

Lao wows local fans in premier race

CHINESE UNDERDOG COMES FROM BEHIND TO STUN RIVALS IN 100M FINAL

By LEI LEI
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — China's Lao Yi was thrilled to win the Asian Games' blue-ribbon event on Monday after clocking 10.24 seconds in the 100m, but he would have preferred to beat the national or Asian record to inherit the title of Asia's fastest man.



ATHLETICS

"I didn't expect to win, but it would have been nice to have run a personal best," said the 25-year-old. "I was kind of hoping to break the national record here."

Lao made his signature slow start in Guangzhou, then came from behind to derail the title bid of Saudi Arabia's Yasir Baalghayth Alnashri (10.26 seconds), with Barakat Al Harthi of Oman a further two-hundredths back for bronze.

"I had a slow start and then I sped up, which is my usual rhythm," he said. "I maintained a high speed later on and became more and more relaxed."

Despite his blistering pace, Lao, who now has his eyes firmly fixed on next year's World Championships, was 0.07 seconds shy of the Chinese record set 12 years ago by Zhou Wei.

His winning time was more than 2/10 of a second behind the Asian record of 9.99 set in 2007 by Qatar's Samuel Francis, who was disqualified in the semifinals for a false start.

Not that it mattered to Lao's Chinese fans, who hailed him as their champion this week but barely knew his name this time last year. At the Shandong National Games last year, he didn't take part in the 100m but competed in a relay event.

His great leap forward occurred this year at the National Championships in June, which he won in 10.21, the best result by a Chinese sprinter since 2003.

During the national trials for the Guangzhou Games, Lao recorded 10.31 to secure a berth on the squad after honing his strength.

"I suffered some injuries in previous years so I just focused on physical training for strength," he said. "The result at the nationals gave me a lot of encouragement and boosted my confidence to win here."

Lao will next compete in the first round of the 4x100m relay on Tuesday.



PETER PARKS / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Chisato Fukushima of Japan (left) finishes ahead of Guzel Khubbieva of Uzbekistan (right) to win gold in the women's 100m final in the athletics competition at the 16th Asian Games on Monday. Khubbieva claimed silver.

Veteran Uzbek sprinter still running hot at 34

GUANGZHOU — She failed to defend the Asiad championship, but won the respect of fans and fellow athletes.

Thirty-four-year-old Asiad defending champion Guzel Khubbieva of Uzbekistan clocked a season's best 11.34 seconds to claim the silver medal in the women's 100m sprint on Monday — just 0.01 of a second behind Japan's Chisato Fukushima, who is 12 years younger.

"I don't think too much about my age," said Khubbieva. "I think time has rewarded me with more experience than most of my competitors."

Khubbieva jumped into the spotlight in 2002, when she picked up her first Asiad medal in the 4x100m relay at Busan. She reached her peak in 2006 by winning one gold and one silver at Doha.

The Guangzhou effort produced her

fourth Asian Games medal, but the veteran is still expecting more.

"There is still passion in me," she said. "I don't feel it's time for my retirement. I think I can still have great performances. I'm sure I will be competing in the future."

Fukushima took the gold in 11.33 seconds while Vietnam's Vu Thi Huong won bronze in 11.43.

XINHUA

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FENCING

Host fencers win in team sabre

The Chinese team celebrates its win over Korea in the men's team sabre final at the 16th Asian Games in Guangzhou on Monday. China beat Japan and Korea outdueled Kazakhstan in the semifinals earlier in the day. China also won the women's team sabre gold on Sunday.



AFP

ARCHERY

Korean archers rule the range

Korean archers show their joy after defeating China in the men's team final at the Aoti archery range on Monday. The Korean team took the gold medal. The Korean women's team also defeated China in the final on Sunday for gold.



AFP

ATHLETICS

Yang soars to pole vault gold

Yang Yansheng of China competes in the men's pole vault final in the athletics competition at the 16th Asian Games in Guangzhou on Monday. Yang, the Doha Asiad's bronze medalist, won the gold medal with a height of 5.50 meters.