

## Rhode makes US history with gold

By AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
in London

Shooter Kim Rhode missed just one shot out of 100 — equaling the world record — as she became US' first individual medalist at five straight Olympics by winning in the women's skeet on Sunday.

Rhode, a medalist in Atlanta, Sydney, Athens and Beijing, destroyed the field at the Royal Artillery Barracks, never looking remotely in danger under cloudy skies in south London.

China's Wei Ning won silver with Danka Bartekova of Slovakia taking bronze after a shoot-off. But the competition was a procession for Rhode — who then warned her rivals she had no intention of retiring.

Rhode, 33, won golds in women's double trap in Atlanta in 1996 and in Athens in 2004, taking bronze in the event in Sydney in 2000.

She switched to skeet full-time when women's double trap was discontinued as an Olympic event after Athens, and grabbed silver in the discipline four years ago in Beijing.

"One got away but everyone misses every now and then," said a delighted Rhode.

"I know that I felt very comfortable in that final round and through the match and was really ready. I felt that I had done everything I could and there wasn't anything more and I was just going to let the chips lay where they may."

"It's just been an incredible journey and ultimately I couldn't be happier for bringing home the gold for the United States," she added.

Speaking about her US first, she said: "I don't think it's hit me yet. I'm sure later on tonight that the record and everything that represents (will hit me). Right now I'm just focusing on my second event ... and hopefully we'll be looking at 2016. I'm not looking at this being my last Olympics."

"I can go on for a very long time," added Rhode. "That's the beauty of shooting. It's something that you can do. It's not a flash-in-the-pan type thing. I definitely don't see any end in sight."

After a bright start to the day, storms swept across the temporary venue but the rain held off for the final, where Rhode finished with 99 hits out of 100 of the fast-moving clay pigeon targets.

Wei was a distant second with 91 hits, while Bartekova was involved in a shoot-off for bronze after she finished level on 90 hits with Russia's Marina Belikova.

Rhode came top in the qualifying competition, hitting 74 targets out of 75 to notch a new Olympic record.

Skeet requires competitors to hit a clay target moving away from them. The top six shooters from the qualification go into the final, where they fire a further 25 targets, with the scores added to their qualifying tally.

Rhode's build-up to the London Games was hit when flight problems forced her to miss her team's training camp in Denmark, and when her four-month-old puppy ate her plane ticket.



EDDIE KEOGH / REUTERS

Kimberly Rhode of the United States tosses a spent cartridge in the air as she celebrates winning the women's skeet final at the Royal Artillery Barracks at Woolwich in southeast London on Sunday.



MARWAN NAAMANI / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Chinese shooter Guo Wenjun won the gold medal in the women's 10m air pistol at the London Games on Sunday. "It was not easy to prepare for the Olympic Games after giving birth last year," she said.

# If you're bad, Mommy really might shoot you

China's Guo Wenjun won gold in air pistol, as one of several new mothers on the team, **Chen Xiangfeng** reports.

Chinese athletes would normally rather have babies after retirement for fear that maternity would affect their careers.

But three members of the Chinese women's shooting team — all gold medalists at the 2008 Beijing Olympics — set their sites on the 2012 Games as new moms.

Reigning women's 10m air pistol champion Guo Wenjun became China's first new mother to take gold in London on Sunday, after making an unlikely comeback in the match.

"I'm more excited than four years ago," she said.

"It's a big win, and it's a win for my baby daughter. I also would like to give half my gold to my husband."

The 28-year-old came from behind with an incredible 10.8 final shot. Celine Goberville of France, who was 0.5 ahead of Guo before the final shot, shot 8.8 to share a second-place tie with Olena Kostevych of Ukraine. Goberville then won the one-shot shoot-off to win the silver and left Kostevych, the 2004 Olympic champion, with bronze.

"This is the charm of shooting," Guo said.

"It was not easy to prepare for the

**"I will encourage our young teammates to seek love and marriage, even if they are still athletes."**

GUO WENJUN  
CHINESE SHOOTER

Olympic Games after giving birth last year. I had to take care of the baby and started training to gain as many more points as possible during the Olympic qualifying competitions.

"Chinese people might be concerned about whether an athlete is still able to keep focused on the game after having a baby. It's a misguided worry. Actually, I feel calmer, and more motivated and responsible, in training and competition. I feel the support of my baby and family."

Guo said that being a mother while pursuing her sports dreams has made this the happiest time in her life. "I will encourage our young teammates to seek love and marriage, even if they are still athletes," Guo said, smiling.

Guo was not China's first Olympic champion mom.

That honor belongs to Xian Dongmei, who won the 52kg judo gold four

years ago in Beijing, when she was 33.

This year, Chen Ying is aiming for glory in the women's 25m pistol on Aug 1, while Du Li will compete in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions on Aug 4.

Du, who's also the Athens Olympic champion, had to miss several qualifiers because her baby son was too young. She then decided to take her baby with her to Beijing and rented a house next to the training base.

Du, who's in her third Olympics at age 30, believed that becoming a mother has made her more relaxed and mature.

"In the past two Games, I was nervous and felt pressure," she recalled. "But I feel so relaxed this time. After becoming a mother, I am more patient and shoot with greater stability. I'm now enjoying the sport."

Chen is the eldest of the three. The 35-year-old held a delayed wedding ceremony and gave birth to a daughter after her Beijing victory.

She also said she takes a different approach to shooting as a mother.

"I'm the defending champion, but I am no longer the favorite," she explained. "I have a different psychology from four years ago. Then, I put all of myself into the sport and bet everything on a single gold. Now, I'm calmer."

## King of the rings doesn't come easy

By TANG ZHE  
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After its seven-gold-medal performance at the Beijing Games in 2008, the Chinese men's gymnastics team was hit with a wave of retirements.

There have been times in the ensuing years when Chen Yibing wished he would've been among them.

And yet here he is, the defending champion in the rings and the team competition, back in London as the core of a young team.

Even now, Chen admits he's worried he'll end his career on a sour note. Doubt began creeping in back in 2009, when he could only claim bronze in the rings at the National Games, and was disqualified in the finals of the World Championships a month later.

"I was busy in various activities and loose in training after the Olympic Games. When I restarted my training in 2009, different problems came to me, one after another," Chen said. "I received too much applause and too many flowers after the Olympics. I was a little lost and didn't train as hard as before."

In the midst of all that, Chen was appointed captain of the Chinese men's gymnastics team at the end of 2009.

"The trust of (head coach Huang Yubin) was a boost to me. I felt the power and confidence I had lost come back to me again. The team needed me and I had to shoulder the responsibility," Chen said.

And then, Chen was back. He won gold medals at the 2010 Rotterdam World Championship, the 2010 Guangzhou Asian Games and the 2011 Tokyo World Championship.

"I stood up from where I felt down," said Chen, nicknamed "the king of the rings." "I fought back against the public's distrust with my hard work and accomplishment. I am still the kind of person who can change my fate with persistent effort."

Compared with other Chinese gymnasts, Chen is a late bloomer. He won his first international title at the World Championship in 2006 at the age of 21.

Chen's parents started him in the sport when he was 5 years old. He struggled to stand out among his peers, and several times considered quitting. Chen said his toughest period was from 1996 to 2000, when he moved to the professional team but achieved little in competition.

"I was very upset during the mediocre years," he said. "I felt frightened when my parents and friends asked me about my training and competition. I was embarrassed and didn't know how to answer their questions. That was the worst time for me. I lost my goals and didn't know why I trained so hard every day."

Things began turning around in 2001. He won a gold medal in the rings, and a bronze medal in the individual all-round at his last national junior championship. He was sent to the national team as a substitute shortly thereafter.

Chen won his first national title in the rings in 2005, and claimed his first world championship in his international debut at the 2006 World Artistic Gymnastics Championships. He became almost unbeatable in his specialty. His performance on the rings at the Beijing Olympics was praised as textbook for its precision and high level of difficulty.

The 27-year-old will lead China's young squad, which has suffered a tough start. Pommel horse specialist and individual all-round competitor Teng Haibin withdrew three days before the opening due to an injury.

Chinese gymnasts made dozens of mistakes in the men's qualification and ranked sixth in the team event. Nobody has qualified in the vault or pommel horse.

"More criticism means higher expectation — we will spare no effort to reverse the game in the final," Chen said. "Though as the captain I hope the Chinese men's gymnastics team can continue its glory, I have to admit we are not as competitive as we used to be in 2008, but we will hold on."

Chen is hoping to become the first to win consecutive gold medals in the rings.

"I hope I can be 'the first man of rings,'" he said.



DYLAN MARTINEZ / REUTERS

Chen Yibing of China competes in the pommel horse at the men's gymnastics qualification in the North Greenwich Arena on Saturday.

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