

China's teen hot shot ties world record

By TANG ZHE
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — China has a new top gun.

In a stunning performance at the Aoti Shooting Range on Tuesday, 17-year-old Zhai Yujia equaled the world record of 590 points en route to capturing the gold medal in the men's 10m running target event at the Asian Games.



SHOOTING

Zhai also broke the Asian record set by his coach, double Olympic gold medalist Yang Ling, at the 2002 Lahti World Shooting Championships.

Jo Yong-chol from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) won silver with 572 points, while Jeong You-jin from the Republic of Korea took the bronze medal.

"I can attribute the result to the instruction of my coach and to my efforts," said Zhai, adding Yang has made a big impact on his training.

"He was watching me in the shooting hall, and his presence encouraged me a lot."

Contrary to his star pupil's prominence, mentor Yang, the 1996 and 2000 Olympic champion, missed the entire target in the second series of the slow shoot.

"Scoring zero point is just an accident. I got distracted when I raised my gun," said Yang, who was competing for the first time in several months.

Thanks to Zhai's effort, Yang won a team gold that was decided by combining results of the two shooters from one NOC.

"It doesn't matter if it is a big or small competition, once I started thinking of full points, I get nervous," said Yang.

After winning the men's 10m running target in Atlanta and Sydney, Yang missed the chance to triple his title at the 2004 Athens Olympics due to injury.

"Maybe I will not continue to shoot anymore," said the 38-year-old Yang. "I will change my focus to training young shooters. I can teach them how to prepare, how to shoot and how to think, based on my experience."

After taking over as Zhai's coach more than six months ago, Yang is quite optimistic about the teenager's shooting future.

"I hope I can help Zhai to become the world champion, but constrained by the moving target event, it's a little harder for us," he said.



PETER PARKS / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Japan pitcher Yusuke Ishida throws to Uuganmyagmar Battulga of Mongolia in Tuesday's preliminary game at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou.

Asia's big hitters maul Mongolia

JAPAN POUNDS OUT 24 RUNS AGAINST UNDERMANNED NOVICES

By TANG YUE
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — Mongolia's 24-0 drubbing at the hands of Japan on Tuesday, the team's third straight loss in the Guangzhou Games' baseball competition,



BASEBALL

might not have been so severe were it not for an injury to its starting pitcher. "This is the first time I've ever pitched in an international game," said Shijir Ganbaatar, who was called up to replace sidelined Khatanbaatar Batbold.

"It's also the first time I've ever played in a regular stadium," he said. "There was a lot of pressure."

Batbold was hit by a foul ball in the first inning of the opening match against China. It broke his nose and knocked out several teeth. He missed the next game against Thailand and was ruled out for the tournament.

Mongolia's bumpy ride through

the Asiad's baseball tournament started before the first ball was tossed as they had to endure a 22-hour train ride to Guangzhou after flying into Beijing from Ulaanbaatar.

Little was expected of them in a sport that has power hitters in Asia, but little presence in their horse-riding and wrestling-obsessed nation.

The 12-member Mongolia team is the smallest in the tournament.

However fans have been disappointed at the team's inability to rack up a single run in the group stage, where it has been outscored 64-0. It lost 0-15 to China and 0-25 to Thailand before being whipped by Japan.

"The results are really disappointing. Batbold is our best pitcher, so when he was injured, it was really very hard for us to play," said coach Sugarsuren Magvan. "We're also in a very difficult group."

Magvan's game plan quickly came unstuck when Batbold limped off the field and 20-year-



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MONGOLIAN COACH
SUGARSUREN MAGVAN

old Ganbaatar, registered as an infielder, took the mound.

The coach also put several other players in new and unfamiliar positions to compensate, but these changes had little in the way of positive impact. Magvan even put on the catcher's mitt to bolster the under-strength team.

He said it was unrealistic to expect strong results from the team, given that Mongolia only has about 500 players and 20 coaches for the sport, which is chronically under-funded.

"We have very little money. The players are amateur and don't get paid. We have to pay our own fares. That's why we haven't brought many players to Guangzhou," said the 30-year-old, who is a painter by trade and coaches as a part-time job.

Before the Guangzhou Games, Mongolia's baseball team appeared at only one international event, the 1994 Asian Games in Hiroshima, where it finished last in a group of six.

Despite all the obstacles, the coach refuses to quit. He said things can only improve as the team works to rebuild itself in time for the next Asiad in Incheon, the Republic of Korea.

"We are a very young team and we had no experience before," he said. "We learned a lot through these matches, and this will be very helpful to us as we go forward."

The team will compete in the under-16 and under-18 tournaments in Asia before bidding for some redemption in Incheon, he added.