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Universiade SHENZHEN 2011

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Shenzhen Universiade: Venues will benefit locals

BY SHI YINGYING

The Universiade Center in Shenzhen will be the most-used venue during the 26th World University Games next month, then serve as a place for grass-roots sports, cultural activities and even a possible host to NBA games, according to organizers.

“We have talked with NBA teams and invited them to play in the facility in the future,” said Liu Zhida, director of facility management for Universiade Shenzhen 2011. He is responsible for the city’s 63 permanent and temporary venues for the games.

“The 18,000-seat main gymnasium at the Universiade Center will be used in future NBA games in China, but likely in the preseason,” said Liu.

“But before that, it will be home to domestic basketball games and ice skating competitions,” Liu said, explaining how the center can be turned into an ice rink.

“It’s designed for multiple functions and the wood floor is removable. First we take the wood floor away and fill the area with water. After freezing for 24 hours it becomes a skating rink,” Liu said.

“It’s a pity that this Universiade is held in summer and doesn’t have ice events — otherwise we could show you how it works.”

“It can also be turned into a venue for table tennis or gymnastics,” said Liu.

He noted the plan from the very beginning has been to build something not just for the games alone, but also for residents of Shenzhen.

“That’s why we ended up building a totally enclosed gymnasium and paid special attention to the acoustics,” he said. “After this sports gala for youth around the world, Shenzhen people can also use it as a concert hall.”

“The Universiade Center is composed of a stadium, a gymnasium and a natatorium,” said Liu.

“They will be used from the day after the opening ceremony to the last day during the 12-day games — the most frequently used venues,” Liu said.

The smallest among three, the natatorium — or swimming pool complex — was built “for the people rather than for the games,” according to Liu.

“Apart from two indoor swimming pools, there’s a children’s pool outside. That’s something unnecessary for professional games but totally built for residents,” said Liu.

In addition to the Universiade Center, Liu said all the facilities built are part of

the Shenzhen government’s efforts to improve the city’s urban infrastructure by hosting a sports gala.

“One more thing to remember is that we saved unnecessary expenses — only 22 out of the 63 venues were newly built and the rest are renovated stadiums and sports fields at schools. Even the accommodation facilities for athletes will be used as dormitories for a newly built college,” Liu said.

Shenzhen will host the 26th Summer Universiade from Aug 12 to 23, 10 years after Beijing held the 21st event in 2001. It will welcome about 9,000 athletes and officials from 113 countries.



The 61,000-seat stadium is largest facility in the Universiade Center.

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Games accelerate subway development

BY SHI YINGYING

With the approach of the 26th Summer Universiade, Shenzhen’s public transportation system has been significantly improved with three all-new subway lines built and two existing routes extended.

The city’s subway user numbers almost doubled after new lines opened to the public at the end of June.

“Our average daily traffic was 600,000 people for May and this figure turned to 1.1 million on June 25, three days after the opening of Line 5 and three days before the full operation of Line 2 and 3,” said Zhao Penglin, deputy secretary-general of Shenzhen city government, who is in charge of the city’s transportation.

“It was an 83 percent increase and this figure will continue to grow,” said Zhao.

He added that Shenzhen’s subway lines — with a total length of 155 kilometers — will be able to carry about 2 million passengers a day by the end of the year.

The city had only two metro lines operational before June and one closed at around 7 pm, said Yu Qiang, a 25-year-old Shenzhen resident. “That means lots of transfers and lots of time on the road,” he said.

“I’m living in Longgang, a relatively remote district 20 kilometers from the central business district where I work,” said Yu. “The operation of Subway Line 3 saves me at least an hour during the morning rush hour.”

Because the three new subways just opened before the Universiade, Zhao said one of the most frequently questions he was asked by the media was whether Shenzhen built subways for the games.

“Definitely no,” said Zhao. “We first put the second phase of the subway project on the government agenda in 2004, three years ahead of the successful bid for the games in 2007. The initial motivation for building the subways was that the speed of our urban road construction couldn’t catch up with people’s needs.”

“We can only say that the Universiade sped up the subway project,” he said. “We also slightly changed the original plan. For example, we wouldn’t have the name of ‘Universiade Station’ if there were no games.”

30 days
until the start of the 26th Summer Universiade