



WU JUN FOR CHINA DAILY

Italians Rachele Bruni (right) and Alice Franco, gold and bronze medal winners, get together after the women's 10km open water swimming event yesterday at the 26th Summer Universiade in Shenzhen.

Born swimmer enjoys a dip in Seven Star Bay

GERMAN LONG-DISTANCE RACER MAKES A SPLASH BY CLAIMING SILVER

By SUN XIAOCHEN
CHINA DAILY

SHENZHEN — Spending summer time in the clear waters of scenic Seven Star Bay in eastern Shenzhen is definitely a great pleasure.

German swimmer Nadine Reichert tried to enjoy every minute in the warm waters on Saturday morning while competing in the women's 10km open water race at the 26th Universiade.

"It's a great competition, but it's also a great experience to swim in such a nice place," Reichert said in the mixed zone after claiming the silver medal in 2 hr 7 min 29.2 sec.

"I like the sea. I like competing outdoors, in nature," Reichert said. "I used to swim in venues close to the beach. The venue here is beautiful. I like the outdoor water here and I enjoy the course."

Italian youngster Rachele Bruni won the gold medal in 2:06:49.3. Compatriot Alice Franco finished 1:53.5 later to take the bronze.

Although some swimmers complained the broiling weather affected their performances, Reichert shrugged it off, stressing she had made no special preparations for the warm water.

"Actually I didn't prepare especially for this venue," the 26-year-old said. "We just swam in the outdoor pool in the village. The water there is much warmer than here. But I like the feeling in warm water. It wasn't a problem for me."

Reichert, who was born into a family of swimmers, hailed her parents as the inspiration for her enjoying being in the water from a young age.

"Maybe I was born with a gift," she said.

After starting to swim at age 6, Reichert first competed at indoor events when she was a junior and began to focus on open water racing 10 years ago.

Reichert will also compete in the 800m and 1,500m freestyle races in the main pool at the Universiade Center today.

Aiming to be a teacher after graduating

from the University of Mainz, Reichert faces a tough daily schedule trying to balance her lessons and training.

Reichert, who has to practice every day at 6 am at a local club before heading to class two hours later, admitted she sometimes feels bored maintaining this routine.

"It's really very hard to balance everything," she said. "Training is hard and sometimes it's really boring. You don't want to do it any more."

"But if you remember your goals and want to achieve something, you have to work harder. That's my motivation."

Competing in a sport that produces many superstars, Reichert said she has only ever concentrated on herself.

"Not really (having an idol). I don't want to be someone else. I just want to try my best to be myself."

Away from swimming, Reichert enjoys leisure time with her family members, her husband and her two cats.

Underdogs get a chance to put their names in lights

By SUN XIAOCHEN
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SHENZHEN — After China's star swimmers produced world-class performances at the recent Shanghai World Championships, their lower-profile compatriots will be pressing for places at the elite level at the Shenzhen Universiade.

Aiming to break a five-year gold medal drought at Universiades, China, which finished the 2009 Games with two silver and one bronze medal, sent a 50-strong youth team, including seven national squad members, to compete for glory in the main Universiade pool.

Spearheading the women's squad is Tang Yi, who last year won six gold medals at the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore and three at the Guangzhou Asian Games. She will lead the race for gold in her favorite event, the 100m freestyle.

Another two budding stars — Lu Ying, who teamed with Tang to win a bronze medal in the 4x100m medley relay in Shanghai, and 2009 Rome Worlds 50m backstroke bronze medalist, Gao Chao — will also be in the running for gold medals.

Meanwhile, traditional powerhouses the United States and Australia will use the Universiade to test the Olympic potential of their younger swimmers.

Coming to the meet with a promising lineup consisting of college and national champions, the young US squad will be gaining experience at senior level outside of its home country.

"I believe this group is going in with something to prove, especially with Olympic trials next year," said women's team coach Eric Hansen, who was a member of the 1987 and 1991 Universiade teams.

"There is a lot of talent on this team, and whatever they might lack in international competition, they make up for in optimism and attitude," Hansen said. "They are representing the United States, and that brings expectations as well as opportunities."

Led by the Beijing Olympic 50m freestyle bronze medalist Kate Campbell, the 24-member Australian team will also tune up for next year's London Olympics.

"This is my first University Games," said Campbell.

"I will treat it as seriously as the Olympics and take it as a warmup for the London Games."