



# Rookie Xu wins bronze for China

► Host claims third-ever Olympic sailing medal; but still sees gold

By Xiao Guo

**QINGDAO:** Xu Lijia's debut at the Olympics ended well yesterday, earning her country a bronze medal in sailing in Qingdao.

"I'm not feeling bad winning a bronze, I did my best," said Xu about her victory just moments afterward.

"I hope this is only the beginning. I would like to see more Chinese youths getting involved in sailing."

But the 21-year-old's bronze in Laser Radial sailor wasn't easy. She had a rough start to the Olympic competition on the opening day of the Laser Radial event at the Olympic sailing competition, placing below expectations at 14th.

But steadily, she pushed hard and was in third place by the ninth round, the last race before the finals.

Xu is currently ranked world No 2 in her class and was one of the pre-Games medal favorites in the Olympics sailing regatta.

In her short career, Xu has rewritten Chinese sailing history with many notable accomplishments. In 2006, she won world gold in the Laser Radial class in California — the first by a Chi-

nese in an Olympic class.

She was unable to compete in Athens in 2004 due to health reasons.

"Since then, I have become aware that sailing is an indispensable part of my life," she said.

That's why stepping up on to the podium in her home country has made the moment all the more meaningful for the Olympic rookie.

But the win took a lot of hard work and adaptation to Qingdao's water conditions. Xu didn't do well at the 2006 and 2007 Qingdao International Regattas. She placed 11th, after failing to adjust to Qingdao's light wind conditions.

"But, I don't blame the wind, everyone is facing it and I know I still have to improve my sailing skills," she said then.

Xu first learned how to swim at the age of 4. She switched to sailing after meeting sailing coach Zhang Jing, who suggested she try the sport based on talent for it that Xu showed early on.

Under Zhang's advice, Xu decided to give the sport a whirl. She soon fell in love with sailing at age 12. Sailing has since been her life — and she wouldn't have it any other way.

"Sailing is all worth it," said Xu.

**I'm not feeling bad winning a bronze, I did my best.**

**XU LIJIA**  
China Laser Radial sailor



Xu Lijia of China, sailing in the Laser Radial class, holds the national flag to celebrate her winning the bronze at the Beijing Olympic Games in Qingdao yesterday. Ju Chuanjiang

## Fine organization ensures success

By Zhang Ying

**QINGDAO:** The Olympic sailing competition has received high praise from Games organizers for its smooth operations.

The organization behind all the Olympic races over the past 12 days has been widely applauded by several parties including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Sailing Federation (ISAF), and political and media leaders from home and abroad, says Zang Aimin, executive vice-president of the Sailing Committee in Qingdao of the Beijing Organizing Committee for the Games.



Zang Aimin Ju Chuanjiang

Despite heavy rains and strong winds on Aug 17, the medal races of Yngling, Finn, and 49er were carried out well, demonstrating Qingdao's fine organizational preparation and cooperation between domestic and international staff teams.

Urs Lacotte, executive general secretary of the IOC, gave thumbs-up to the city. "Qingdao Olympic Sailing Committee worked well with IOC and ISAF, ensuring a wonderful sailing regatta," he said.

Lacotte said he was also impressed with the strong show of support from the entire city and wide participation of the masses, which made the event possible.

More than 80,000 spectators from home and abroad watched the Games on the spectator bank, doling out top grades to the service and facilities there.

Facilities in Qingdao's Olympic Village, which was home to 62 fleets and provided services in 17 languages, also received smiles all around.

A Chilean delegation led by Jaime Pizarro, Chile's deputy sports minister, gave high marks to the village, with the minister firmly believing in Qingdao's complete success in holding the event.

Security was also well under control. The sailing center was protected by using a multi-dimensional defense mechanism, monitoring the area by land, sea, air and from underwater nearby. Security officers also patrolled the area during all hours of day and night.

A British delegation came to visit the center, exchanging ideas with the staff there and acquiring experience for their country, which will host the 2012 London Olympic Games.

"We hope to have more chances to communicate with our Chinese colleagues here and bring the valuable experiences back to London," one of the delegates said.

About 13,000 Games-time, city and social volunteers participated in running Qingdao's sailing competition. One hundred volunteer families also contributed by hosting foreigners, charity-themed events and promoting cultural exchanges between China and other countries and regions.

Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme has attended several Olympic Games and has also worked previously as an IOC member. "I have full confidence in a successful Olympic sailing competition in Qingdao," he said. "That will greatly improve the city's reputation across the globe."

This special supplement is co-published by the Information Office of Qingdao municipal government and China Daily

# Golden dream finally comes true for British Goodison

By Guo Xin

**QINGDAO:** An Olympic dream became golden for British sailor Paul Goodison at the 2008 Olympic Games yesterday.

Goodison earned his first Olympic gold medal in the men's Laser medal race at Fushan bay, Qingdao, also the third gold for Britain in the regatta.

Taking an 18-point lead into the double-points race, Goodison used the tactic to block his nearest rival Sweden to maintain his lead in the medal race. He forced Sweden to the last of the 10-boat fleet through all the marks while

Goodison himself kept the ninth position till the end.

Goodison's actions also cost the Swede a medal even though he went into the race in second place overall.

With a total of 63 points, Goodison added to Britain's already impressive collection of Yngling and Finn gold medals and 470 men's silver. He also proved his talent was unquestionable to win his first Olympic gold despite the fourth position in Athens 2004.

"It was quite tricky and pretty stressful. I waited to make sure that I got the gold at the end of the day and there was only one

way to guarantee it. Sweden knew it was coming too, but I just had to do what I got to do," said the 30-year-old Goodison.

Vasilij Zbogor from Slovenia, Athens bronze medalist, took the silver medal, finishing second in the medal race with 71 points overall. Medal race winner Andrew Murdoch of New Zealand blocked Zbogor at every mark to try to get rid of the Slovenian in the light shifty airs, knowing it would cost him the bronze medal, but like the Sweden, the New Zealander missed out.

"It was really shifty, so it was hard to choose which course

to take," said Zbogor. "I was able to sail my own race, as Britain was keeping an eye on Sweden. I think I had an advantage because I have already won bronze at Athens, so I didn't feel pressure and make mistakes."

The bronze medal went to Diego Romero from Italy with 75 points total and third finish in the medal race.

### Long overdue win

The win was long overdue for Goodison, who had been eyeing gold since narrowly missing the podium in Athens.

But, things were different

this time around in China. Just moments before the race, Goodison said he was feeling more confident about his preparations for Beijing, both physically and mentally.

His mother Cynthia Goodison also came to Qingdao to cheer him on. Goodison said it definitely helped to have his family there.

"My family supports me so much and the medal is a massive team effort. I really would like to thank them for helping me pull through," he said.

He began sailing at the age of 4 and turned professional in 1996. Goodison is a four-time

European champion and currently ranks third in the world.

Goodison won gold at both the 2006 and 2007 Olympic test events, making him one of the only two sailors in the world to be undefeated at the Olympic sailing venue. The other is Ben Ainslie, who won gold in the Finn class three days ago.

"Ben (Ainslie) has been one of the most influential people in my sailing career, as we trained together before Sydney, and I got to see what it takes to win gold," said Goodison.

Agencies contributed to the story



Paul Goodison of Britain celebrates after winning the gold medal at the Laser class competition during the Beijing Olympic Games in Qingdao yesterday. Ju Chenghao



Anna Tunnicliffe of the US, sailing in the Laser Radial class, smiles after winning gold at the Beijing Olympic Games in Qingdao yesterday. Ju Chuanjiang

# World No 1 American Tunnicliffe takes Laser Radial title

**QINGDAO:** Anna Tunnicliffe of the United States came from behind in the final to win the women's Laser Radial class yesterday at the Beijing Olympic Games sailing competition in Qingdao.

Gintare Volungeviciute took silver in the women's Laser Radial for Lithuania's first sailing medal in an Olympics, while China's Xu Lijia took bronze.

The medal race was held in light and shifting winds at Qingdao, the sailing venue about

500km south of Beijing. "It hasn't really hit," said British-born Tunnicliffe, 25, with a huge American flag draped over her shoulders after the first US sailing gold of the Beijing Games.

Tunnicliffe, who moved to the United States with her family at the age of 12 and later became a citizen, had enough points in nine preliminary races to assure her at least a medal after the final, which counts double. Early in the race, it looked like she would be lucky to get silver.

"It was a little too exciting," she said just after the finish. "I had a really bad start. It was very hard to focus when my competitors were gaining points on me."

At the end of the first of four legs in the medal race, she was eighth out of the 10 boats that made the final, and at end of the next leg she was next to last. Then, heading up on the third leg, she spotted a wind shift and set off on a different course than most of the fleet.

"I wasn't winning at that

point and I saw this big left puff, and I went like 'here goes.'" I had to. I mean I was guaranteed a medal, and that meant a lot, so it was a risk worth taking," she said. "I went left and moved to the front of the fleet."

The gamble paid off. And at the end of the third leg, she had climbed to No 3, and gained one more spot on the final leg to finish second, behind Volungeviciute.

After taking silver, Volungeviciute seemed bewildered by the rush of media attention, telling Chinese officials, "I need

to change clothes" and moving away from the reporters. "It's procedure," said the official, leading her back to the media zone.

"I worked very hard for this," she said. "I am also very happy to get the first Olympic sailing medal for my country."

The Chinese celebrated their country's third-ever Olympic sailing medal by throwing the medalist, Xu, off the dock into the water.

Xu, who along with windsurfer Yin Jian was one of two

strong Chinese sailing medal hopes going into the Games, was cheered on loudly by home fans on the main breakwater at the Olympic Sailing Center.

China has never won Olympic sailing gold, although Yin could end that drought today when she takes a five-point lead into the medal race.

The Laser Radial class was introduced for the first time at these Olympics in place of the Europe dinghy.

Agencies