

'Ice Queen' wields a cool cue

By SUN XIAOCHEN
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — Pan Xiaoting, China's No 1 female billiards player, who claimed nine-ball gold at the Asiad, has been told she transforms from a fun-loving young lady to an "ice queen" when she picks up a cue.

"Friends tell me I become another person with a cold face when I start playing. I am not aware of it. Actually, I am a girl who smiles a lot and enjoys kidding with my friends," Pan said.

However, she concedes the ice-cool façade works in her favor at the table.

"Billiards is actually a mental competition, which requires great concentration. If you want to win, you have to take it seriously. You have to respect the game and your opponent," she said.

Chou Chieh-yu, the Chinese Taipei player who lost to Pan, 7-5, in the nine-ball gold medal match, agrees.

"She always concentrates 100 percent in games and remains calm. It's hard to keep mentally stable in close games. But she did it (in the final on Nov 19) and that's why she won," said Chou.

Pan's tense facial expressions often carry on after the game and sometimes make her look like the loser due to her forced smile in front of the cameras.

Apart from cue sports, which have brought her fame, Pan enjoys the same things as other young women, such as karaoke and cosmetics.

The day after the Chinese billiards team checked into the Athletes' Village, Pan and her teammates found the karaoke room in the international zone and enjoyed a hearty session of singing. Her favorite singer is Faye Wong.

Pan, 28, has been hailed as the most beautiful female billiards player in China, but she just shrugs off the mantle.

"I know how to keep my skin healthy. I have tried many different brands of cosmetics. No matter which you prefer, removing and cleaning are the most important (parts of the process)," she said, volunteering some skin-care tips.

"Chemicals in some cosmetics can harm your skin, so make sure you take it all off before you go to sleep," said Pan.

She is also emerging as a successful businesswoman with a chain of billiards clubs all over the country. The 17th and newest club opened in Shanghai just before the Asian Games started.

"Although they are named 'Pan Xiaoting Billiards Clubs', the business is operated by my father and an experienced team. I provide suggestions on design and promotional activities," said Pan.



Pan Xiaoting smiles while waiting for a security check at the welcome center of the Asian Games Athletes' Village.

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BIRTHDAYS

Born on Nov 23

Athletics

Sabitri Nepali
NEP 1985
Tassaporn Wannakit
THA 1989

Cycling BMX

Jang Jae-young
KOR 1982

Diving

Hoang Thanh Tra
VIE 1988

Dragon boat

Peng Chun
CHN 1975

Fencing

Nontapat Panchan
THA 1981
Chu Wing Hong
HKG 1987

Soccer

Panupong Wongsa
THA 1983
Ruslan Mingazov
TKM 1991

Golf

Miss Ariya Jutanugarn
THA 1995

Handball

Jia Dong Jin
HKG 1970

Hockey

Juliani Mohamad Din
MAS 1985

Modern pentathlon

Anna Shonadina
KAZ 1989

Sepaktakraw

Nguyen Thi Dung
VIE 1990

Volleyball

Aung Myat Tun Tun
MYA 1990

Weiqi

Jiro Akiyama
JPN 1977

Q & A >> Sabika Mubarak, shooter from Bahrain



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Bahraini shooter Sabika Mubarak poses with her Chinese calligraphy in front of the exhibition wall.

Why do you want to learn Chinese calligraphy?

The Chinese culture has a very long history, and it is fascinating and mysterious to us foreigners. I always wanted to get to know the culture, and I think learning Chinese is the first step. As well as my name, I can now write my mom's and dad's names. But it is a little hard for me.

As a Chinese, I am amazed by your skill. Your brush writing is even better than mine. How did you do that?

It was my first try writing characters with a brush pen, but I had some experience using a normal pen, so that helped me a little. Also, the teacher here is good. She showed me every stroke very

clearly and told me to write as smoothly as possible. And I got into a groove while I was writing.

There are many copies of athletes' handwriting or even drawing behind you on the wall. Do you want to hang yours there? And which one do you like?

I saw the copies the first time I walked into the room and I stood there for a long time appreciating them. I like the Chinese painting of the dragon, it's vivid and beautiful. It would be nice to put up my copy on the wall, but I still want to keep it and take it home. Maybe I will write another copy and leave it here.

Your event has finished. Can you tell us what impressed you during the competition?

It went well, you know. The organization was effective and the venue was very good. The site is a little far from the Athletes' Village. When we got up early in the morning, I saw everybody fall asleep again in the bus. It was so quiet in the bus ... but very interesting.

If you come back to Guangzhou for a tour, where would you want to visit?

I don't know because I haven't had time to see the scenic places here. But I have heard of some nice areas and I know the Cantonese dishes are very famous. There are also some restaurants recommended in the newspaper. If I come here again, I would like to go to them and try their food.