

CHINESE DELEGATION

Having fun on and off the court

By SUN XIAOCHEN

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Winning medals is good but making new friends is even better, claim Chinese delegation members. Boasting a strong team of 123 athletes includes world champions, the Chinese delegation vows to deliver stellar results at the second Youth Olympic Games. But it will also focus on showing off a vibrant image of China to the rest of the world in Nanjing.

“We haven’t set any goals in regard to number of medals at this event, so our team members will feel more relaxed to communicate with foreign athletes and enjoy the fun part of the Games,” said Chang Yao, a delegation official and executive of national team affairs, upon the delegation’s arrival in Nanjing on Tuesday.

Before leaving for Nanjing, the team gathered in Beijing for specific training in socializing and communicating skills with foreign athletes to prepare for the gala cultural exchange programs at the Youth Olympic Village.

Xiao Tian, vice-chairman of the Chinese Olympic Committee and chief of the delegation, emphasized the difference between the YOG and the Olympic Games.

“The Youth Olympics value cultural exchange and education more than competition. We’d like to take the opportunity to further communicate with youths from around the world,” he said.

Chang echoed Xiao’s sentiment, saying the athletes have been encouraged to make friends on and off the court.

When the first batch of Chinese athletes checked into the Youth Olympic Village on Aug 13 there was excitement and curiosity on

their young faces.

Various cultural and education programs have already attracted their attention.

“I’d like to try all the activities available in the village and visit as many cultural booths as possible during my stay here,” said Qin Jinjing, a 18-year-old female badminton player.

To offer more spare time for athletes like Qin, the International Olympic Committee has asked each sport federation to allow at least two days off in its YOG competition schedule and encouraged all athletes to stay in Nanjing until the closing of the Games on Aug 28.

“I raise both hands in approval of the decision. It will allow us extra time, which we usually don’t have at other events, to have fun and make new friends,” Qin said.

Still, China’s athletes remain keen to show off their prowess to the rest of the world.

“After all, competition is competition. We will also try to perform at the highest level we can and expect a better performance than in Singapore,” said Chang.

At the first Summer Youth Olympic Games, held in Singapore in 2010, China finished atop the medal table with 30 gold and 51 overall.

BY THE NUMBERS

123
athletes

China will feature during the Youth Olympic Games.

28
sports

Chinese athletes will compete in.

14
years old

is the youngest age among the Chinese sports delegation. Her name is Zheng Jie, a soccer player.

20
percent

of Chinese athletes are middle school students.

30
gold medals

China won at the last Youth Olympics in Singapore, topping the medal tally.



China's Xie Qiwen fights for a ball with Mexico's goalkeeper during their qualifying match on Thursday at the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games. PHOTO BY XINHUA



Chinese athletes arrive at the registration center at the Nanjing Youth Olympic Games Village. PHOTO BY WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

NANJING TO PROMOTE BEIJING'S BID FOR 2022 WINTER OLYMPICS

The success of the Nanjing Youth Olympics is expected to make a positive impression on the international Olympic community for Beijing's bid to host the 2022 Winter Olympics, a Chinese official said.

Beijing and nearby city Zhangjiakou, Hebei province, launched a joint bid last

November to host the 2022 Winter Olympics. How the Nanjing YOG is hosted and how Chinese athletes perform will play a major role in winning support for the 2022 bid, said Xiao Tian, China's vice-sports minister.

“We hope to deliver a positive image of China's young generation and the whole

country at the Nanjing YOG to make a good impression on the world,” said Xiao.

Chang Yao, a team official with the Chinese delegation, said all the athletes competing in Nanjing will become unofficial ambassadors for the joint bid.

— SUN XIAOCHEN