

China coach deflects criticism after win

By QIU QUANLIN
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — The head coach of the Chinese men's soccer team on Saturday night admitted the post was related to his "personal network".



SOCCER

"I do have some personal relationships. That is it. I have no choice in the matter," Sun Wei said after China's 3-0 victory over Group A rival Malaysia at the Guangzhou Asian Games.

Li Jianbin's header and Zhao Honglue's low free kick within five minutes in the second half broke the deadlock. Zhang Linpeng then followed up with a penalty kick, helping China secure the victory against an eight-man opponent at the Tianhe Stadium.

However, the victory did not stop reporters and 45,000 home fans from voicing their dissatisfaction with the host's performance.

At the post-match press conference, Sun said his squad lacked skilled strikers as the three goals were all scored by defenders.

"I told my boys to be patient in the second half because we had more players on the pitch. But our strikers still missed scoring chances. They need to become more skilled, which should come from playing more matches," Sun said.

Malaysia had to concentrate on defence after two players were sent off within five minutes in the first stoppage time and another was red carded by Australian referee Ben Williams in the 80th minute.

The coach's announcement about how he won the job came after a local TV reporter posed a tough question after the match.

"What's your comment on some online reports indicating that you became the head coach only because of your personal network?" the reporter asked.

"There was no Internet access at the Asian Games Town when I arrived," the coach answered, hinting he had not read the report.

The coach then left the pressroom after admitting his role was related to his personal network of friends.

China, which finished second in Group A, will face its perennial rival, the Republic of Korea, in a knockout clash on Monday.



YANG SHIZHONG / CHINA DAILY

Takeshi Matsuda of Japan celebrates winning the men's 200m butterfly final at the Asian Games on Saturday.

Matsuda: Japan's butterfly monarch

AFTER EIGHT YEARS, VERSATILE VETERAN FINALLY WINS ASIAD GOLD

By LEI LEI
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — The Chinese team won four of the six gold medals on the opening day of swimming at the 16th Asian Games on Saturday, but lost its advantage in the men's 200-meter butterfly when archrival Japan swept the top two spots.

Takeshi Matsuda, the bronze medalist at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, claimed his first Asian Games gold medal in one minute, 54.02 seconds, followed by compatriot Ryusuke Sakata in 1:55.23. China's Chen Yin settled for bronze, a further 0.06 seconds back.

Home favorite Wu Peng, who won the event at the past two Asian Games, finished fourth.

Matsuda won the bronze medal at the 2002 Busan Asian Games and was edged into second place by Wu four years ago in Doha.

"I wasn't able to win the gold four and eight years ago. It took me eight years to win the gold medal at the Asian Games, so I'm very satisfied and very happy

about that," said the Asian record holder.

Matsuda started swimming at the age of four in a very tough environment. He used to train at a club with an outdoor pool, which made training in winter quite brutal.

However, the parents of the budding swimmer got together and built a makeshift roof over the pool.

Matsuda says those early struggles helped lead him to his current success.

"I used to train in a 25m pool in the open air. It was very cold in winter and very hot in summer," he said. "I think it helped develop my hunger and desire to try hard and I developed a must-win spirit. That experience made me what I am now."

Matsuda will also compete in men's 200m and 400m freestyle at the Guangzhou Games, but he has already set his sights on the 2012 London Olympic Games.

"My goal is always to rank No 1. I want to continue improving my record," said the 26-year-old. "At the last Olympic Games, I got the bronze. So, at the next Olympics, I am aiming for the gold."



YANG SHIZHONG / CHINA DAILY

Chinese women celebrate winning the 4x100m medley relay.

China's Wu also vowed to keep on going despite losing in his signature event.

"I was almost at my worst today," said Wu after the race. "I just tried some new techniques to improve my speed in the first half, but I felt very tired after 150m. My ultimate goal is the 2012 London Olympic Games, so such attempts before it are worthwhile."

"I will go to train in the United States again. I hope I can learn some lessons from this failure," he said.

In other events, China's Zhu Qianwei claimed the first gold of the swim meet by winning the women's 200m freestyle. Zhu touched the wall in one minute, 56.65 seconds, while her teammate, Tang Yi, took second in 1:57.08. Hanae Ito of Japan finished third in 1:58.24.

China's Olympic silver medal butterflyer, Jiao Liuyang, won the women's 100m easily in 57.76 seconds, beating Singapore's Tao Li by 0.48 seconds. Yuka Kato of Japan, who led after the first 50m, finished third in 58.46.

In women's 50m breaststroke, China's Wang Randi grabbed the gold, while the Chinese women's team also won the 4x100m medley relay. Japan took the silver in 3:58.24, followed by Hong Kong in 4:06.83.

Japan's first gold came in the men's 400m individual medley. Yuya Horihata won in four minutes, 13.35 seconds, followed by China's Huang Chaosheng. Another Japanese, Ken Takakuwa, finished the third.