

Shanxi's athletes go for glory

Province puts on a standout performance across disciplines at the 15th National Games



The delegation from Shanxi province enters the stadium during the opening ceremony of the 15th National Games in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Nov 9.
LIU TONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

By YUAN SHENGGAO

Athletes from Shanxi province made a series of notable achievements at the National Games, which ended in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Friday.

The 15th National Games, which were held from Nov 9 to 21, were the first major sporting event jointly hosted by Guangdong province and the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions.

The Games encompassed 34 major sports across 419 disciplines, attracting more than 14,000 athletes alongside approximately 11,000 participants in mass sports events. Shanxi sent a delegation of 272 athletes, who qualified for the finals in 144 disciplines spanning 27 major sports.

Although the official opening ceremony was held on Nov 9, some of the competitions commenced earlier.

On Oct 11, the Shanxi women's trampoline team made a triumphant start by winning the team event with a total score of 167.81, claiming the province's first gold medal in the elite competition. The success continued on Oct 12 when Hu Yicheng extended Shanxi's golden run by clinching the women's individual title with an outstanding score of 57.46. The back-to-back victories marked the best performance ever by Shanxi in trampoline at the National Games.

"The audience was fantastic, creating a thrilling atmosphere. I truly enjoyed the competition," Hu said. "The National Games come every four years, and I can feel how much I've grown on this stage."

Building on this success, Hu continued her stellar form at 38th FIG Trampoline Gymnastics World Championships 2025, where she captured an impressive three gold medals and one bronze across four events.

Shanxi's gold tally didn't stop there. In the women's 25-meter pistol final, Chen Yan displayed remarkable composure, hitting 40 targets to secure the province's third gold. Diver Li Yajie then dominated the women's 1-meter springboard final, executing high-difficulty dives with flawless precision to claim a long-awaited gold for the Shanxi diving team.

Additionally, Shanxi athlete Zheng Ninali, who is the first naturalized athlete in Chinese track and field, won the women's heptathlon. The women's heptathlon is comprised of seven events: the 100-meter hurdles, high jump, shot put, 200-meter sprint, long jump, javelin throw and 800-meter run, testing the overall abilities of the athletes.

The success culminated with Yao Yang, who excelled in the women's *changquan* (long fist), swordplay and spear play all-around event. With high scores across all three routines and a total of 29.490 points, she ended a 20-year gold drought for Shanxi in wushu, reviving the glory of martial arts in the province.

Shanxi athletes also won silver and bronze medals across multiple com-

petitions, including wrestling, boxing and swimming.

Yet, the true victory lay not just in the medals, but in the immense effort and spirit the athletes demonstrated.

During the semi-final of the women's 66kg boxing, Zhao Chunyuan, despite suffering a torn anterior cruciate ligament and meniscus damage, persevered to win a bronze medal.

In the men's Greco-Roman 87kg wrestling, seasoned Shanxi athlete Qian Haitao, a three-time National Games participant, defended with immense fortitude, repeatedly neutralizing the onslaught to secure the bronze medal. Though he didn't top the podium, his composure and veteran prowess set an example for younger athletes, proving that genuine passion can defy the challenges of time.

As one of the Generation Z athletes in the Shanxi delegation, Han Xiuqiancheng made her National Games debut in the women's skateboarding park competition. Leveraging agile tactics and a rookie's boldness, she created several surprises throughout the event.

Although she didn't secure a medal, her performance highlighted the strong potential of Shanxi's rising talents, signaling a bright future for the province's sports.

In the sailing competition, Tang Yuanshuai claimed the silver medal in the men's ILCA 7 final. This marked Shanxi's first-ever sailing medal in the National Games, a remarkable achievement for a team with a traditionally weak foundation in the sport.

In the women's kayak cross final, Huang Jieyu finished eighth, while Zhang Hejie, competing in the men's event, advanced to the quarter-finals. Despite the event's late start and limited training resources in Shanxi, the athletes honed their skills daily in challenging whitewater conditions.

Their participation signifies a historic breakthrough — from non-existence to qualification, and from participation to competitiveness — opening new development



Yang Yang of Shanxi competes in the women's 100-meter breaststroke final. LIU TONG / FOR CHINA DAILY



Chen Yan competes in the women's 25-meter pistol final. XINHUA

prospects for Shanxi's water sports and embodying a trailblazing spirit.

In recent years, Shanxi's athletic prowess has been consistently demonstrated through a series of historic achievements on the national and international stage. The province's athletes have made significant contributions to Team China's honor.

At the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics, snowboarder Su Yiming, who was trained and supported by Shanxi, announced his arrival on the global scene in spectacular fashion. He captured gold in the men's Big Air competition, securing China's first-ever Olympic gold medal in snowboarding. Also, he added a silver medal in the slopes-style event, setting a new benchmark for China in the sport.

The success continued at the Hangzhou 2023 Asian Games, where the Shanxi delegation enjoyed its most successful outing ever, winning six gold, three silver, and three bronze medals. This record-breaking haul across athletics, shooting, and taekwondo, among other sports, showcased the province's rising competitiveness.

On the domestic front, Shanxi athletes have also excelled. The province's appearance at the 14th National Winter Games in 2024 was a resounding success, earning 12 gold, nine silver and five bronze medals to rank ninth nationally — a landmark achievement for Shanxi in winter sports.

These remarkable results are attributable to the high-quality development and sustained investment in Shanxi's sports system.

"Before, if we wanted to play badminton, we had to travel quite a distance. Now, the public fitness center downstairs is available anytime — it's so convenient," said Wang Jun, a resident of Yingze district in Taiyuan, who brings her child to play at the renovated Laojunying Public Fitness Center every week.

Following the upgrade, the center's excellent facilities and environment have transformed it into a hub for local residents, a change that stands as a testament to the wider, effective improvements in Shanxi's public fitness infrastructure.

By August, the province's per capita sports area had reached 2.72 square meters. A major push since 2021 has seen the construction or upgrade of 64 sports parks, 44 fitness centers, and 201 public stadiums, with 156 venues offering free or low-cost access. This growing network of facilities has addressed the public need for accessible fitness. Further boosting participation, over 2,000 fitness events at the county level and above, along with 700 community sports games, are now held annually, fueling the active lifestyle movement in Shanxi.

Zhang Xin and Zhang Qi contributed to this story.



Above left: Yao Yang competes in spear play. LIU TONG / FOR CHINA DAILY

Above right: Hu Yicheng of Shanxi competes in the women's individual trampoline. XINHUA

Hu Zhanxiang (right) of Shanxi competes in wrestling. LIU TONG / FOR CHINA DAILY