

Japanese 'king' loses his crown— again

KITAJIMA MISSES OUT ON PODIUM FINISH AS YOUNG COMPATRIOT CLINCHES 100M BREASTSTROKE GOLD

By LEI LEI
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — Japan's breaststroke king, Kosuke Kitajima, was dethroned for a second time in the swimming pool on Monday night when he again failed to make podium.

Young teammate, Ryo Tateishi, stole Kitajima's thunder while maintaining Japan's dominance in the breaststroke with a victory in the 100-meter final.

However, China broke its neighbor's 56-year domination in the men's 4x200m freestyle.

"I knew after my (first) turn that I couldn't win the race. Although I swam faster than this morning, I didn't swim fast enough to get a medal," said fourth-placed Kitajima, the defending Asian Games champion and Beijing Olympic gold medalist in the event.

He finished a disappointing fourth in men's 50m breaststroke on Sunday, but said he wasn't concerned as he was concentrating on his strongest breaststroke events — the 100m and 200m.

After the 100m race, the four-time Olympic gold medalist, can only pin his hopes of emerging with at least a medal in Thursday's 200m race.

"I will do all that I can to do better in the 200m and I have to improve my physical condition," he said. "I want to encourage the Japanese team again. Tateishi and his gold medal are very important to the team."

It was Tateishi's second medal at the Guangzhou Games; he claimed silver in the men's 50m breaststroke on Sunday.

The rising star hopes his efforts



PETER PARKS / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Jiao Liuyang of China salutes from the podium during the award ceremony for the women's 200m butterfly. It was Jiao's third Asian Games gold.

will boost a Japanese team which has clinched only four gold medals out of 19 so far, while China has snared 14.

"I lost my touch in the 50m yesterday ... today was much better," said Tateishi. "Hopefully my win will help boost the confidence of the Japanese team."

Tateishi is also not concerned about the form of his star teammate.

"Kitajima did not do well tonight, but he has been training very hard and will come back," he said. "I think his condition was not very good. But he is still a professional and a very good swimmer."

Japan's other gold medal on Monday came in the men's 200m backstroke, as Ryosuke Irie, the runner-up at Rome World Championships last year, faced no legitimate challenges. He clocked one minute and 55.45 seconds, followed by Chinese Zhang Fenglin (1:57.53) and Cheng Feiyi (1:58.93).

However, Japan's crown slipped in its favorite event, the men's 4x200m freestyle relay.

Since the event was introduced at the Asian Games in 1954, Japan had swept all the titles — before Guangzhou.

Led by world champion Zhang Lin, the Chinese team won in

seven minutes and 7.68 seconds. Japan took the silver in 7:10.39, while the Republic of Korea was third in 7:24.14.

It was Zhang's first Asian Games gold after finishing fourth in the men's 200m freestyle on Sunday.

"We are very glad to win the gold as we beat Japan for the first time in the event," said Zhang. "All my teammates performed very well and they encouraged me a lot. The gold medal today is a new start for me."

The Japanese team admitted it was disappointed, but vowed to fight hard in its remaining events.

"China was just better than us

today. We have to accept that reality," said Sho Uchida, the second-leg swimmer on the relay team. "The Asian Games have not ended and we have to go back to sum up what happened and see how we can improve."

In other events, China's Jiao Liuyang won her third gold medal at the Asian Games in the women's 200m butterfly and her compatriot, 15-year-old Shao Yiwen, snared gold in the women's 400m freestyle.

Gao Chang added another gold for China by winning the women's 50m backstroke, while teammate Lu Zhiwu claimed victory in the men's 50m freestyle.

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GYMNASTICS

Teng leads a China 1-2 finish

China's Teng Haibin convincingly won Asian Games gold in the men's all-round gymnastics final on Monday, outperforming teammate Lu Bo. Japan's Hisashi Mizutori took the bronze.

"This may be my last time competing at the Asian Games so I am very excited to win," said Teng. "A few mistakes occurred here and there, but today my performance was very good."



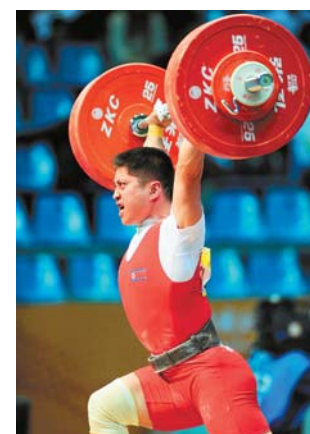
AFP

WUSHU

Malaysia wins first gold medal

Malaysia's Fong Ying Chai won her second consecutive gold in the women's Taijiquan/Taijijian all-round final, following Doha in 2006, to claim her country's first title of the Guangzhou Games.

In a close final, Chai scored a combined 19.36 to beat Japan's Ai Miyaoka and Chinese Taipei's Wen Ching-ni.



XINHUA

WEIGHTLIFTING

Kim strikes for the DPRK

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)'s Kim Kum-sok claimed the men's Asian Games -69kg title on Monday from Mortaza Rezaeian of Iran on inferior body weight, the first gold for DPRK in Guangzhou.

The two lifters had finished the competition tied on an aggregate of 324kg, but Kim got the nod due to him weighing less than the Iranian, who took silver.