



Yin Jian eyes record gold

► Competition resumes today after races canceled due to lack of wind

By Zhao Ruixue

QINGDAO: With the Olympic sailing competition in full swing, the eyes of many are fixed on Yin Jian to see if the Chinese RS:X competitor can win the first-ever sailing gold for China.

Yin is now in a solid first place with 6 points, ahead of Marina Alabau of Spain with 15 points and Jessica Crisp from Australia with 17 after four races.

In her first two races, Yin staged stunning performances for home spectators by leading around every mark in both races.

She continued to excel on day two of racing – winning one and finishing third in the fourth race of the competition.

"Today my racing was not as good as yesterday, but catching up from 11th place to finish third (in race four) was an accomplishment for me," Yin said after Tuesday's races.

"I will focus on the remaining races and my physical conditioning will get better and better," Yin added.

No doubt Yin has challenged other RS:X sailors.

"Yin is awesome. I had opportunities to beat her today, but it didn't work out," said Jessica Crisp from Australia.

Yin has been a hot favorite to win China's first gold medal in sailing after she took a silver at the 2004 Athens Games.

A minor collision with another competitor in the 10th round in 2004 dropped Yin to second place, just two points shy of the gold medalist.

After 2004, bothered by leg injuries, Yin once had to consider whether to continue her sailing career or pursue a

college education.

"My leg ached a lot, especially in overcast and rainy days," Yin recalled.

The sport's post-Athens transformation from Minstral to RS:X class boats also made Yin waver.

"If I continue sailing, I have to take up a new sailing class. I don't think it is easy, so I decided to retire."

But three months later she changed her mind.

"As long as the sailing team needs me, I will continue sailing no matter how hard it is. Besides, the 2008 Olympics being held in China is a once-in-a-lifetime chance for me," Yin recalled.

Determined to give home spectators her best performance, Yin trained hard ahead of the Olympics.

"Yin is experienced and there is no big gap between her and European sailors," said Yao Xinpei, deputy head of the Chinese sailing team.

"She has only average performances in strong wind. But for a long time, she has been training hard to improve her skills in strong wind," Yao added.

Yin will compete in her fifth and sixth races out of the total 10 that should have been completed yesterday.

No racing was possible yesterday due to lack of wind.

The Finn and Yngling classes have sailed seven races and will come out again today, originally planned as a reserve day for both fleets.

It was still unclear if all remaining races in each series will be staged today, one day before the Finn and Yngling medals are decided.

Agencies contributed to the story



China's Yin Jian sails during race four of the RS:X women's windsurfing competition at the 2008 Beijing Olympics in Qingdao on Tuesday. Inset: Sailors of Laser class compete on Wednesday.



Olympics promotes Qingdao tourism

By Zhang Ying

QINGDAO: Enormous numbers of visitors from home and abroad are now gathering in the city of Qingdao on Fushan Bay in Shandong province to enjoy the glamor of the Olympic sailing competition.

"The Olympic Games is injecting vigor into Qingdao's tourism industry. The city is stepping forward to become a prestigious coastal tourism city," said Wang Jiangong, director of Qingdao Tourism Bureau.

Using the opportunity of the Olympics to promote its tourism industry has become Qingdao's new highlight.

Statistics show that visitors to the seaside city have increased more than 30 percent annually over the five years since it began preparing for the Games. Last year tourists numbered 30 million.

Its May 4th Square is now dotted with foreign tour groups. After watching races at the neighboring sailing venue, they often spend their evening at the Beer Street near the square to enjoy Tsingtao Beer – a famous Chinese brand produced in its namesake city.

"I really like the city. It's very beautiful. I am happy to be here," Isabelle Finn-Kelcey from Britain told China Daily.

Qingdao boasts unique tourist attractions and historic culture featuring a blend of mountains, the sea and Western-style buildings.

The coastal resort offers marine sports, sightseeing and vacation tours.

The city's western sector has a large number of well-preserved Western-style buildings over a century old, while its east has developed into a prosperous and dynamic modern commercial hub. The two combine to give tourists a novel experience of enjoying the Oriental and the Occident, the traditional and the modern.

Big events and large exhibitions such as the Qingdao International Beer Festival, the China (Qingdao) Ocean Festival and China International Electronics Show also drive the local tourism economy.

Tourist information is now offered in Chinese, English, Japanese and Korean in Qingdao's major ports, main roads, star hotels and scenic spots.

Its hotels include the Sheraton and Hyatt from US, Kempinski from Germany, Sofitel from France and other world-renowned hotel groups that started arriving in 2004.

Ambitious British sailors seeking medals in all participating events

By Huang Yanhong

QINGDAO: "We are looking forward to an exciting August here in Qingdao as we try to win the top six in each event. Our goal is to win four medals, at least one gold," said Stephen Park, captain of the British sailing team.

Britain has one of the most powerful sailing teams in Qingdao. A total of 18 athletes are competing in all 11 Olympic events.

They are most competitive in the 49er, Finn, Laser and Yngling classes. Without an accident they are almost certain to be the biggest winners in the sailing competition of this Olympics.

After the past six competition days, Britain holds the top ranking in the Finn class, a result registered by veteran sailor Ben Ainslie.

Ainslie, winner of two Olympic gold medals – in Sydney and Athens – and a silver at the Atlanta Games, was also the champion of the 2006 and 2007 Qingdao International Sailing Regattas.

He has won eight world and European titles, was crowned

ISAF World Sailor of the Year in 1998 and 2002, and four times was named UK's Yachtsman of the Year.

Whether he can continue the feat is one of the biggest questions at the 2008 Olympic sailing competition.

"It's difficult when people just expect you to win and probably secretly hope that you lose for a change," Ainslie said. "Pressure is something you just have to deal with and it doesn't get easier, but it is also part of the thrill of competing at the highest level."

Nick Dempsey was the bronze-medal winner in the Mistral class in Athens and a bronze medalist in the Cascais 2007 ISAF Sailing World Championship. As his 28th birthday approaches, Dempsey said the best present he hopes for is an Olympics gold.

His girlfriend, Sarah Ayton is also a world-class sailor in the Yngling class – she won a gold medal in Athens.

Saskia Clark, another member of the British team, also has a wish for her 29th birthday. "The one with a gold medal is my favorite," she said.

"Sail for Gold 2008" emblazons the name cards and clothes of British sailors and

coaches, showing their ambition is no secret.

The British team's preparation for Qingdao started two years ago. They have studied the sailing venue's meteorological data going back to 2006.

They have now been in Qingdao since June.

"We came here for training every summer after Athens. We are familiar with the wind and environment here," said Ian Barker, the British coach of the 49er class.

"We have brought our own chefs and the food is brought here from our country strictly according to plans made by our nutritionists to make sure that dishes satisfy both our taste and body."

"Medical has also been well arranged," he said.

In Athens the UK team harvested two golds, one silver and two bronzes. At the 2007 World Championship, they won two golds and four bronzes.

In the 2007 Qingdao International Sailing Regatta, Britain topped the medal tally with five golds and one silver in all 11 events.

Tomorrow two medal races will be held – in the Finn and Yngling classes.



Sarah Ayton, Sarah Webb and Pippa Wilson of Britain set sail before competing in the Yngling class in Qingdao. Ju Chuanjiang

'Fragrant' Swiss Hug hugged for heartfelt help

By Xue Xiaoying

QINGDAO: With the beautiful Chinese name Ou Fangxin, Swiss national Francine Hug is now a star in the Qingdao Olympic Village for her helpful service.

Fangxin means "fragrant" in Chinese.

Sent by the Swiss Embassy in China to work as a translator, Hug is a boundless source of energy, always available and always smiling. She is also very modest often saying *na li, na li* – "you flatter me" – when receiving praise for her earnest work and fluent Chinese.

Attracted by Chinese culture and history, Hug came to China three years ago to study as a postgraduate student at Beijing Language and Culture University.

"I really like Chinese literature, especially poems of the Tang Dynasty (618-907) and the four classic novels," she said. "My favorite is *The Romance of the Three Kingdoms* because there are a lot of heroes and complex strategies in it."

Though she works every day and doesn't see the nearby Olympic races, Hug is not frustrated.

"It's really a challenging and interesting thing to work

for the Olympic Games. Though I may miss seeing the Games, my work is a part of the Games, and I can learn more about how it is organized," she said.

"I like to work with the Chinese. Almost everything here is well planned and we have a good cooperation among colleagues." After the Games, Hug will go to London to study for a master's degree. Proficient in six languages, she wants to work as a United Nations diplomat.



Francine Hug (left) talks with a sailing coach. Ju Chuanjiang

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