

# Chinese skipper Bi nets support from fans

By QIU QUANLIN  
CHINA DAILY

SHENZHEN — On the soccer field, she seems to be propelled by her desire to win. Off the pitch, she seems to be controlled by her micro blog.

Three hours before playing against Russia in the Universiade's women's soccer quarterfinals, Chinese captain Bi Yan posted calls for support on her micro blog.

"The game is about to start," she wrote.

"So please cheer for us, and we will do our best to win."

Bi's two goals helped China beat Russia 4-1 at the Shenzhen Bao'an Stadium on Wednesday.

"The game is truly a new experience," said Bi, who has nearly 800,000 followers on her QQ.com micro blog.



## FOOTBALL

Playing in a supportive atmosphere has encouraged my team and me to play hard to win every game."

The team has won every match so far in Shenzhen.

"But I don't think I have played to my best form," Bi said.

Bi said the Chinese women's team had to overcome many difficulties before the Universiade.

"Most of our players have never played in the Universiade," Bi said.

"We don't know much about the opponents, and the girls have not been playing together for a long time."

China's head coach, Wang Changquan, spoke highly of Bi, who is also the captain of the Chinese women's national team, after

the quarterfinal.

"She is the best woman's player in China," Wang said.

"She has played a great role in leading the girls to victory."

Coaches and players from rival teams have said China's inclusion of national team players, such as Bi, has given it an edge.

Some have even questioned whether the 27-year-old is qualified for the Universiade.

"I don't know why people have questioned our identities in the Universiade," Bi said.

"Some of my micro blog fans also asked me why I came here to play. Like all of the other teams' players, we really are university students. There is no doubt."

Bi, who studies at Beijing Normal University, said classroom lessons have helped her team's players better understand soccer.

"We're not just physically strong," she said.

"Studies broaden your knowledge and improve your adaptability on the pitch. Only if you have a smart brain can you then win the game."

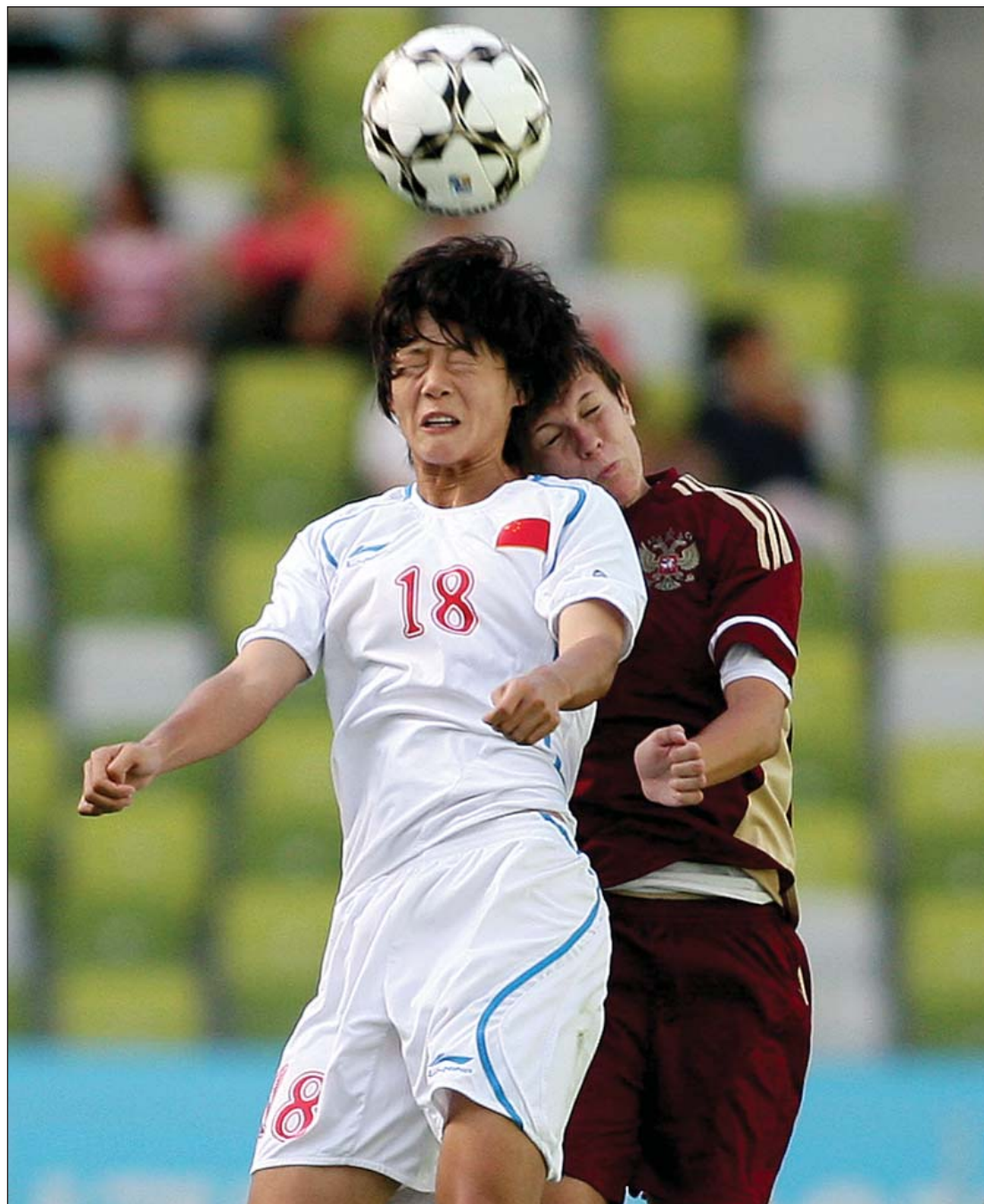
Bi called for more emphasis on soccer in educational institutions.

"Soccer should be developed early in students' school lives," Bi said.

"We should introduce effective measures to develop more talent in college. Step-by-step, Chinese soccer will see brighter days."

After the 4-1 victory against Russia, China — whose most recent moment of glory was a 2005 Universiade women's soccer silver — will face the winner of another quarterfinal match between Brazil and Mexico.

"If it is possible, I would like to play against Brazil in the semifinal, although we don't know much about the South American team," she said.



PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

Li Dongna of China (white) fights for the ball with a Russian player in the quarterfinals of the women's soccer competition yesterday. China won 4-1.

# China charges over Russia to enter quarterfinals

By QIU QUANLIN  
CHINA DAILY

SHENZHEN — Russian women's soccer head coach, Nikolay Kocheshkov, believed it was his team's defensive style that caused its knockout loss to China in the Universiade quarterfinals.

"The biggest difference between my team and the Chinese team was the playing style and tactics," Kocheshkov said.

"Asian players have advantages in technique, ball control and pass-

ing. That's why we found it hard to seize the ball today."

The match was "interesting", and he believed both teams were "nervous", he said.

"Like most European teams, we are better in defending and quick counterattack. But it did not work today," he said.

"Both teams tried their best to win it. I am sorry that we failed."

Chinese defender Zhao Lili scored the first goal in the 23rd minute. Striker Wang Shanshan completed the second for China

in the 68th minute.

Russian defender Anna Kozhnikova's header came two minutes after Chinese captain Bi Yan's goal in the 87th minute.

Bi also scored China's final goal during extra time.

The Russian team was defeated 1-0 by South Korea in its last Group B match on Monday before also losing to the host.

Chinese head coach Wang Changquan said his team's determination to control the ball was crucial.

"The Russian players have strong bodies and are aggressive about seizing the ball," Wang said.

"Our players had to take good control of the ball today. We made plans, and the players followed the plans well."

After the quarterfinal win, China has accomplished its target at the Shenzhen Universiade — that was to enter the semifinals.

"We have achieved our goal now, so there will be less pressure for the coming matches," Wang said.

"I hope our players can exhibit

their abilities even better. We will treat the upcoming games very seriously, because we need to be thankful and responsible to the fans and, most importantly, to the national flag on our shirts."

A serious injury sustained while trying to kick the ball out of the penalty box forced Chinese goalkeeper Wang Shimeng to leave the game in the 23rd minute.

She is still in hospital, Wang said. "I'm not sure she will be lined up in the next match," he said.