

Striving Towards a Modern Coastal Metropolis

# Winter Sports Economy is Booming

By Dong Na

With the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics in full swing, Chinese people's passion for winter sports has extended to the industries: skating and skiing, tourism, education, training, and equipment manufacturing... It is estimated that the total size of China's winter sports industry will reach one trillion yuan.

Although Ningbo's winter sports industry started late, with the help of strong manufacturing advantages and a large consumer population, it is stepping on a new track to pursue the business opportunities brought up by the Winter Olympics, whether it is directly related industries such as commerce, tourism, and sports, or manufacturing and foreign trade.

## Winter Olympics Heat into Ningbo

Since the start of the ski season in December last year, the number of passengers at the Shanglianggang ski resort in Fenghua has increased by 30 percent compared with the previous year. "The number of visitors during the Spring Festival holiday was booming, reaching 4,000 on the first day of the New Year. In previous years, there were only 3,000 visitors at the peak," said Wang Linbin, the manager of the resort.

In recent years, with the rise of urban ski experience gyms, many citizens are experiencing the fun of skiing in commercial complexes. As a new form of business, five urban ski experience gyms have emerged in the commercial complex of Ningbo since last year.

In addition, roller skating, skateboarding, ice skating, and other sports are getting popular nowadays. In the past two years, the number of participants in ice and snow sports in Ningbo has been increasing at the rate of 20,000 per year. At present, the number of participants in Ningbo has reached 100,000.



Skiers at the Shanglianggang ski resort in Fenghua.

[Photo by Tang Yan]

## Welcome the Next Trillion-sized Business

The Olympics have led to a huge increase in the awareness and participation in winter sports, and the consumption of winter sports continues to grow. Support from policy and the financial sector is making China's winter sports industry developing fast. By the end of the 13th Five-Year Plan period, the scale of China's winter sports industry has exceeded 400 billion yuan, up 56.9% compared with 2015.

As one of the first Ningbo foreign trade enterprises in the winter sports business, Ningbo Zhongbao has secured cooperation agreements with several ski resorts in Europe and the United States and registered its own brands Kitz and Krampus to develop "star products", such as ski shoes, snowboards, and ski fixtures.

Skiing alone can help extend a complete industry chain of ice and snow sports. SNOW51, for example, is a one-stop happy life service platform based on skiing. "Our ski experience and training is not limited to experience gyms, but also to outdoor ski resorts like the Songhua Lake, making skiing a 365 day business. We cooperate with major international winter sports brands to increase retail, social, and catering businesses to build a whole industry chain of ice and snow sports," said the staff.

Capital markets are also optimistic about the "winter sports opportunities" brought by the Beijing Winter Olympics. Since the beginning of last year, several ski startups have received more than 300 million yuan in financing. In addition, A-share listed companies, education, and training industries are also gearing up to actively explore the winter sports opportunities.

## Expand the Winter Sports Industry

"As a catalyst for ice and snow sports, the Beijing Winter Olympics will push China's winter sports industry to embrace a new leap forward." Industry experts believe the value of China's ice and snow sports industry is expected to exceed 70 billion yuan this year.

At present, there are nearly 30 enterprises in Ningbo engaged in the research and development, manufacturing and import and export of ski-related equipment, including ski clothing, skis, ski poles, helmets, snow mirrors, among others. However, Ningbo has not formed an industrial cluster in ski equipment manufacturing, and the overall scale is not large. Tourism experts believe that Ningbo has both opportunities and challenges in promoting winter sports tourism.

"Starting from this year, we will consider the setting of professional slides, as well as camping, roller skating, snowy afternoon tea and other complementary formats, to improve the industry chain and attract more tourists," Wang Linbin said.

While actively introducing the city ski experience gym, Ningbo commercial centers are also planning to create a new model of "shopping center + ecological sports park".

The winter sports industry is becoming a new economic growth point. Experts point out that Ningbo enterprises should focus on extending the consumption chain, deeply integrating the ice and snow sports with cultural tourism, equipment manufacturing, education, and training industries, and bring more resources into the ice and snow consumption and industrial chain, so as to improve the winter sports economy as a whole.

## SPOTLIGHT

## Celebrating the Lantern Festival in Ningbo

By Xu Zhuowei

The Lantern Festival is the earliest existing carnival in China, which falls on the 15th day of the first lunar month. Various folk activities were held in Ningbo to celebrate the Lantern Festival.

In Zhanqi Town, Yinzhou District, children from different countries dressed in traditional costumes of "horse lanterns", tried to sing the folk song and enjoyed the festival. Children of different cultural backgrounds laughed, played, and blended with each other.

"Horse lanterns" is a unique folk art project in Zhanqi Town, meaning "tens of thousands of horses galloping" and "prosperous". The gongs and drums were melodious, and the Erhu and Pipa played in unison. "The green light is high..." kids from Ningbo British International School happily followed the rhythm of the music to start the "first experience of horse lanterns".

They carried the horse's head in their left hand and the whip in their right, and changed various formations with the sound of gongs and drums. Although their movements were a little rusty, their cute appearance instantly turned many people over.

In Meishan Street, Beilun District, citizens celebrated the Lantern Festival by holding dragon and lion dance.

Accompanied by the sound of gongs and drums, the folk performance team moved from far to near. The dragon and lion dance team walked in the front. The red-haired lion of Meishan with regional traditions danced with the drums, jumped lightly, and stood up independently... The wonderful performance attracted a cheering crowd.

In Nantang Old Street, interesting lantern riddles, unique and brilliant lanterns, wonderful performances, and fun garden parties have been launched one after another. It is customary for Ningbo citizens to invite relatives and friends to watch lanterns and guess lantern riddles in the Lantern Festival.

Another custom of the Lantern Festival that cannot be missed is eating tangyuan, or glutinous balls. The sweet and round delicacies are molded from glutinous rice flour, symbolizing the wholeness of the family.

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## 双语汇 Different Tongues

# 郑氏十七房：青砖小瓦，古村悠然

By Gou Wen

Zheng Shi Shi Qi Fang (the Seventeen houses of the Zheng family) is located in Zhenhai District, with a construction area of more than 40,000 square meters. Most of the houses were built in the Qing Dynasty. This is one of the largest and best preserved ancient architectural villages of the Ming and Qing Dynasties in China.

郑氏十七房位于镇海区，建筑面积4万多平方米，大多为清代建筑，是国内现存规模最大且保存较为完整的明清古建筑村落之一。

Walking on the flagstone road, people can see the small bridges, flowing water, ancestral hall, and ancient stage, together forming a beautiful view that represents the scenery of Jiangnan, or southern area of the Yangtze River.

漫步在石板路上，小桥流水与

祠堂戏台相映成趣，目光所及是一派江南风光。

This is one of the origins of Ningbobang. Many business giants, such as Zheng Xi, founder of "Lao Feng Xiang" and Zheng Zunfa, founder of "Hero Ink", had become indispensable names when people mention Ningbobang.

这里是宁波商帮的最早发源地之一，走出了一批商业巨子，如“老凤祥”创始人郑熙、英雄墨水厂创始人郑遵法等，是宁波商帮一股不可或缺的力量。

Nowadays, many people are attracted to visit here. At the beginning of the Year of the Tiger, citizens and tourists come to guess lantern riddles, wrap rice dumplings, and make tiger hats, adding a lively festival atmosphere here.

如今，这里吸引了许多人前来游玩。在虎年伊始，市民游客在这里猜灯谜、包汤圆、制作虎头帽，为老宅增添了热闹的节日氛围。



Making tiger hats to celebrate the festival here. /制作虎头帽庆祝节日。  
[Photo by Tang Yan, Tang Yue] 唐严 汤越 摄

