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Reflections on Beijing 2015 (/supporters/blog/105-beijing-reflections)

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Having been to London 2012 and Glasgow 2014, it was now time to try the IAAF world championships. This time round it was in Beijing. The bird's nest stadium. For me, this is the home of athletics and where it all begun, having watched Usain Bolt back in 2008. It only felt right to hop on a 10 hour flight to see the spectacular unfold.

Staff at Track and Field Tours were lovely, making me feel very comfortable. They provided excursions and sightseeing trips in between the athletics events, giving people opportunity to see some of the world's most famous sights. I couldn't have asked for a better organiser of the trip. If you want all the hassle of planning a trip taken away from you, along with flexibility to be independent once there, I'd thoroughly recommend Track and Field Tours.

My Highlights

The championships started with a boom. During day 1 and 2, we saw Mo Farah defend his 10,000m title, along with a dual head to head between Jessica Ennis Hill and Katarina Johnson Thompson (Jess's experience saw her through to claim a fantastic Gold despite taking a year out to have a baby). She did nothing to change the 'nation's sweetheart' perception of her during these championships, with the stadium almost electric with joy, excitement and respect from not just GB fans but many supporters from different nations.

We also saw the most anticipated head to head at these championships, Bolt vs Gatlin. The fans in and around the stadium had already picked their favourite and the cheers for Bolt and boos for Gatlin echoing around the stadium, emphasized this. Fans were even more ecstatic when Bolt won by 0.01secs.

Despite not taking an interest in throwing events, I found myself appreciating the art and skill it took some to throw. Sophie Hitchon broke the NR TWICE in the hammer throw. Well done Soph!

Support appreciated

The highlight of the WC had to be Greg's fantastic performance in the long jump, comfortably silencing critics and dominating the field once more. After the long jump and as the stadium emptied, three sets of GB fans from different sectors of the stadium stayed to cheer on Greg. He humbly went round to each sector of fans, took photos and signed t shirts and tickets. As he came over to my section, he thanked



us for coming; saying it was a long journey for us and he appreciated us making the effort to come support him. These are our celebrities and I think I speak for all fans that night when I say the gesture from Greg meant so much to us. Away from the cameras and ceremonies, we were supporting our GB athlete and he actually took notice. Thanks Greg!

Beijing is completely different to the European cities I have become accustomed to. The stadium or even surrounding areas had very little catering choices for the western world. You either had to make residence at the local mall or walk for around 30 minutes to avoid the Chinese food (which after a couple of days of eating, becomes difficult to eat). Although I was told Beijing is 'not a touristy place' I still expected some food to be available in the stadium. The limited choices of crisps, gum and nuts didn't satisfy fans.

Would I go back to Beijing? I'm not quite sure. Would I go to another WC? Absolutely yes. The athletics were superb.

Blogger: Ryan Williams

Ryan has his own blog - check it out here (<https://tnftalk.wordpress.com/>)



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