



China's Wang Zhizhi drives for a shot against Britain's Dan Clark (left) and Joel Freeland during their men's basketball preliminary-round match on Monday. The London Games is Wang's last Olympics. "I will remember all those years with my brothers," he said.

CHRISTIAN PETERSEN / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Veterans bid court farewell

Chinese basketball will undergo a changing of the guard after Games

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They're among the greatest basketball players in China's history.

They've played in the NBA and the WNBA. They've won numerous domestic titles and Asian championships.

Now, they're saying goodbye.

The men's national team will lose Wang Zhizhi and the women's team will lose Miao Lijie and Chen Nan, forcing both squads to brace for a changing of the guard as the London Olympics wind to a close.

Four-time Olympian Wang, 35, was Asia's No. 1 center before Yao Ming rose to prominence. He's calling it quits on the heels of five straight losses in group play.

"We need veterans like Wang," said coach Bob Done-wald Jr, who's also leaving now that his contract has expired. "This team is building up and the CBA is building up. But this is sports, and everyone gets old and new blood coming up."

Teaming up with retired NBA center Yao and power forward Yi Jianlian, Wang helped Chi-

na finish eighth at the Beijing Games, equaling its best Olympic result.

But age and injury limited his minutes in London.

Donewald said the team needs new players like Wang and Yi to emerge.

"I hope more Wang Zhizhis and Yi Jianlians will grow from the domestic league," he said. "China can't rely on one Wang or one Yi to compete against the world's top teams."

Wang was signed by the Dallas Mavericks in 2001 — the first Chinese player in the NBA — and later played for the Los Angeles Clippers and Miami Heat. A tall, athletic player at 2.14 meters, he was primarily utilized as a long-range shooter in the NBA.

Wang made his Olympic debut at the Atlanta Games in 1996, where he started and averaged 11.1 points and 5.6 rebounds, helping China finish in eighth place.

"My last Olympics is over," Wang said. "I will remember all those years with my brothers."

He said he believes China can become one of the world's top teams if the Chinese Basketball Association continues to improve.

"We saw in London that there's a big gap between us and the world's top teams," he said. "The huge task of catching up

is going to fall to the next generation. I hope more rising teens will come out and help China become one of the world's best teams."

Women's veterans

The women's team, which finished fourth at the Beijing Games, also wrapped things up in London on Tuesday after losing to Australia in the quarterfinals.

It meant the end of the road for Miao, 31, and Chen, 29.

Coach Sun Fengwu praised their contributions to the team and said young players could learn from studying them.

"They would like to inspire those young guns," Sun said. "They did a great job as team leaders and veterans."

"I know it's their last Olympics. They are among the greatest women's players in history. I always told the rest of the team, most of whom were born after 1990, to learn from them during the Games."

Miao joined the Sacramento Monarchs of the WNBA in 2005, but left after a short time. She was the best guard in Asia and no one in China has been able to fill her shoes in terms of shooting and penetration.

Miao said she gave all she could.

"We are old, but we didn't allow ourselves to slow down and lower our play on the court," she said. "We told ourselves we needed to set an example. Young players can make mistakes and they can slow down,



Australian forward Rachel Jarry (left) vies with Chinese guard Miao Lijie during their women's quarterfinal match on Tuesday. Miao joined the national team in 1997.

MARK RALSTON / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

but we cannot.

"We went to great lengths in every game and did not want to be sorry when we looked back on this Olympics after many years."

Miao joined the national team in 1997. She retired after the Beijing Games, but was recalled because she played such a pivotal role.

Now, it's all over. "I'm worn out now. It's over. Everything will be in my memory," she said.

Chen was one of the best centers in the world in her prime. She didn't want to leave, but the battles against age and injury became too much.

"I really wish we had a bunch of good players and then I was dismissed from this team," said a smiling Chen, who played most of the 2009 WNBA season with the Chicago Sky. "I am really unwilling to accept the truth that I have to leave due to my physical condition."

"Women's basketball needs more players to take over."

Up next for Chen is a wedding banquet in her hometown with her husband.

They got married earlier this year but had no time to host the event as she prepared for the Games.

"After that, I will enjoy my honeymoon," Chen said.

Australia second sailing gold of Games

By AGENCIES
in Weymouth, United Kingdom

Nathan Outteridge and Iain Jensen won the men's 49er gold at the London Olympics on Wednesday, giving Australia a second sailing gold of the Games.

Outteridge and Jensen were already mathematically assured of topping the standings coming into the closing medal race, and New Zealand's Peter Burling and Blair Tuke had silver in hand.

The teams had only to show up and compete — Burling and Tuke sealing their second place to earn New Zealand's 100th Olympic medal.

Six of New Zealand's 10 medals in London have come in events involving boats — five in rowing and one in sailing.

In a wide-open battle for bronze, Peter Lang and Allan Norregaard finished the medal race in third place to beat out Great Britain's Stevie Morrison and Ben Rhodes.

"Finally after four years of hard work it's just a lot of satisfaction," Outteridge said. "It's all sinking in at the moment — a dream come true."

Outteridge and Jensen claimed Australia's second gold of the Olympic sailing competition at Weymouth, after Tom Slingsby's Laser victory.

The sailors' efforts have been a boost for a country struggling

to strike gold in other sports. "We've been getting quite a lot of attention from the media over the last few days," Outteridge said. "We're not really used to that. It's good for our support-

ers and we're just glad we can be a part of it."

Meanwhile, New Zealand and Britain sailed into joint first position on Wednesday ahead of the medal race in their bid for Olympic gold in the women's 470 two-hander, with both teams certain of at least a silver medal.

"I guess they couldn't improve on silver. We can really try to do better than the men," New Zealand's 2011 world champions Jo Aleh said. "It looks like it's all on for the medal race."

Britain's 2012 world champions Hannah Mills and Saskia Clark outraced the Kiwis in the last of the two qualifying races to draw level on 33 points each.

Competing on the Portland Harbour course in southwesterly

winds of up to 10 knots, Mills and Clark had to sail their best against the New Zealand pair and the Dutch team after coming eighth in the first race, adding: "We now just need to finish off."

The Dutch pair of Lisa Westerhof and Lobke Berghout lie in third place overall with 52 points, three ahead of the French team of Camille Lecointre and Mathilde Geron.

Westerhof had only one thing on her mind "and that is to win bronze," she said. A Dutch team official told Reuters Westerhof would return to flying after the Games - she is a 747 pilot for the Dutch airline KLM.

REUTERS—AFP

offtrack ...

TALKING TO HERSELF

Two-time beach volleyball gold medalist Kerri Walsh Jennings has found a way to keep herself from overthinking during her matches.

"You have to give your brain another job to do," she said after advancing to her third straight Olympic gold medal game.

And what is that job?

"I spell 'pass' 20 million times a day," she said. "P-A-S-S. Right when they're getting ready to serve."

BETTER LATE THAN NEVER

Britain's military has started pulling back personnel from the Olympics Park after a private security contractor made good on its numbers.

Although G4S failed to provide some 10,000 workers it was contracted for, it is now sending more than 7,000 workers to Olympic venues each day.

G4S spokesman Adam Mynott told AP: "It's gone as well as it could given our revised position."

The Ministry of Defense says because of the development, some military personnel have been put on standby.

Although there have been a few issues — guards turning up at the wrong place or minor skirmishes — G4S says the security operation has gone smoothly. But, Mynott said: "Given it's not quite over yet, it's still a crossing-your-fingers exercise."

IT'S ALL FOR THE LADIES

A gold medal brings pride to a nation and satisfaction to the athlete who worked so hard to achieve it. Winning can also bring endorsements and riches that otherwise would be unattainable, and etch the athlete's name in the history books.

So what is 26-year-old Scott Brash, one member of Britain's champion show jumping team, most looking forward to about becoming a gold medal winner?

"I really hope this win improves my pulling power with the women, if I'm honest," Brash told the BBC after the win. "That's about it."

PARTY AT THE PALACE

Three months after thousands celebrated Queen Elizabeth II's Diamond Jubilee, Buckingham Palace will be the scene of partying for Britain's Olympians and Paralympians.

British athletes have enjoyed success at the Olympics not seen since 1908 when London last hosted the games.

And the British Olympic Association is hoping millions turn out on the streets of the capital for a victory parade that will finish at Buckingham Palace the day after the Paralympics closing ceremony.

BOA chief executive Andy Hunt hopes children are allowed out of school to join the celebrations on the afternoon of Monday, Sept 10.

NAMESAKE CHEETAHS

Carmelita Jeter and Justin Gatlin — meet Carmelita and Justin, the cheetah cubs. They may be only three months old, but they will soon leave you in the dust.

The National Zoo in Washington has named two cheetah cubs after the fastest Americans in the Olympics.

Jeter won the silver medal in the women's 100m, finishing in 10.78 seconds. Gatlin took the bronze in the men's 100 with a time of 9.79.

Cheetahs are the fastest animals on land. Their top pace is nearly three times as fast as Gatlin's bronze-winning run.

LONG SWIM HOME

Chinese netizens have suggested Sun Yang can swim back home, if nothing else works.

The Chinese swimmer, who scooped gold medals in the men's 1,500m and 400m freestyle in London, said on his micro blog on Wednesday afternoon that he was worried about trains taking him back home.

"High-speed train service has been suspended for three hours in Zhejiang because of Typhoon Haikui. Can I get back home tonight?" Sun wrote on his Sina Weibo.

Typhoon Haikui, the third typhoon to hit China in the past week, brought downpours and floods to East China after landing in Zhejiang early on Wednesday morning, forcing cancellation of most transportation services. "Do not hesitate to get off the train. Once you get back home by swimming, the train will probably still be in Zhejiang," said a *weibo* user named Fanny_S.



THREE'S COMPANY

The high jump medals ceremony will have a packed podium.

Mutaz Essa Barshim of Qatar, Derek Drouin of Canada and Robert Grabarz of Britain finished in a three-way tie for the bronze medal, which is rare but not unheard of in the event.

"It doesn't matter," said Barshim, who earned his country's fourth medal ever. "We are all brothers. We are high jumpers, one family. We share the happiness, too."

The last time three high jumpers shared a podium spot at the Olympics was in 1992, when Hollis Conway (United States), Timothy Forsyth (Australia) and Artur Partyka (Poland) all earned bronze medals. It also happened in 1908, when Georges Andre (France), Cornelius Leahy (Britain/Ireland) and Istvan Somodi (Hungary) tied for silver.

Barshim, Drouin and Grabarz will get their medals on Wednesday night.

AP-CHINA DAILY