

Sports reporters of tomorrow

PROGRAM WILL PROVIDE EXPERT TRAINING FOR STUDENTS DURING GAMES

By ZHENG XIN

CHINA DAILY

SHENZHEN — Carrying a video camera over his shoulder while holding a microphone to conduct an interview with torch bearer Li Weiran, a young journalist from sznews.com sets about his task.

Like most media staff working at the Universiade, he's barely in his twenties.

"We have more and more young journalists, the future of the sports media," said Gianni Merlo, president of the International Sports Press Association (AIPS). "They are dynamic and open-minded. They just need a platform for more experience in the field."

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To prepare young journalists for their future careers, a training program, jointly organized by AIPS, the International University Sports Federation (FISU) and the Shenzhen 2011 Organizing Committee, will be run from Aug 12-23.

Forty-four sports reporters from 44 media agencies, including Deutsche Welle, Italian Gazzetta dello Sport and NHK from Japan, will participate.

About 100 Chinese students from Beijing University and Renmin University will also participate in the program.

It is the first program of its kind to be conducted at the games, according to Roslyn Morris, AIPS's secretary general.

The young reporters will be tutored by many sports press veterans, including Anthony Edgar, head of the IOC's media operations, and Terence O'Rorke, senior manager of media relations and communications at WADA. The students will also



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Gianni Merlo, president of the International Sports Press Association, reads the Universiade Daily, an official publication of the games.

take part in high-level seminars conducted by international sports experts and federation representatives.

"The high-profile professionals will provide the young reporters with guidance as well as general ideas about the field," said Merlo.

"The students are young and open-minded," said Merlo. "They hold the future of sports and they will know how to come up with a responsible and fair sports report when they have gained some experience.

The Universiade in this city is a great platform for the young journalists."

The AIPS initially launched the workshop during the World Athletics Championships years ago, and it turned out to be a great success.

"We have found out the importance of continuing the project since then," said Merlo.

"The future of sports journalism relies on the young generation. The past is past and the youngsters hold the future," he said.

Yao Ming still ambassador, says US official

SHENZHEN— Nels Hawkinson, a former basketball player and an official of the US Universiade delegation, gave high praise to China's retired basketball center Yao Ming during his fourth visit to China in Shenzhen on Tuesday.

"Yao Ming was and still is a great Chinese ambassador to people from all over the world," said Hawkinson.

"People in the US enjoyed watching him play. I never heard one bad thing ever spoken or written about him. That is a great thing to say about anyone."

The former basketball player made his first trip to China in 1979, when he was 19 years old. During that trip he met Mu Tiezhu, another great Chinese center and he was impressed by "Chinese height" for the first time.

"I'd never seen such a big guy before," Hawkinson said. "I was turning around, trying to face the basket, only to see his chest right in front of my eyes. That's incredible."

Mu died in 2008 of a heart attack. "I was terribly sad to hear of his passing," said the 51-year-old. "Even though we could not communicate, we knew each other was a nice person."

"Playing against him and the China team was truly one of the highlights of my athletic life."

The US has sent its largest-ever squad to Shenzhen Universiade, including stars in track and field and swimming, as well as the NCAA's elite.

However, Hawkinson doesn't expect first place for the team in the Universiade.

"China will be the first and we have to find a good place after China. That's what we are trying to do."

Hawkinson was reluctant to predict how the basketball team would fare.

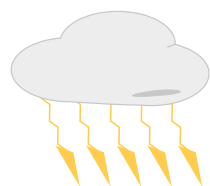
"The rules in NCAA are quite different from the rules in the Universiade," said Hawkinson, "and our guys have only gathered for two weeks, so we have to adjust to the rules as quickly as possible."

"Some top players didn't come with us because of the schedules of their colleges."

The Shenzhen Universiade opens on Friday.

XINHUA

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