



CBA CHAMPIONSHIP SERIES

Fairy tale season gets happy ending

Marbury scores 41 to lead Ducks to first CBA title, capping storybook year

By DUSTY LANE
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It was the most fitting of ends. Stephon Marbury led Beijing to its first CBA title on Friday night at a sold-out MasterCard Center, capping a season in which he reclaimed his career and the Ducks claimed their place as one of the league's elite teams. "When you think of how much work we put in from preseason, you knew that it was something special being brewed here," Marbury said. "I think that playing here in Beijing, the fans and the organization, everybody was so professional, and everybody wanted the same goal."

"That's just the way it was supposed to end." The end didn't come until the end. Beijing gritted out a 124-121 victory over the Guangdong Southern Tigers, the defending league champions, that wasn't decided until James Singleton missed a potential game-tying 3-pointer as time expired.

Moments later, a sobbing Marbury was being tossed in the air time and again by his teammates in the middle of a mob on the court. Not two minutes earlier, he'd left the game in an entirely different mood, fouling out with 1:12 left and the score tied at 121-121.

It was just that close all night. "It's a miracle, but it's also the result of our hard work," said Ducks coach

Min Lulei. "It's a result of teamwork, our never-say-die spirit and Marbury's leadership. All of these combined for today's success."

The Southern Tigers were on the verge of pulling away twice, once early and once late.

The first time, they held a 40-25 lead with 11:11 left in the second quarter. But Marbury hit a 3, went to the line, hit another 3 - threat neutralized.

By the time halftime rolled around, Beijing was up 62-57 and Marbury had 27 points, 22 in the first half.

Guangdong had another run, pulling ahead 111-101 with 7:14 left in the game after guard Aaron Brooks put back his own missed shot just after he'd hit two highlight-reel 3-pointers.

But Beijing quickly reeled the Tigers back in, and it was a shootout the rest of the way with the teams trading the lead time and again.

Randolph Morris finally put a cap on it with 21.9 left, drawing a foul on a fast-break and both shots.

"I was too excited to say a word," said Beijing forward Zhu Yanxi. "It was such a tough series and we moved forward step by step. We faced difficulties, but we worked together as a team and kept on fighting until the last minute."

Marbury finished with 41 points and 7 assists, while Morris had 14 points and 8 rebounds.

Brooks led Guangdong with 33 points and 5 assists, while Singleton had 29 points and 9 rebounds.



Beijing Ducks captain Chen Lei (left) celebrates while guard Stephon Marbury holds up a basketball net after the team's CBA championship win over Guangdong Southern Tigers on Friday in Beijing.

CUI MENG / CHINA DAILY

offcourt

NBA-STYLE ATMOSPHERE Cheers, tears, white T-shirts ignite stadium

It may have been the CBA Finals, but it sure looked like the NBA.

You couldn't be blamed for feeling as if you'd stepped into an NBA arena if you were in the MasterCard Center for Game 5 of the CBA Finals between the Beijing Ducks and the Guangdong Southern Tigers on Friday night.

The 18,000-some fans were given white T-shirts as the team tried to create a "white-out", a trend popularized by the Miami Heat for big games at their American Airlines Arena.

They chanted "defense" and "go Ducks", and generally stayed away from the kind of behavior that landed the team in hot water after the opening game of the series.

Highlights of Stephon Marbury's head-to-head matchup with Aaron Brooks, which were displayed on the screen hanging above center court, just goaded on the already electric crowd.

"The home court atmosphere is awesome here," said Chen Zongzu, a 75-year-old die-hard Ducks fan.

Chen brought his family, including his 72-year-old wife, his daughter and his son-in-law, to the stadium to cheer for the Ducks, a team they have been supporting for 10 years.

"If the Ducks win today, it will be a sleepless night for our whole family," Chen said. "I think we will still be cheering for it in the morning."

The game ended with a mob on the court and with a weeping Marbury at the center after Beijing claimed the CBA title.

But the excitement wasn't contained to the Ducks, or even to the stadium.

Across town, soccer fans were paying attention as Beijing Guo'an, the city's top soccer club, played in Workers Stadium at the same time.

"Obviously, this game is much more crucial. I couldn't miss it, so I gave up on Guo'an's match," said 37-year-old Xie Wenhai. Xie said he knew he'd made the right decision once he found himself in the middle of the chanting throng at the MasterCard Center.

"The volunteers gave everybody white shirts here, so we could unite as one," Xie said. "You hear others shouting besides you and you feel your blood get heated. I think I will come to the Ducks' games more often in the future."

— SUN XIAOCHEN

winespecial

Changyu expanding vineyards to capture market

By JU CHUANJIANG
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Changyu Pioneer Wine Co Ltd, China's oldest and largest winemaker, announced recently it will undergo a massive expansion of its existing vineyards and build another 20 high-end chateaus across the world's top grape-growing regions in the next five years.

"With 120 years of experience in viticulture and the wine business, Changyu has grown into one of the nation's top producers and is on par with the best European winemakers," Zhou Hongjiang, general manager of the company said during a national Sugar and Wine Festival held in Chengdu from March 21 to 23. "An ambitious plan is already in place as we look forward to more robust growth and a more important place in the global wine market," said Zhou.

Chateau alliance

Changyu began building its first chateau as early as 10 years ago. The Changyu-Castel chateau in Yantai, Shandong province, the company's hometown, was China's first to be built in accordance with international standards and was funded jointly by Changyu and the Castle Group of France, one of the largest wine manufacturers in Europe.

In 2006, the company built an ice-wine chateau in northeastern China's Liaoning province, which has become one of the world's largest ice-wine production bases. A year later, the Chateau Changyu AFIP Global Hotel opened to the public in Miyun county just outside Beijing. It serves not only as a winery but also as a hot tourist destination that provides a blend of services associated with wines.

Another three chateaus have been basically completed and will be open to the public in the second half of this year in Shaanxi province and the Xinjiang and Ningxia

autonomous regions, which are considered China's top grape-producing areas.

In addition, the company teamed with four prominent chateaus in New Zealand, France and Italy to establish an international chateau alliance in 2009. Under the agreements, Changyu is the exclusive Chinese distributor of high-end wines produced from these overseas companies.

China's high-end wine market is expanding fast as the standard of living continues to improve.

The wine produced at the chateaus accounts for the majority of Changyu's high-end products, and its sales revenue has reported an average annual increase of more than 45 percent since 2008.

"Changyu will spare no effort to seize the opportunity by building 20 more chateaus in 17 major grape-growing areas all over the world, and it will look for more cooperation with overseas chateaus by 2016," said Zhou.

"With all these efforts, Changyu will be on track to play a vital role in the world's high-end wines market," he said.

Fine growing regions

Relying on the conventional wisdom that 70 percent of a wine's quality depends on the grapes, Changyu has always focused on its improving planting techniques and has constantly worked to expand its grape-growing bases.

As of the end of last year, the company had a total of 20,000 hectares of vineyards throughout the Xinjiang Uygur and Ningxia Hui autonomous regions as well as the provinces of Shandong, Shaanxi and Liaoning and a few around Beijing, said Li Jiming, Changyu's chief engineer.

Changyu's vineyards make up one-quarter of China's grape-planting regions.

"To meet growing demand, the company will continue to expand

its vineyards and aims to have the world's largest grape-growing acreage in five years," said Li.

In Yantai alone, the company has more than 4,666 hectares of vineyards spread along the city's coastal areas, which lie on a latitude similar to that of France's renowned wine-producing region in Bordeaux, and Italy's Tuscany. And another 667-hectare growing area will be added within the year, Li said.

To maintain standards, Changyu has set up a quality-control system for its own vineyards and tightly manages subcontractors. The company contracts local farmers to grow grapes and provides them with the same resources used in its own vineyards, such as seedlings, fertilizer, techniques and regular training.

The company also has an information management system that allows every planter to coordinate fertilizer and pesticide use.

Every vineyard has a fermentation plant or chateau beside it to make sure that the grapes are sent to fermentation tanks within one hour of harvesting.

Meanwhile, a wine research and manufacturing plant designed to have an annual production of 250,000 tons of wines and brandy will be established in Yantai.

Promising brandy market

A recent report from the International Wine and Spirit Research Institution shows that China is now the world's second largest brandy markets and will become the largest by 2016, with a 47 percent increase in brandy consumption expected over the coming five years.

"The Chinese liquor industry generated an average annual sales revenue of over 300 billion yuan (\$47.6 billion). There will be a huge market if just 5 percent of domestic consumers switch from liquor to brandy," said Zhou.

Changyu has a long history of making brandy. It produced China's



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Chateau Changyu-Castel, China's first chateau built according to international standards, was established in 2002 in Yantai, Shandong province.

first bottle in 1914 and now has a market share of more than 90 percent in the domestic low-end brandy market. However, the high-end brandy market is mainly occupied by overseas brands.

"Changyu will focus on producing high-end brandy and making it another pillar industry in the next few years," Zhou said.

Insiders say that China has become one of the seven top grape-planting areas in the world, along with France, Italy, Australia, and the United States.

"God will not always favor Bordeaux in France. In the next 30 years, China will become another ideal place for growing grapes, and the world's best wine will be made here." Richard Smart, a famous Australian grape-cultivation expert predicted at the second World Congress on Climate Change and Wine, held in Barcelona, Spain, in 2008.

The sound natural and investment environment have also encouraged



The Changyu Kely Estate of New Zealand was built in 2006 to increase sales of its high-end wines overseas.

lots of overseas winemakers to build branches and chateaus in China.

One of prominent examples is Chateau Lafite Rothschild. It began building a chateau and developed 25 hectares of grape-planting area in Penglai, a coastal city of Shandong

province. The project is expected to produce 120,000 bottles of world-class wine each year.

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