

Aiming for more time as a mom

CHINA'S STAR TRAPSHOOTER TRYING TO BALANCE COMPETITION AND FAMILY

By SUN XIAOCHEN
CHINA DAILY

While taking her career to a new level after capturing consecutive World Cup Final titles in 2003 and 2004, Chinese trapshooting veteran Li Qingnian regrets being unable to spend more time with her three-year-old son.

But a happy family lunch with her son and parents in the main dining hall of the Athletes' Village eased Li's guilt and allowed her to get back to feeling like a full-time mom — at least for a little while.

"As an athlete, I could say I have no regrets about my career," Li said. "But as a mother, I owe too much to my son," she added while feeding him cookies and dessert.

Born in Beijing, 29-year-old Li left her parents and moved to Guangzhou after getting married and having a baby, nicknamed Xiaoni, which means calf in English.

In the years since, however, a rigid training schedule and constant travel have occupied nearly every minute of Li's daily life, depriving her of a mother's joy in watching her son grow up.

"She is always so busy, concentrating on training and competing. As parents, we fully understand her focus on the career. But Xiaoni is just a little kid, and he couldn't help wondering 'Why is mom not here?'" said Li's mother



China's shooter Li Qingnian feeds her son cookies in the main dining hall in the Athletes' Village on Monday.

who came to Guangzhou with her husband to witness their daughter's performance at the Asian Games.

Away from home for weeks on end, the only link between Li and Xiaoni is the telephone wire. Getting used to babbling with mom on phone

for long time while only living together for several days, Xiaoni sometimes complains to his dad, "Why I have two moms? One on the phone and another at home..."

"Yeah, when I heard the story from my husband, I feel sad and ashamed. Women athletes

always have to make a hard balance between career and families. I chose the former one in my early life, but I am ready to pay back my son," said Li.

Although lunch with Xiaoni is always limited for Li, the young mom knows all about her son's appetite. And

she's good at keeping his diet in check.

"Among all the food here, he likes McDonald's best, while high-sugar foods such as cookies and dessert are also his favorite. But I will feed him some vegetables and fruits after meals," she said.

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO DINNER >> Reaction to OCA President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah's dining hall visit

Hend F.M.N. Alnaser, billiard player from Kuwait

Were you surprised to see the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) President Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah in the dining hall? What did he talk to you about?

Well, it was a big surprise to meet him here. I never imagined that I could meet such an important person and talk with him. He just gave us a short greeting, asked about our lives and the games and wished us good luck and stunning performances.

It seems OCA President Ahmad is a nice man, and easy to talk to?

He is a very nice man and easy to approach. I am from Kuwait and I saw him in our country many times, but this was the first time I had the chance to speak to him. It's very exciting and encouraging

for me. Hopefully, we can play well in our games and try hard not to disappoint him.

Bayan Jumah, a swimmer from Syria

Share with us your feelings about meeting the OCA president. Did you recognize him? Was it a big surprise for you?

Definitely, I feel very excited. Yeah, I didn't realize he was the president until he walked up to me and said 'hello.' When I realized who it was, I said, 'Oh my god!' He was very kind to me.

What did he say to you?

He asked my nationality and event. And then he took interest in my life here — the food in the dining room and the service in the residential zone. He also encouraged me to perform well in the pool and wished me good luck.



SUN XIAOCHEN / CHINA DAILY
Sheikh Ahmad Al-Fahad Al-Sabah (center), president of the Olympic Council of Asia poses with a Kuwaiti athlete in the main dining hall on Monday.



BIRTHDAYS

Athletes born on Nov 16

Athletics

Lee Kyung-hee,
ROK 1982

Jia Chaofang,
CHN 1988

Momoko Takahashi,
JPN 1988

Basketball

Mao Chia-en,
TPE 1982

Boxing

Serik Sapiyev,
KAZ 1983

Canoe/Kayak sprint

Sima Orouji,
IRI 1989

Cricket

Ilyas Gull Muhammad,
HKG 1968

Sun Huan,
CHN 1985

Cycling BMX

Narong Klinsuraj,
THA 1990

Dragon boat

Masayuki Shoji,
JPN 1978

Leung Chun Kit Alfred,
HKG 1980

Wang Lin,
CHN 1984

Soccer

Lee Chi HO,
HKG 1982

Nguyen Thi Minh Nguyet,
VIE 1986

Gymnastics artistic

Radwan Fahad E. Almu-
wallad,
Saudi Arabia 1992

Handball

Erdeneochir Dul,
MGL 1985

Kabaddi

Chen Pei-tzu,
TPE 1990

Karate

Majed Saleh A. Alkhalifah,
Saudi Arabia 1989

Sailing

Kim Da-hye,
ROK 1996

Softball

Kantrakorn Jitisaree,
Thailand 1988

Taekwondo

Oh Jung-oh,
ROK 1984

Tennis

Kumar Adhikari,
Nepal 1984

Weightlifting

Wei Qi,
TPE 1989

Wrestling

Ho Quang Hai,
VIE 1989