



GOH CHAI HIN / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

A combo photo shows Chinese women paddlers (left to right) Li Xiaoxia, Guo Yan and Guo Yue celebrating their victories over Wang Yue Gu, Feng Tian Wei and Li Jia Wei of Singapore to clinch the table tennis women's team gold medal at the 16th Asian Games in Guangzhou on Tuesday.

CHINA TABLES VENGEANCE

HOST PADDLERS PUNCTUATE SUPREMACY BY CRUSHING ARCHRIVALS IN BOTH MEN'S AND WOMEN'S

GUANGZHOU — China avenged its shock world championship defeat to Singapore in emphatic style by romping to a 3-0 win in the Asian Games women's table tennis team final on Tuesday.

On a golden day for China, the men then followed up by crushing the Republic of Korea by the same score to make it a double whammy.

Li Xiaoxia defeated Wang Yue Gu 11-8, 15-13, 11-9, Guo Yan saw off the highly rated Feng Tian Wei 11-8, 11-6, 11-9, with Guo Yue wrapping up the gold with a 12-10, 11-7, 11-5 triumph over Li Jia Wei.

In May, Singapore shocked reigning champions and top-ranked China at the Moscow World Championships in what was billed as one of the greatest table tennis upsets of all time.

But China coach Shi Zhihao opted to select teenagers like Liu Shiwen and Ding Ning for that event before reverting to his more experienced players on home ground here to ensure there would be no embarrassing repeat.

Shi was at pains to stress revenge was not on his mind.

"Just now a journalist asked me if we were looking for revenge after the loss in Moscow, and I said we face competition every day," said the coach.

"The most important thing is that we perform well — the Chinese team did, and the Singapore team did as well.

"I'm very good friends with Singapore coach Zhou Shusen and I would like to reiterate that there is no revenge. Everyone wants to win. Everyone wants to be number one."

Explaining his decision on which of the startling array of talented Chinese paddlers he chose for the final, he said, "The three players we had today were more tailored to play against the Singapore team.



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Wang Hao of China returns a shot to Oh Sang-eun of the ROK during the table tennis men's team final in Guangzhou on Tuesday.

"We needed more experience to go up against them."

China, which has long dominated the sport in Asia and on the world stage, was never really in trouble, although there was the merest whiff of Singapore comeback at one stage, when Li Xiaoxia went 5-1 down in the second game, before normal order was swiftly restored and she battled back to win 15-13.

Feng, who like many of the Singapore players was born in China but now represents Singapore under the city-state's controversial Foreign Sports Talent Scheme, said the shock Moscow win had its disadvantages.

"We attracted other teams' attention by winning the World Championships, but we have to work hard to prepare for the 2012 London Olympics," said Singapore's sportswoman of the year.

Singapore coach Zhou said the sold-out final was a classy battle between two top sides.

"I believe from this match we can see the gap between the Chinese and Singapore teams," he conceded. "China obviously is the top team in the world."

In the men's final, the Chinese were runaway winners despite being without triple world champion Wang Liqin.

Wang Hao took apart Oh Sang-eun 11-7, 11-5, 11-8 before Ma Lin demolished Joo Sae-hyuk 11-3, 11-7, 11-9.

Ma Long wrapped up victory by beating Lee Jung-woo 11-9, 11-6, 11-4.

"We played smoothly because we were in good form and we followed the guidance of our coach," said Ma Lin.

"We were excited that we had total control of the situation."

Wang was left out to give younger players a chance ahead of the 2012 Olympics in London, and their showing here underlined the pool of talent waiting in the wings.

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