



MENAHEM KAHANA / AFP

Gold medalist Park Byung-taek of the Republic of Korea poses on the podium during the awards ceremony at the end of the men's 25m Center Fire Pistol individual shooting competition at the 16th Asian Games in Guangzhou on Thursday.

Korean veteran repeats 20-year-old feat at Asiad

44-YEAR-OLD PARK WON HIS FIRST TITLE AT 1990 BEIJING ASIAD GAMES

GUANGZHOU — Park Byung-taek became the first shooter to win Asian Games gold medals over two decades as the Republic of Korea (ROK) dominated the Aoti ranges on Thursday.

The 44-year-old won the 25m Center Fire Pistol individual title, a feat he first achieved at the Beijing Asiad in 1990 and won again at Bangkok in 1998.

Park is only the third athlete in Asian Games history after Japanese archer Hiroshi Yamamoto and the ROK's horse rider Suh Jung-kyun to win gold medals in a 20-year time span.

The ROK shooters won three of the four gold medals on offer on the sixth day of competition to take their overall tally to 13 from the 32 events contested so far.

China lead the field with 15 gold medals, with Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK — three) and Kazakhstan (one) being the other nations to win titles.

Park won the individual title to share the honours with China, who picked up the team event in the Center Fire Pistol competition.

The supremely-fit Park fought off a stiff challenge from local favorite Liu Yadong to grab the gold by one point, scoring 586 to his Chinese rival's 585.

Vijay Kumar of India picked up the bronze with 583, just one point ahead of the DPRK's Kim Jong-su.

Park, whose last major title was a gold medal at the World Championships in 2002, said regular practice kept him on his toes.

"For the past eight years, I have trained for two hours every day," he said. "That has ensured my confidence level remains high."



SHOOTING

Park also took a swipe at Chinese shooters for not performing as well as expected on home soil.

"When they shoot abroad, they are very good," he said. "But they tend to be stressed and nervous when competing at home. The pressure gets to them, I think."

Park's Chinese rival, Liu, appeared to agree. "There is a lot of pressure on us when we shoot in China because the crowds always expect us to win," he said.

In a well-contested team event, the Chinese trio of Liu, Jin Yongde and Li Chuanlin hit back to beat the ROK athletes by one point.

DPRK won the bronze.

The ROK, meanwhile swept the team and individual titles in the men's 50m Rifle 3 Positions event.

Han Jin-seop took the individual gold medal with a score of 1,269, five points ahead of teammate Kim Jong-hyun, who completed an ROK's 1-2 in the event.

Zhu Qinan of China won the bronze after a best score of 101.3 in the final, beating Gagan Narang of India by one point.

Han dedicated the gold medal to his father, who died of a stroke in 2003.

"My father told me never to be happy with any position but first," the ROK shooter said. "I think he will be happy today. I miss him so much."

The ROK's squad of Han, Kim and Lee Hyun-tae claimed the team title with a combined tally of 3,489 to finish 11 points clear of second-placed Kazakhstan.

Host China, one of the favorites for the team gold medal, managed only a bronze with 3,471 points, ahead of India's 3,458.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Jin sails and tweets her way back into local fans' hearts

By TANG ZHE
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — China's Jin Ziwei and Tian Liang picked up gold in the women's double sculls on Thursday in seven minutes and 5.68 seconds, 11.47 ahead of their Vietnamese rivals at Guangzhou International Rowing Center.



SCULL

For Jin, 25, it was the perfect end to an Asiad that she played a crucial role in, having earlier served as the flag bearer for China.

It also marked her return to grace after the rower failed to win over Chinese fans in recent years despite contributing to the country's quadruple sculls gold medal at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

"I was very surprised to be the flag bearer," said Jin. "After that, people began focusing on me and the rowing team more and more. I'm very glad to see that and I will cherish the moment."

Jin said her newfound popularity has taken her interest in micro-blogging to a new level.

"I've been tweeting for some time, but nowadays the public is paying more attention to me so I update it more often and share my feelings and schedules with people."

In the double sculls, the Chinese duo, which has paired for the first time, took a safe lead from the start and never looked seriously threatened.

"Though there were only four teams, we took the match seriously," said Jin. "We never thought about our opponents. We just followed our game plan."

She said she didn't know whether the two would row together at the 2012 London Olympics.

In the day's other contests, Huang Wenyi and Pan Feihong took the 100m gold for China in the lightweight women's double sculls.

"The key to our victory was teamwork. There's a kind of chemistry between us," said Huang. "We face difficulties together, and I believe that's the most important thing for us."

On the first day of the rowing finals, Chinese crews took more gold medals in the men's double sculls, courtesy of Sui Hui and Zhang Liang, and the men's lightweight double sculls, won by Sun Jie and Zhang Guolin.

China also won the women's fours, while Japan clinched the men's lightweight fours, one of the few events that China did not enter.



EDMOND TANG / CHINA DAILY

Tian Liang (left) and Jin Ziwei of China pose with their medals after winning the women's double sculls at the 16th Asian Games on Thursday.