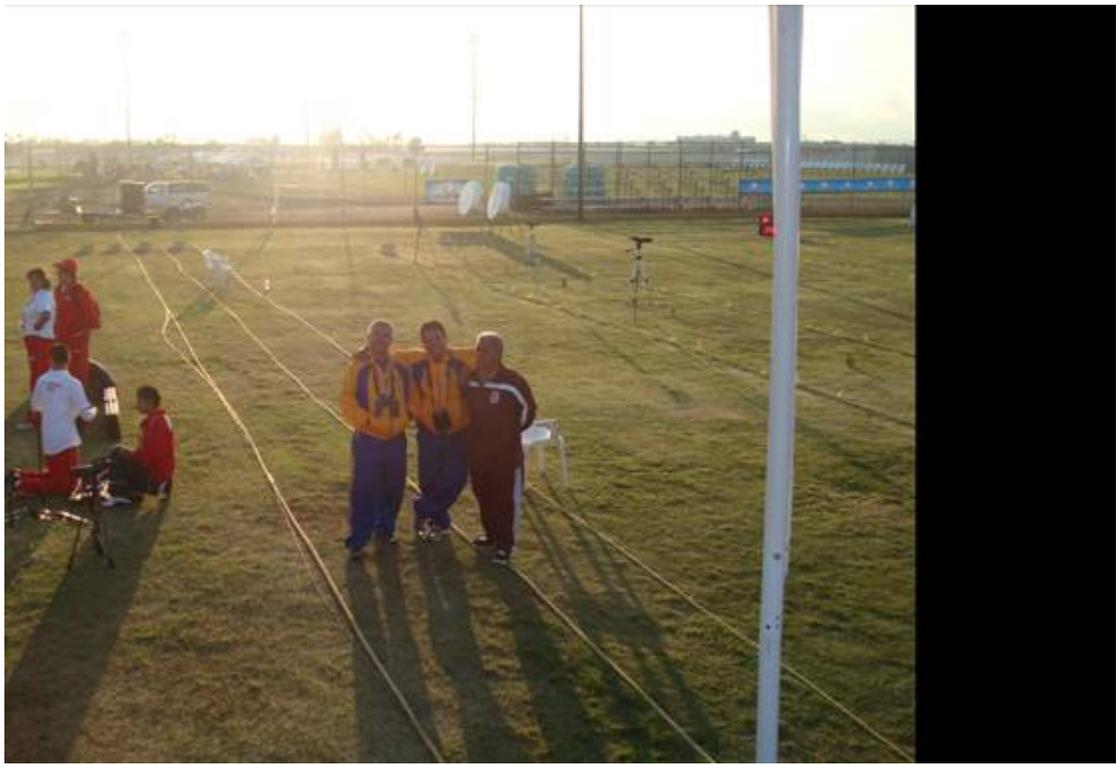
each category and division compete against another team entity for top spot. During these set of eliminations there was a noticeable trend of female archers becoming a key element in the team dynamics where they were often determined team victories or encouraged their male teammate to show their talent under pressure giving an energizing meaning to the term, which was often chanted to the male archers, “you should shoot like a girl.”



The second shift of competition of this day was full of activity lasting past 5 pm.



From early morning to late afternoon there was much activity in all the fields.



The “Tomandantes” Raúl Sepúlveda, Víctor Murmullo and Ing. Mario Castro enjoying the event, no matter the time, always at the ready.

FOURTH DAY OF COMPETITION

Sunday June 7: Sunday had the medal finals matches with the Bronze finals in the morning and the Gold finals in the afternoon. The final matches were filled with excitement with some matches with archers whose experience allowed them an advantage they kept throughout the match while others were so close they were determined at the very last arrow. It was during these close matches where emotions ran high and explosions of cheers from archers, coaches and families tested the nerves of the competitors and yells of “SONORA... SONORA... BAJA... BAJA.. NUEVO LEON... NUEVO LEON” could be heard throughout the Tijuana Training Center.



The medal finals matches are always the most exciting points of competition and when the competition is closest.



Fellow archers, friends, family and coaches focused on each arrow during the finals.



Winners, always happy for their accomplishments, receiving their due congratulations from their team.



Emotion, emotion, emotion

FIFTH DAY OF COMPETITION

Monday June 8: The last day of competition was the most crucial, particularly for the young archers searching for a spot to represent Mexico on the team to attend the Jr. World Championship to be held in Ogden, Utah from July 12 to the 19 which also doubles as a qualifier for the first Youth Olympic Games in Singapore in 2010. All the athletes did their best but only 3 archers from each category and division were selected to attend this landmark event and the final roster is as follows:

In the Cadet Recurve Female category: Mariana Sánchez of Nuevo León, Julia Chávez of Jalisco, Alejandra Valencia of Sonora qualified. Junior Recurve Female: Mariana Sánchez of Baja California, Alma Chavarría of Jalisco, Itzel Orta of Yucatán, earned their pass to the Jr. World Championship. In the Cadet Recurve Male division Héctor Sansores of Quintana Roo, Héctor Smith of Sonora and Daniel Ramírez of Jalisco are eligible to compete and the Junior Recurve Male category includes Jafet Farjat of Yucatán, Félix Gómez of Baja California and Rodrigo Lastra of the National Polytechnic Institute.

In the compound division Mexico's team will consist of the Junior Males Luis Alfaro from Baja California, Angel Ramirez from Jalisco and Cuauhtémoc Rodriguez of Baja California. Cadet Males are made up of Mario Cardoso from the state of México, Juan Fuentes of Jalisco and Adolfo Medina of Jalisco. In the Cadet Female category Stephanie Salinas of Baja California, Elma Quiroga of Nuevo León and Gabriela Treviño also from Nuevo León earned their spots. Lastly the Junior Females consisted of Karen Montellano from, Jalisco, Rosa Maria Villaseñor from Tlaxcala and Alexis de la Rosa from Jalisco rounded out Mexico's youth selection of outstanding archers who will represent their country at the European Youth World Cup in Sarzana, Italy followed by the Youth World Championships in Ogden Utah.



Finals and classification for Jr. World Championships are exhilarating from beginning to end.



Some contemplative, others emotional, but everyone enjoying the largest event registered in Latin America to date.



Judges performed an arduous but central job the Mexico's Junior Olympics 2009.



If your nocks break “we can provide”



Here a “CLOSE UP”



The state of Morelos, participating for the first time at Jr. Olympics



Archers bringing their mascot Wall-E, who was very useful during the tournament.



Worn and tired is how some archers reached the end of competition.



Other archers were happy for their achievements and anticipating the next event.



The administrators of Mexico's Junior Olympics 2009: President of the Archer's Association of Baja California Lic. José Guillermo Martínez and Director of the Athletic Institute of Baja California MC. Saúl Castro Verdugo accompanied by a new generation of archers in Baja California Daysi Ayala, Linda Ledgard and Sonia Villafan.

The last event of the Jr. Olympics was the individual and team final rounds for the Male Cub Compound category. Even though it was close to 8pm on the day of competition with winds and cold that characterize the weather in Tijuana there was no lack of enthusiasm for the little "giants" who demonstrated a determination and spirit that defines great sportsmanship and excited the spectators. The cheers from the spectators, many of them parents and family members of the young archers, reverberated through the archery fields. It was a moving and emotional moment seeing the new generation of archers demonstrate their athletic capacity and show their determination and strength under pressure which persisted from beginning to the end of the matches that concluded the 2009 Junior Olympics. At the end of the event the awards ceremony occurred in darkness and with the satisfaction of having completed the final objective of further promoting the development of Archery in Mexico for future generations to enjoy.



Archers nearing the end of competition, undoubtedly satisfied with their results or having enjoyed their experience at the 2009 Jr. Olympics

After the awards ceremony, as is customary, the Athletic Institute of Baja California invited the president of each participating archery federation to socialize and celebrate the outcome of the competition. In attendance was the Director of the Tijuana Training Center Octavio Morgan accompanied by his wife, as well as the President and Vice President of the Archer's Association of Baja California along with the Presidents of the participating archery associations as special guests.

Along with chatting and sharing their experiences of the event, the president of Robin Hood Archery Natividad Jaime took the time to congratulate all the associations who participated in the event for their hard work in promoting the sport. He gave a special thank you to Juan Curiel for his exceptional efforts to expand the sport and presented the state of Guerrero with 5 fully equipped Hoyt Excel bows with their p to congratulate them on becoming the newest archery association in the nation and to contribute to their further development in school and communities.



Naty Jaime, President of Robin Hood Archery presenting a new set of archery equipment to the President of the Archery Association of Guerrero as sponsorship for the further development their archery program.

In this way Mexico's 2009 Junior Olympics concluded its archery competition with a warm farewell to all visitors to Baja California and a message that they will all be welcomed back WITH OPEN ARMS