

Web Exclusive: King Abdullah Sports City

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ThyssenKrupp outfits Saudi Arabia's biggest sports complex.

by Begoña Flores Canseco

King Abdullah Sports City is a new multipurpose stadium and sports complex located 60 km north of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. It is the largest and most expensive sports project in the country's history. The main edifice, King Abdullah International Stadium, is used for soccer, while smaller indoor arenas surrounding the main stadium host athletics and indoor sporting events.

King Abdullah, who was reigning at the time, inaugurated the facility on May 1, 2014. Completed in a record 14 months, the 60,000-seat stadium opened with the final of the King's Cup between Al-Ahli of Jeddah and Al-Shabab of Riyadh. Visiting dignitaries included the Saudi-Arabian Royal Family, kingdom ministers and special guests from the Italian and Spanish national teams. This project enjoyed high media exposure due to its unique architectural design, special features and namesake.

During the manufacturing stage, representatives from the client, Saudi Aramco, requested a visit to the escalator factory in Spain in February 2013. Project manager Omar Ahmed accompanied Saudi Aramco to ThyssenKrupp Norte. This visit by one of the largest government-owned companies in Saudi Arabia allowed ThyssenKrupp Norte to showcase its manufacturing facilities. In addition, the representatives visited the ThyssenKrupp Elevator Innovation Center. Saudi Aramco was impressed and expressed immense satisfaction.

The transportation system within the main stadium includes 15 elevators, four escalators and one inclined stairlift for wheelchair access. One key feature of the project is the royal and VIP lounges, where seven elevators and four escalators have been installed. The remaining eight elevators consist of four service elevators and four general-passenger and limited-use/limited-application elevators.

Two of the royal passenger elevators and the four general-service, along with one VIP-service, elevators are ThyssenKrupp synergy elevators. The synergy provides greater flexibility in configuration, load capacity and speed, while its machine-room-less design allows for maximizing building space. It also features ThyssenKrupp's regenerative drive technology, which captures generated power and feeds it back into the building's electrical grid, reducing energy costs.



Special features of the royal and VIP elevators include 12- and 15-in. High-Definition screens with live TV capability mounted inside the elevator cars. The VIP elevators are decorated with custom graphics on back-painted glass. In addition, all the floor-indicator panels are special 5- and 7-in. LCD screens.

The execution of the project itself was a huge challenge given the accelerated schedule necessary to meet Saudi Aramco's demands for opening the stadium to the public in May 2014. Some 8,000 people worked over three shifts to complete the project. Several contractors had to work within the same areas. Coordinating them was vital to successfully completing the project on time.

Begoña Flores Canseco is Communications manager at ThyssenKrupp Southern Europe, Africa and Middle East.