



# Having an eye for the storm

FORECASTERS HELP ATHLETES COPE WITH CITY'S VOLATILE WEATHER AND KEEP GAMES ROLLING

By SHI YINGYING  
CHINA DAILY

**SHENZHEN** — Everybody cares about the weather, but for Universiade athletes, its impact is more than remembering to bring an umbrella — and it can mean the difference between winning or losing.

Golfers need to know about the risk of lightning. Wind speed is crucial to sailors and windsurfers. And sand temperatures matter a great deal to beach volleyball players.

“Golfers, for example, don’t want to be struck by lightning while holding their clubs,” Shenzhen Meteorological Bureau deputy director Mao Xia said.

Shenzhen’s climate creates a challenge for its hosting of the Games. The city has experienced thunderstorms on an average of 18 days every August for the past 50 years.

“Fortunately, we have a team of 189 devoted weather experts scattered throughout the city to make sure nothing goes wrong,” Mao said.

Zhang Yongpeng is one of them. “The sailboat and sailboard competitions were delayed by an hour last Wednesday because of a storm,” Zhang said.

“We gave the forecast about one hour ahead of the actual storm, which was about 11:40 am. At first, the Universiade’s competition department didn’t believe us and said it was a fine day. They changed their tune when a thunderstorm rolled in at 12:42 pm and lasted for about 20 minutes.”

Zhang pointed out weather reports are crucial for sailors.

“Just a few days ago, a man went



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**Wearing a bikini could be one of the best ways to beat the heat in the Universiade host city of Shenzhen.**

missing in a storm during a competition in Shandong province,” he said.

Shenzhen’s meteorological bureau sent a special ship to gather information about weather conditions, including wind force and direction, water temperature and precipitation near Seven Star Bay Marina, where the Universiade’s sailing competition was staged, Zhang said.

While not a matter of life or

death as it is in sailing, wind is also important to archery.

“An arrow’s trajectory is a 70-meter-long parabola,” the Chinese archery team’s coach, Wang Youqun, said.

“Arrows are made of carbon fiber and are very light. Consequently, they are susceptible to wind speed and direction. It’s common to miss the target because of wind.”

Special windsocks and flags were set up around the archery range to

give athletes a better idea of wind speed and direction. At the suggestion of experts, archery matches were rescheduled to start after 4 pm, when the wind is often lighter.

“We pay serious attention to weather forecasts, especially before matches,” Shanghai Institute of Physical Education archer Liu Zhaowu said.

“Really good archers are trained to deal with crosswinds, and to shoot into and against the wind.”

The “specialized” Universiade forecasting method is a trend for the future, Mao said.

“We will bid farewell to the days of ‘general city forecasts’ for everyone and enter the customized weather forecast era,” he said.

“Of course, we won’t do 14 million individual forecasts for Shenzhen’s 14 million residents. But we can start with such steps as focusing on important harbors and traffic hubs, such as Shekou Port.”

## Teen brings sunny attitude to show

By SHI YINGYING  
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**SHENZHEN** — At 16, Jia Xiaodu is probably the youngest weatherman in town. The Shenzhen Middle School student hosts a special two-minute English weather forecast for the Universiade.

Although Jia has no previous experience in TV or meteorology, he appears at ease in front of the camera.

“I was a bit reserved for the first couple of days, but it all went well for the other days,” Jia said.

“Why is my English that good? I’m heading to Boston for Grade 11 in 10 days.

“I don’t really get stage fright, because I’m used to speaking in front of foreigners who only understand English,” he said, referring to his recent school interviews.

Jia sprinkles his forecast with

humor and gossip. Such topical issues as the medals table are mentioned in, but do not dominate, his program.

“I spend two hours every day researching and writing the scripts myself and translating the Chinese subtitles,” he said.

When asked which university he hoped to attend, Jia replied, in his characteristic style, with three simple words: “Harvard or Yale.”



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**Sixteen-year-old Jia Xiaodu hosts a two-minute English weather forecast for the Universiade.**