

# Ningbo Athletes Ready for Tokyo Olympic Games

By Gou Wen

The Tokyo Olympics, which kicks off on July 23, is the largest of its kind in which the Chinese team has participated overseas. In that team, seven athletes from Ningbo, Shi Zhiyong, Li Ling, Wang Shun, Yu Yiting, Yang Qian, Zhang Xingjia, and Guan Chenchen, are ready to achieve even better results. Among them, three have had Olympics experiences, while the rest are first time participants. This is also a new record number of Ningbo Olympians.

## Seizing the Golden Opportunity

In 2018, Shi Zhiyong, the weightlifter from Ningbo won the gold medal in the men's 69kg weightlifting final at the Rio Olympics. This is also the first gold medal for Ningbo.

Five years later, Shi attends the Games again, trying to set his new record. As departure approaches, his team members are taking measures to lift his mind and body to the best condition. "He has a very tight schedule, for example, he finishes treatment and relaxation at 10PM everyday," said his coach, Tang Deshang.

Adding to the team's efforts, Shi also has his own way to reduce pressure: making himself stronger. He said that the postponement of the Games makes everyone stressed, yet the pressure also motivates him. He believes that the only way to avoid pressure is to be strong enough.

"I will try my best to win another gold medal so that the national flag will be raised and national anthem played on the field, earning honour for China and Ningbo," said Shi.

In history, there are two athletes of the Chinese weightlifting team, Zhan Xugang, male, and Chen Yanqing, female, won gold medals in two consecutive Olympic Games. Now Shi Zhiyong is also fighting to be the third.



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- ①The weightlifter Shi Zhiyong.
- ②The Ningbo-born sport shooter Yang Qian.
- ③This is Li Ling's fourth Olympic Games.

[Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

## The Courage to Exceed Limitations

In the history of Chinese sports, there are only a few athletes who have participated in four Olympic Games. Li Ling, a pole vaulter from Ningbo, is one of them. She also holds the event's Asian record.

"This is very special for me. The most important thing is to control injury, maintain physical condition, and then try to rewrite the personal best in the competition," said Li.

The postponement of the Tokyo Olympics for one year is a test for all the athletes preparing for the Games. Li is no exception. Her age has increased by one year, and many changes have

taken place for her competitive state. However, she is optimistic because of her competition experience.

"In the past year, there were fewer games. It is harder to keep yourself in the zone and you really need to show the highest level in key games. But we also get more time to adjust," said Li.

Together with experienced athletes such as Li Ling, Yu Yiting, one of the first timers, will also participate in the Games. She was born in September 2005, trained in Zhenhai Swimming Centre since childhood, and later transferred to Ningbo Swimming Team, and eventually, the national team.

As an emerging swimming star, she participated in the world swimming championships in

Gwangju, South Korea. At the Olympic trials in May this year, she also got good results.

## Supporting Athletes with Professional Standards

In Ningbo, not only are the athletes actively preparing for the Games, but also many sports staff working hard to support them.

Li Wenlian, the owner of a badminton shop in Cixi is going to start her first Olympic stringing service and she is the only Chinese stringer at the Tokyo Olympics. In fact, she is also a world-class racquet stringer. In her work, making the strings fit the racquet to allow the players to find the best feelings, is the most challenging part.

Every time before stringing, Li Wenlian will carefully check and adjust the racquet. "It usually takes me 15 to 20 minutes to finish stringing. However, if the racquet is deformed, it may take longer. This requires constant practice to get more experience," said Li Wenlian.

Not long ago, Lang Ping, the coach of the Chinese women's volleyball team expressed her gratitude to the staff at the Beilun Training Base. Lang appreciated the "first-class" logistics at the Base as she recalled her training days at Ningbo.

"Ningbo Beilun has been a great convenience for us to prepare for the Olympics. Staff here made a lot of contributions, and we are really thankful," said Lang Ping.



## SPOTLIGHT

# Wang Shun: Three-time Olympic Swimmer

By Jin Lu

Well prepared and fully protected, Wang Shun, the 27-year-old Ningbo swimmer, will soon take part in the Olympic Games for the third time.

"This may be my last Olympics, I will try my best to fight for it," said Wang Shun, "I am very proud and honored to play on behalf of the country."

On May 6, in the men's 200m individual medley final of the Tokyo Olympic trials, Wang Shun was the first to reach the finish line at only 1:56.78. This is the tenth time he won the championship since 2011, nine years in a row.

Having experienced the London 2012 and the Rio 2016 Olympics, Wang Shun, who will compete in the Olympics for one

more time, is already a veteran in the Chinese swimming team.

Although as he grows older, his body conditions cannot be the same compared to a few years ago, Wang Shun has earned more experience this time. "In the past, if you were in a bad state, you would be at a loss. But now I know clearly what I should do, and I understand myself better."

For more than a year, Wang Shun has been training under Zhu Zhigen, a famous swimming coach in China. During this year's winter training, Wang Shun focused on strengthening the breaststroke and backstroke, and constantly explored how to deploy his physical fitness.

To prepare for the Tokyo Olympics, Wang Shun did not slack off for a moment. When asked to comment on his recent

training, Wang Shun said that as he was pushing with the body's endurance limit every day, he became stronger. "Every day I am getting stronger, and I continue to get more experience and I feel that my inner heart is also getting tougher."

After all those years, Wang Shun's parents have also become accustomed to being "flying trapeze"—wherever their son goes for training and competition, they will go to the scene to cheer for him as much as possible.

"I have been to all the games that can be watched on the spot in China, and many times abroad too, including the Rio Olympics," said Wang Yanshou, the swimmer's father.

However, Wang Yanshou and his wife cannot go to Tokyo for the Olympics this time, due to

COVID-19. "But we have WeChat, I can talk to my son online when he is free. It's going to be fine, he just told us," said the fa-

ther to the reporter, "He also said that he would follow the team's arrangements and try his best in the game."



The 27-year-old Ningbo swimmer Wang Shun.

[Photo provided to Ningbo Times]

## Ningbo Girl Yang Qian is Going All Out to Prepare for the Olympics

By Dong Na

Recently, Yang Qian, a Ningbo-born sport shooter, is doing her best to get ready for the Olympics.

"Yang Qian has been in her zone lately, scoring a high number of rings in several mock finals, and setting a personal best in the mixed team event," said Yu Lihua, Yang Qian's first coach.

Yang Qian is the second shooter from Ningbo to qualify for the Olympic Games. She has shown super high skills, hitting the world record once, since joining the junior team selection for the Tokyo Olympics last year.

Shooting requires strong psychological quality, said Du Li, head coach of the rifle team and an Olympic champion. "Everything remains unknown before the competition, even you are fully prepared in trainings." In recent days, Yang Qian has been keeping up to her regular schedule, showing up in the apartment, dining hall, and training center as usual. Her priority is to maintain a steady state of mind, focus on training, and avoid external disturbance that will cause too much pressure.

Yang Qian was born in 2000 in Jiangshan, Yinzhou. In 2011, she passed the selection and joined the shooting team of Ningbo Sports School from Maoshan Primary School. In the 2014 Games of Zhejiang Province, Yang Qian won three gold medals in a row, scoring 399 points in the 40-shot women's air rifle, a world-class performance.

Yang Qian did not stop there. In 2015, she won the third place in the First National Youth Games. By the end of the year, she was selected to the National Youth Olympic Team and won the title of National Sports Master. At the beginning of 2016, she was specially recruited to the shooting team of Tsinghua University.

Yang Qian knocked on the door of the national team with her performance at the Second National Youth Games in 2019: she scored 633 points. Only three players on the national team had ever managed to do so at that time! After that, Yang Qian was enrolled in the national team and started to earn her grounds step by step.

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