

CHINA



Students of the FC Bayern Football School Qingdao practice soccer at the school in Qingdao, Shandong province.

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Famed German soccer club starts Chinese youth league

FC Bayern and Qingdao West Coast New Area team up to set up school for sport

By XIE CHUANJIAO in Qingdao, Shandong xiechuanjiao@chinadaily.com.cn

Young Chinese soccer players now have more opportunities to be trained by European coaches since a soccer school in Qingdao, Shandong province, run by German Bundesliga giant FC Bayern Munich announced the establishment of its first youth academy in China.

On April 8 and 9, the FC Bayern Football School Qingdao held a program to recruit 80 players born in 2014 and 2015.

Coaches gauged their performances during training sessions and games, and 20 standout players were chosen to join the school's U8 team, founding its first youth team.

Dominik Voglsinger, a manager at FC Bayern Munich, said that he was impressed by the attitude displayed by young players, adding that they have great potential to develop.

"For the next steps, coaches will



A German coach watches students train at the school.

help the players develop technical skills and a tactical mindset, and also improve their mental capabilities," said Voglsinger, who has 18 years of experience in youth soccer.

He pointed to the need to develop well-rounded abilities.

"At this age, it is important to learn other types of sports in order to learn different rhythms of movement. We have to try to find a good balance in training," said Voglsinger, adding that coaches will work with parents and teachers to help children grow up healthily.

Located in the Sino-German

Ecopark in the Qingdao West Coast New Area, the FC Bayern Football School Qingdao is the result of a partnership, and an agreement was signed between the two sides in Berlin in October 2016 to create the first FC Bayern Munich soccer school in China.

The school is also home to the first FC Bayern Munich museum in China.

According to Zhang Yunqing, vice-director of the Sino-German Ecopark administrative committee, the school has eight high-standard fields with state-of-the-art facilities for indoor and outdoor training, as well as

accommodation and catering.

"It helps develop soccer at school and sets different training goals and corresponding courses for coaches and adolescents, creating a 'Bayern model' for Chinese soccer," Zhang said.

Since its establishment, the school has hosted coaches from FC Bayern and has launched a host of youth programs.

It has also organized high-profile events, including the finals of the FC Bayern Youth Cup China and the Adidas Youth Cup.

"The school plays a big part in Sino-German sports exchange," Zhang said, adding that it plans to organize more games, international summer camps and other exchange activities to give young players ample opportunities to grow and hone their skills.

Seven-year-old Li Hanzhao was among the 20 selected. He said that he is excited to join the US team and didn't think he would be selected.

"My peers at the Bayern school are very talented, and it is more difficult to win here than at my primary school," said Li, who started playing the sport in kindergarten.

He intends to work hard at training and hopes that one day, he will play for Munich, just like his goalkeeper idol, Liu Shaoyang.

Fight for equal pay still inspires women

GUIYANG — In late March, a plantation in Baozi village, Guizhou province, bustled with tourists enjoying cups of tea around stoves or picking fruit for fun.

Some 39,000 square meters in size and created with an investment of 10 million yuan (\$1.45 million), the plantation grows a variety of fruit, including citrus, passion fruit and dragon fruit, and can receive up to 500 tourists a day. "We call the plantation the 'Ladies Manor', because our 50-plus employees are predominantly women," said Huang Dan, head of the plantation.

The 35-year-old comes from Liuchang township, not far from Baozi. Since starting her business in 2019, Huang has helped turn the plantation into a booming, multimillion-yuan business.

Many Baozi women like Huang said they are inspired by a historic episode that turned the village into a household name.

In the 1950s, China began to encourage women, who had previously been confined to domestic work, to take an active part in the production as part of the effort to develop agriculture, although they

“Every time my mother-in-law tells me the story of fighting for equal pay, I am moved. She has always encouraged me to work just as well as men.”

Chen Hongfang, a village official in Baozi village, Guizhou province

were paid considerably less than men at the time.

Wen Anrong, who is now 87, said that women had to work two or three days to earn the same number of labor credits a man earned in a day. Unsurprisingly, many women felt the system was unfair.

As a result, a heated debate began, with many women in the village demanding the same pay as men. They eventually won the argu-

ment and their struggle helped boost productivity, resulting in an increase in grain production.

Qiu Deying, who is now 81, once earned 5,551 labor credits and was nominated as the champion worker that year, beating out all her male co-workers in the process.

"People said that women couldn't work as hard as men, but I didn't believe that," she said.

"Women hold up half the sky. We are just as competent as men."

After an agricultural magazine ran an article on Baozi's breakthrough in 1955, Chairman Mao Zedong called on other villages and cooperatives to follow suit. People from all over the country began visiting Baozi to learn from its experience. The village's women also became active in public affairs, and for a long time now, women have held most posts on village leadership committees.

One of them, a 58-year-old village official, Chen Hongfang, is Wen's daughter-in-law.

"Every time my mother-in-law tells me the story of fighting for equal pay, I am moved," she said. "She has always encouraged me to

work just as well as men."

Tan Li, Baozi Party chief, attributes the development of Baozi in large part to the work ethic of its women. "Gender equality unleashed the productivity and creativity of women," Tan said.

He said that when the village piloted garbage sorting, Chen patrolled each day to ensure no one was making a mistake.

"Once, she even passed out from the smell as she dug through the trash to show the villagers how to separate dry garbage from wet," Tan said. "They were all impressed by her work ethic."

Experts speak highly of how this historic fight for gender equality inspired generations of women in the village. "The women's deeds reflected their awareness of the need to protect their labor rights," said Wang Dan, an official with the Guizhou provincial women's federation, adding that their example has taken root and flourished across the country.

Jiao Jie, executive deputy director of the women's research center at Shaanxi Normal University, said, "I hope society will offer more support and opportunities for women to shine on a larger stage."

Hebei schools teaching intangible heritage

By ZHANG YU in Shijiazhuang zhangyu1@chinadaily.com.cn

One Friday afternoon, Li Jingwen sat watching *xilu bangzi*, a type of opera from Haixing county in Hebei province, in an activity room at school, enthralled by the theatrical nature of its imagery and powerful rhythms.

The 9-year-old from Shangde Primary School in Xiangfang town was watching a scene from *Huanghelou*, or *Yellow Crane Pavilion*, which tells stories about the Kingdom of Wu during the Three Kingdoms Period (220-280).

"I couldn't understand most of the lines, but the expressions of the performers and their makeup were so dramatic and interesting," she said, adding that she wanted to learn to sing some of the opera herself once she grows up.

The art form is being performed at primary schools to teach students about its beauty, much as is done with many other examples of intangible cultural heritage.

"The introduction of intangible cultural heritage to schools allows students to directly experience the charm of traditional Chinese culture," said Xu Yongxing, head of the county's education bureau, adding that this is a good way to spread traditional culture and increase the likelihood of it being passed on to future generations.

Du Zhonghua, an opera performer who is also an inheritor of

the art, said teaching intangible cultural heritage is critical.

"It is an important part of traditional culture. Students are able to enjoy the beauty of traditional culture through it," Du said.

Han Kuitian, a teacher at the primary school, agreed.

"Young people like my students can be influenced by traditional culture only by getting to know a little bit of it," Han said.

According to Han, performances of *xilu bangzi* were introduced to the curriculum in 2017. Inheritors of the cultural heritage come to the school every Wednesday to put on different opera performances for students.

In addition to opera, other examples of heritage, including paper-cutting, martial arts studies and clay sculpting, have also been introduced to the curricula at schools in Haixing.

At Yifu Primary School, there's a studio for making clay sculptures, while at Guoqiao Primary School, there's a workshop for practicing martial arts.

According to Xu, some performances and teaching activities are also held during the summer and winter breaks to give students something interesting to do during the holidays.

"This not only makes their lives more interesting, but also enhances cultural confidence and encourages the passing on and protection of intangible cultural heritage," Xu said.



Students at a primary school in Haixing county, Hebei province, learn paper-cutting in class. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Old weather station in Jilin stands test of time

CHANGCHUN — A weather book dating back to 1947, a worn-out barometer and a Russian hair hygrometer (humidity meter) were among a collection of climate heritage items on display in Changchun, Jilin province.

"The display invites people to learn more about the time-honored meteorological station in Changchun, its 100-plus years of history, and its contributions to society," said Shan Fuhui, director of the weather bureau of the city's Lyuyuan district, where the items were exhibited.

Changchun has a long history of meteorological observation and was one of the pioneers in northeastern China. The city's first meteorological station was founded in the district in 1908.

Despite relocations and restructuring, meteorological observation has continued to be carried out at the station. In 1987, it gained official recognition as a national standard climate station, and in 2017, it was listed among 60 of the world's century-old observation stations.

Every day at 7:15 am, a radio-sonde attached to a wireless measurement device is launched via balloon from the station, collecting meteorological data from the ground up to 30,000 meters and exchanging information with stations around the world.

Sun Kemin, who has worked at the station for 31 years, remembers being pulled by a balloon during a strong wind. When she let go of the rope, it scraped the skin off her palm.

Resilience and determination are required to succeed, especially for women who face additional barriers and stereotypes, she added.

In addition to being a sounding station, the facility is one of the eight ground observation stations in China that have continued performing long-term manual observation, maintaining the tradition of manually measuring meteorological data such as air pressure, temperature and humidity for scientific research.

"Previously, we had to go outside and collect data in all types of weather," said Sui Zhengjie, who has been working as a meteorologist for 42 years and will retire in August.

Although the current equipment can measure temperatures 30 times in a minute, the principles of accuracy, comprehensiveness and strictness have been ingrained in the minds of Sui and his colleagues.

Thanks to rapid advancement, the Changchun station has improved its detection and automated capabilities.

In addition to a microwave radiometer, lightning location system and automated acid rain observation system, a BeiDou Navigation Satellite System will also be introduced to the station, Sun said.

Gu Haoquan, a 37-year-old meteorologist, said weather services are deeply intertwined with socioeconomic development, adding that disaster warnings issued in time help agricultural centers avoid unnecessary loss.

"The meteorological station has withstood the test of time, while we carry the mission of providing quality meteorological services on our shoulders," said Shan Fuhui, director of the Lyuyuan weather bureau.