

## Games popular among urbanites

### Survey says young viewers are especially excited for Olympics

By HE DAN  
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More than half of urban respondents in China said they are interested in the 2012 London Olympic Games, according to a survey China Daily obtained on Monday.

Residents in Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong province, are the most enthusiastic about the London Olympics. About 75 percent of those polled in Guangzhou said they have paid close attention to the Games.

That's about 15 percentage points higher than the national average.

The survey was conducted by Horizon Research and Horizonkey, which is based in Beijing.

More than 3,100 residents in 10 Chinese cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou, were polled.

Respondents said they were most excited about the opening ceremony, followed by the sports events and relays.

Urbanites who are younger

than 40 are more interested in the Games. About 64 percent of people ages 18-39 said the Games interested them, while only half of those 40-60 said so.

Seven in 10 male respondents said they have kept a close eye on the London Olympics.

Liu Guang, a 26-year-old Guangzhou resident, said he cannot wait to watch the Games.

"I'm curious about whether Liu Xiang can make it to the 110m hurdles and what his performance will be like," he said.

"And I bet the US men's basketball team will be the champion again."

About 2 percent of those surveyed said they will travel to London for the Olympics.

Caissa International Travel

Service is the sole authorized ticket reseller of the London Olympic Games on the Chinese mainland.

Caissa's president Chen Xiaobing said the London Organizing Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games has distributed 18,000 tickets on the Chinese mainland. His agency bought 2,000 additional tickets through other sources, including Prestige Ticketing, according to a news release on the agency's official website on Friday.

Badminton, basketball and track and field are the most attractive events for Chinese tourists, he said, adding that there are about 3,000 tickets remaining.

Other travel agencies in China prefer organizing travel tours to Britain, including visiting the Olympic venues after, rather than during, the Games.

"It is too expensive to visit Britain during the Olympic Games because the cost is about 30 percent, or even 40 percent, higher than usual," said Li Meng, deputy general manager of the China International Travel Service's outbound travel department.

He said the expense during the Games discouraged most Chinese tourists.

The agency normally charges 20,000 yuan (\$3,130) for a nine-day trip from China to Britain, he added.



A child runs by a painting portraying competitive bicyclists during an Olympic art exhibition in Beijing.



### ONE LAST HURDLE BEFORE THE HURDLES

PHOTO BY ADRIAN DENNIS / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

US athlete Aries Merritt trains during a visit to Alexander Stadium, home of the US track and field training camp, in Birmingham on Monday ahead of the 2012 London Olympic Games. Merritt is one of the title favorites in the men's 110-meter hurdles, along with Chinese track star Liu Xiang. On Friday, Merritt ran a world-leading time of 12.93 sec for the third time this year to confirm his credentials as a serious contender for the gold medal in London.

## Haiti's team in London isn't very Haitian

By ASSOCIATED PRESS  
in Port-au-Prince, Haiti

Four of Haiti's five Olympians at the London Games have something in common — they're not from Haiti.

With millions of Haitians living on \$2 a day or less and hundreds of thousands of people rendered homeless by a devastating earthquake two years ago, the country struggles to produce world-class athletes. But those with Haitian links are still eager to represent the small Caribbean country.

"I still feel Haitian even if I wasn't born there," 21-year-old sprinter Marlena Wesh said in a telephone interview with The Associated Press.

Wesh, who will run in the 200m and 400m races at the Olympics, grew up in Virginia and is a senior at Clemson University. Her parents are from Haiti.

Besides having family ties to Haiti, the four foreign-born Olympians will be competing in track and field, including the former college roommate of Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg.

Samyr Laine, a 28-year-old

triple jumper, is from New York and roomed with Zuckerberg at Harvard. He was the 14th person to sign up for Zuckerberg's social networking site.

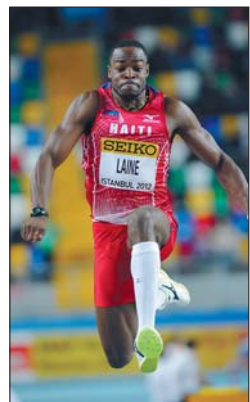
Laine recently graduated from Georgetown Law School but hopes to use the attention generated by the Olympics to form a nonprofit group called the Jump for Haiti Foundation, a sports program that would try to produce future Olympic athletes from the country through camps and clinics. The goal is to have future teams made up of athletes who were born and raised in Haiti.

Laine said he plans to call on his friends, including his roommate-turned-billionaire, to donate a few dollars.

"I hope they see the merits of my cause," Laine said. "I will definitely try to reach out to Mark as well."

Moise Joseph, a 30-year-old 800m runner, and Jeffrey Julmis, a 28-year-old 100m hurdler, are also on the team. Haiti's lone homegrown Olympian is Linouse Desravine, a 21-year-old judoka.

There's nothing unusual



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MARLENA WESH  
21-YEAR-OLD HAITIAN SPRINTER

about athletes from multi-ethnic nations like the United States or Britain representing other countries. But what may be surprising to some is that Haiti, which seems to lurch from one calamity to another, is being represented in London at all.

The country does pose unusual challenges for athletes. Three of the country's five competitive running tracks are home to thousands of people in tents and shanties who were displaced by the January 2010 earthquake. The office of the Haitian Olympic Committee overlooks a hillside shantytown and has a budget of only \$400,000. The US Olympic Committee's budget is about \$170 million.

"Our daily struggle in the Olympic committee here is finding funds," said Alain Jean-Pierre, the body's secretary general.

Haiti first competed at the 1900 Paris Olympics, and won its first medal in the same city at the 1924 Games when it took bronze in the team rifle competition.

The country's only indi-

vidual medal was a silver won by Silvio Cator in the men's long jump at the 1928 Amsterdam Olympics. Cator today is remembered with pride, and the national stadium in downtown Port-au-Prince is named after him.

Another notable Olympian from Haiti was marathon runner Dieudonne Lamothe, the first from his country to compete in four Olympics.

More medals in London will be tough.

"I don't think so, but I think we'll have two athletes in the finals," Jean-Pierre said.

Frederic Charles, a 29-year-old computer technician and the half brother of Olympic runner Joseph, will be among those watching and waiting for Haiti to succeed.

Charles once lived in one of the hundred displacement camps but recently moved into a studio in Port-au-Prince. Above a collection of old desktop computers, the four walls bear posters of a uniform-wearing Joseph sprinting in races.

"He's running for Haiti," Charles said, "so that someone can think about Haiti."

### briefly

#### BADMINTON

##### Li to start title defense against Irishman

Olympic champion Lin Dan will launch his bid for back-to-back gold medals against unseeded Irishman Scott Evans following the draw for the men's singles badminton competition on Monday.

The world No 1 from China — who is seeded two for the Olympics behind Malaysia's Lee Chong Wei — is the heavy favorite to clinch his second gold medal when the tournament starts at Wembley Arena on Saturday. Lin's second-seed status in London is something of an anomaly, with the seedings for the event being decided after he had made a temporary slip to world No 2 in the rankings.

Top seed Lee, meanwhile, opens against Ville Lang of Finland, who progressed to the third round at Beijing four years ago.

#### ATHLETICS

##### Kluft out with hamstring injury

Former Olympic heptathlon champion Carolina Kluft will miss the London Games after suffering a hamstring injury on Sunday, her coach said.

The 29-year-old Kluft, who switched to the long jump after a glittering career in heptathlon, suffered the injury while competing in Kuortane, Finland.

"There will be no Olympics for 'Carro,'" Oscar Gidewall told Radio Sweden. "It's not her shin that put a stop to it today, even if she feels it a little, she has a problem with a tender hamstring that she hasn't felt for several years."

Kluft ran through the sandpit on her first jump on Sunday and took no further part in the competition.

#### EQUESTRIAN

##### Injured horse costs Rose his berth

Australian horseman Shane Rose suffered Olympic heartbreak once again on Sunday after he was forced to pull out of the London Games due to an injury to his mount Taurus.

Team vets left the decision until the last minute to give the horse every possible chance of recovering from the soft-tissue injury to its left front leg, but decided not to risk it given the rigors of the Olympic three-day eventing competition.

Rose tasted similar disappointment in 1996, when his horse Mr Joe Cool went lame just before the Atlanta Games. He struggled to contain his emotions at a news conference, and conceded he cannot get away from London quickly enough.

"It was pretty devastating," said Rose, who won team silver in Beijing. "I was really starting to get excited thinking not much could go wrong. This morning it was a pretty hollow feeling."

#### SOCCER

##### Brazilian team staying out of trouble

Brazil's Olympic soccer squad is opting for a quiet life away from the "temptations" of the Athlete's Village, coach Mano Menezes said on Sunday.

The young squad is under huge pressure back home to win the country's first Olympic soccer gold and Menezes believes it has a better chance of doing that from a secluded hotel in the Hertfordshire countryside outside the capital.

"There are too many temptations here," he said with a smile as he spoke to reporters in the sunshine during a visit to the Village at the Olympic Park.

While players shopped for Olympic souvenirs in the Village megastore, Menezes continued: "Some of the players like Neymar and the others have already been the focus of attention from so many other athletes when we've been here and we have serious work to do at these Games."

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