



Colorful new identity, same bright future

By ZHENG XIN
CHINA DAILY

SHENZHEN — What's green and yellow and wants to win a bunch of medals?

That'd be the Unirooms, the kinetic contingent from Australia, boasting a revamped identity and an ambitious set of goals.

The Australians debuted their new team identity at the Universiade, hoping it will be the catalyst for a new level of success in international competitions.

"It's the first time Australian universities have competed in the Universiade as the 'Australian Unirooms', the highest level for university games," said Martin Roberts, chef de mission of the Australian team.

The name Unirooms, of course, combines "university" with Australia's ubiquitous kangaroo.

It's not the first such combination. Already there are the Olyrooms (the Olympic soccer team), the Jillaroos (women's rugby league football), the Socceroots (men's international soccer), and the Mighty Roos (men's icy hockey).

"This year witnesses the highest level for Australia. We want to be consistent with the name," Roberts said.

Some 220 Unirooms are in Shenzhen to participate in 16 events, almost doubling the previous contingent's size.

"The Australian Unirooms team at this year's Universiade is the biggest and strongest we have ever assembled," Roberts said.

"(This Universiade) is good timing for Australia. We have a lot of athletes here who are moving toward the top of their sport. Besides, we also have an amazing component this year — a mix of new talents and experienced veterans, who can learn from each other and improve their performances."

Many athletes — particularly in swimming, track and field, and gymnastics — already have inter-



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national experience.

"The athletes coming through the university system at the moment are absolutely fantastic, and some will go on to become world champions in their sport," Roberts said.

The Universiade is regarded as an important lead-in event for the Olympics.

"The multinational event is an opportunity for a number of Australian athletes to gain further international competition experience as they prepare for London 2012," Roberts said. "Eight to 10 members of the present team participated in the 2008 Beijing Olympics, and approximately 10 to 15 percent will participate in the (2012 Olympics)."

The women's basketball team — which includes seven players from the national squad — is one of the delegation's best hopes for gold.

"We have been always proud of Australian women's basketball," Roberts said. "Hopefully they will snare a medal in Shenzhen."

Roberts said he was impressed with the venue.

"The most impressive one is the track and field, which is so spectacular and beautiful," he said. "You feel you belong to the field rather than being separated from it since the seats are pretty shallow. It's like being right on the track when you're sitting there."



CHEN CHAO / CHINA DAILY

Martin Roberts, chef de mission of the Australian team, speaks during an interview with China Daily.

Q & A >> PECK WEE DIANA SENG, SINGAPORE, TEAM OFFICIAL



In which event do you think Singapore will most likely pick up a medal?

I should say shooting. And sailing is (quite possible).

Have you been to any other places in the city outside the Village and venues?

Yes, we went to Luohu yesterday evening for a Chinese-style foot massage. The place is named Queen Spa.

You liked it?

Yes, it was pretty authentic. China is known as the origin of massage, and we wanted to try the most authentic massage.

It was pretty relaxing and the price was pretty reasonable. — only 68 yuan (\$10) for a foot massage.

Any differences from (massages) in Singapore?

The Chinese style hurts more. Haha. It shoots deeper, which I think is good for my back, which hurts a lot.

Are you going to any other places after the Games?

We hope so, but our schedule is pretty tight. We have to go back tomorrow morning. So unfortunate. But for sure we will be back very soon.