



# Who will snare the first gold medal?

WOMEN CYCLISTS AND MALE SWIMMERS WILL VIE FOR HONOR OF GRABBING FIRST TITLE AT GAMES

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SHENZHEN — Somebody's going to win the first gold medal of the Universiade this morning.

Who it is and what sport it is up in the air.

The way the schedule shakes out, the first medal will likely be awarded in either the men's 10km open-water swimming or women's 120km road cycling races.

"The first gold of big events usually emerges at the morning event on the day after the opening show. This time it is likely to happen at 10:30 am," said Mai Wuqiang, spokesman for the organizing committee's competition department. "Whether in the water or on the road, it depends on the athletes' performance."

The cyclists will begin at 7:30 am in the Longgang Sports Center, while the swimmers will begin half an hour later at Seven Star Bay in eastern Shenzhen.

Elite men's swimmers usually finish the 10km course in about two hours and 30 minutes, while top female riders take about three hours.

"It's hard to say. If we take the Olympics' results as an example, they may finish at the same time. The student athletes' performances are even harder to predict. So anyone who clinches the first gold, he or she needs good luck," Mai said.

With no strong contender in either event, China sent Xue Feng and Bai Lu from the Beijing University of Technology to the open-water event — which makes its Universiade debut — while no Chinese girls will compete in cycling.

Dubbed the "Marathon of Swimming," the physically demanding men's 10km open water event is often dominated by western countries.

A total of 18 swimmers from 14 different countries and regions, including traditional powerhouses like the United States, Canada and Britain, will compete in the event, which debuted at the Olympics in 2008.

On the cycling side, 15 Asian riders from Japan, South Korea and Chinese Taipei will race against 22 athletes from Europe including Belgium, Germany and Lithuania for the gold medal.

"I don't think too much about the gold, no matter if it is the first or not. I just want to enjoy my ride here and look forward to showing my best," said Huang Ting-ying, a Chinese Taipei rider from the National University of Kaohsiung.



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

It will be a battle between the swimmers and cyclists for the first gold medal of the 2011 Universiade in Shenzhen today.