



YANG SHIZHONG/ CHINA DAILY

Chinese and Malaysian sepak takraw players show off their physical prowess during a group match on Tuesday.

Thais' secret recipe for success

By CUI JIA
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — Thailand's women's sepak takraw team has a secret weapon.

Before each game, the players exchange written notes of encouragement.

Payom Srihongsa, 25, smiled as she read two notes while massaging her ankle before Wednesday's match against the Republic of Korea (ROK).

"We will be the champion this time and we all trust you," Srihongsa read aloud from one note written by teammate Sunthari Rupsung.

On the other, Nisa Thanaattawut

wrote: "Let everyone see our smile as the Asian Games champion when we go home. We can do it!"

The message was accompanied by a small drawing of Thailand's flag.

Both writers were competing in the first *regu* (set) and later won it for the team.

In sepak takraw team match play, nine players are divided into three groups and play all three *regus*. Whoever wins the most *regus* wins the match,

Srihongsa, who also sent notes to other members of the team, said reading them gives her lots of encouragement before each game



SEPAK
TAKRAW

because it makes her feel like all her teammates are with her.

"Although we see and talk to each other every day, when thoughts are put in writing, it means something special," she said.

Srihongsa was disappointed that her team only managed to win the silver medal at the Doha Asian Games four years ago after losing to Vietnam.

"We will bring the gold medal back this time," she vowed.

Unlike Srihongsa, who has played in three Asian Games, this is the first Asiad for 22-year-old Wanwisa Jankaen, and she is

excited about playing alongside her idol, Suebsak Phunsueb.

Phunsueb is Thailand's sepak takraw superstar and a two-time Asian Games double gold medalist whose serve has been clocked at speeds of up to 160 km/h.

"The notes make the girls more united and maybe it is our secret weapon for winning," said Jankaen.

"I am very proud of being able to represent Thailand, where sepak takraw is huge."

With the help of the notes, Thailand beat China and the ROK in the preliminary women's group matches, but the Thais could face a stiff challenge from the ROK, Vietnam and historic rival Malaysia.

After a narrow win over the ROK in the men's team final at the King's Cup World Championship in July, Thailand is taking nothing for granted.

In the women's event, Vietnam is aiming to build on its two gold medals in Doha in the team event and doubles.

Vietnamese hopes are pinned on an experienced squad in the team event, while China is hoping to win its first sepak takraw gold after claiming three bronze in Doha.

As host nation, China can compete in all six sepak takraw events. Other teams can enter a maximum of four.

Champ Liu leads China bandwagon to two more golds

GUANGZHOU — Weightlifting legend Liu Chunhong led China to double gold on the fifth day of Asian Games action on Wednesday, taking the host nation's gold medal haul to seven from a possible 10.

Reigning double Olympic champion Liu and compatriot Lu Yong, also a gold medalist at the 2008 Beijing Games, won the women's -69kg and men's -85kg classes at the Dongguan Gymnasium.

The packed venue was treated to high drama by Lu but a no-nonsense display by Liu, who soon scuppered talk that she was gunning for her own world record by playing well within her limits for a second Asiad gold.

Lu, however, survived a last-lift threat from Republic of Korea raider Kim Kwang-hoon, who scraped back a 13kg deficit in the



WEIGHTLIFTING

snatch to have a 216kg clean and jerk chance for gold with the last hoist of the event.

It was a close-run thing as Kim just failed, his arms buckling as the bar was being raised above his head to gasps from the crowd.

Lu, world champion in 2009 and silver medalist at the 2006 Asiad in Doha, was unfazed.

"Sure I was nervous," acknowl-

edged Lu, who just seconds before Kim's effort had spurned his final lift because his knees were hurting.

"But I've rarely seen lifters doing 216kg on their third attempt. I have injuries to my knees and I didn't want to make them worse ahead of winter training."

The second event of the day saw Liu in full control of the women's -69kg, and she hinted afterwards she had bigger fish to fry.

"Over the next two years, I'll

train and improve in a bid to get the gold medal at 2012 London Olympics," she said.

"I started lifting young and still have age on my side. I'm not old and I'd like to challenge myself at the 2012 Games. I'm confident.

"I hope to do better there than in Beijing," where she set world records in the snatch, clean and jerk and aggregate, said the 25-year-old.

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GOLD RUSH >> TODAY'S MEDAL EVENTS

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Billiard Sports

13: 00 Men's 9-Ball Pool Singles
16: 30 Women's 8-Ball Pool Singles

Bowling

14: 30 Women's Doubles

Cycling Mountain

10: 00 Women's Cross-country Cycling
13: 30 Men's Cross-country Cycling

Dragon Boat

11: 20 Men's 1000m Straight Race
11: 40 Women's 1000m Straight Race

Fencing

19: 40 Women's Individual Sabre
20: 00 Men's Individual Epée

Rowing

10: 00 Women's Double Sculls
10: 10 Men's Double Sculls
10: 25 Lightweight Women's Double Sculls
10: 55 Lightweight Men's Double Sculls
11: 05 Women's Four
11: 20 Men's Four
11: 35 Lightweight Men's Four

Shooting

9: 00 Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions Team
9: 00 Men's 25m Center Fire Pistol
9: 00 Men's 25m Center Fire Pistol Team
14: 00 Men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions

Swimming

18: 00 Men's 50m Backstroke
18: 05 Women's 200m Individual Medley
18: 23 Men's 200m Breaststroke
18: 41 Women's 50m Butterfly
18: 56 Men's 1500m Freestyle
19: 28 Men's 4x100m Medley Relay

Taekwondo

16: 30 Women's Under 53kg
16: 46 Men's Under 80kg
17: 02 Women's Under 57kg
17: 18 Men's Over 87kg

Weightlifting

16: 30 Men's 94kg
19: 00 Women's 75kg