

VISUAL



(Clockwise from left) Students practice a spear routine and a B-twist in wushu martial art, as well as a judo throw at Rizhao Sports School in Rizhao, Shandong province, on Jan 7.

PHOTOS BY LAN HONGGUANG / XINHUA

Curriculum of champions

Rizhao school continues heritage of training some of nation's top athletes

Established in 1988, Rizhao Sports School is the coastal city's only school dedicated to competitive and vocational sports.

Over the decades, the school in East China's Shandong province has cultivated numerous sports athletes who have achieved impressive results in various levels of competition. These include winning a Rizhao record of four gold medals at last year's 15th National Games.

Cross-country skier and school alumnus Li Minglin helped it win its first-ever Winter Asian gold medal in Harbin, Heilongjiang province, in February last year.

According to the school, the results come from training plans dedicated to more than just "training hard", but to "targeted training", integrating sports skills with science, medicine and academic study.

Its focus on both athletic competitiveness and academic performance has ena-

bled every trainee to pass the province's academic tests for youth athletes over the past three years, with 22 of its 129 high school graduates last year being admitted to major universities, including Beijing Sport University.

Geng Xin, a middle blocker in volleyball and a key player who helped the Shandong men's team win gold at last year's National Games, is another school alumnus. During a homecoming visit to the school after winning the medal, he said that the infrastructure improves every time he returns to the city, providing better conditions for the young trainees.

He encouraged the young athletes to stay humble and focused in refining their skills. "Glory belongs to the past, but heritage is what gives meaning," he said, motivating the students to have the courage to face challenges and to maintain the perseverance to stay grounded.

CHINA DAILY

An archery student eyes her target.



A student stumbles during a sanda martial art training session.



A track and field athlete does leg exercises in the gym.



Left: Judo students train with kettlebells at the school. Right: Racewalkers practice their techniques on track.



A judo student uses a kettlebell to improve her body strength.



Sanda martial art students help each other to stop their noses bleeding after being hit during a training session.

