

Striving for future glory

BURKINA FASO SPRINTER HAS SIGHTS SET ON LONDON AFTER STRUGGLING IN SHENZHEN

By LEI LEI
CHINA DAILY

SHENZHEN — Well, there's always London.

Burkina Faso's Gerard Kobeane won't get to represent his country on the Universiade podium after failing on Tuesday to reach the men's 100m semifinal.

Kobeane finished last in his second-round group, but the 23-year-old vowed to keep training.

"I'm not happy because of my time," he said. "At the last Universiade, in Serbia, I was in the semifinal."

The dream, though, remains the Olympics.

"I like the 100m race. It's not hard," he said. "It's a very nice race. I want to participate in the Olympic Games one day."

Kobeane and teammate Kadidou Loure — who will compete in the women's 110m hurdles — are the only Burkina Faso athletes in Shenzhen.

Kobeane began playing soccer at the age of 10, but moved onto running at 13.

"(When I picked up running), I thought 'OK, I can do something,' so I continued," he said.

Competing in the fiercest track and field event, Kobeane's idol is retired US sprinter Maurice Greene, who won four Olympic medals and was world champion five times.

"My athlete favorite is Greene. I like him because he was a very very strong athlete," Kobeane said. "When he was (competing), he (ran the 100 in under 10 seconds) more than 15 times."

Kobeane is not the only sprinter inspired by Greene.

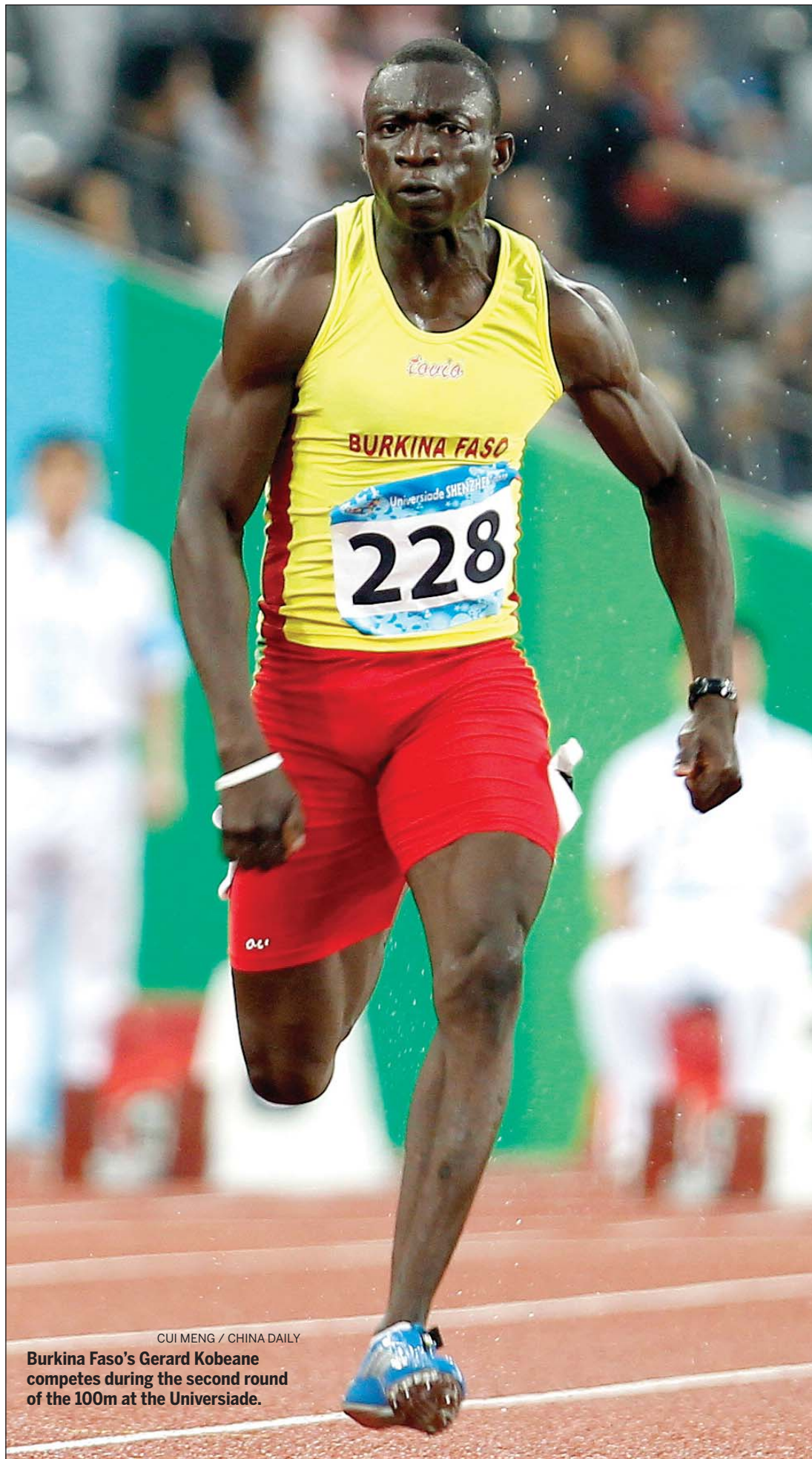
Ratu Banuve Lalabalavu Tabakucoro from Fiji also considers Greene his idol.

The 18-year-old reached a personal best of 10.49 seconds in the second round, but finished fifth, missing the semifinals.

Fiji sent only five athletes, all of whom will compete in track and field.

"It is probably the biggest team we've sent," said Tabakucoro, who started running at the age of 10. "We look forward to competitions like this."

"Competing at the Olympics is what all the competitors' dream. I will be training hard for that."



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Burkina Faso's Gerard Kobeane competes during the second round of the 100m at the Universiade.

Brave Kenyan captures spectators' hearts

By LEI LEI
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SHENZHEN — Though Diana Rose Jerotich Yator of Kenya finished a distant last in the women's 10,000m race, she was still last night's heroine.

With the support of all the spectators at the stadium, Yator finished the race in 47 min, 49.46 sec, six minutes after all the other runners had crossed the finish line.

"I feel wonderful that I finished the race. I didn't think of giving up because I believed I could finish it," said Yator, who suffered some physical problems from the start and did not expect such hot, humid weather during the final.

"My goal was to win the gold medal. I was so encouraged by the crowd that I just wanted to finish the race."

Fadine Suna from Turkey won the gold in 33:11.92, followed by Hanae Tanaka and Mai Ishibashi from Japan.

Yator is studying education at Moi University in Kenya. She plans to pursue a master's degree in environmental study after graduation and hopes to get a scholarship to do the course.

But running will still be part of her life in the future.

"I believe that I can run on the Olympic track," she said.



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Diana Rose Jerotich Yator of Kenya battles to the finish line in last night's 10,000m.