



By SUN XIAOCHEN
CHINA DAILY

SHENZHEN — Cheng Shao-chieh is having a very good summer.

First, the Chinese Taipei shuttler claimed a surprising silver medal at the world championships last month in London.

Then, she one-upped herself, claiming the singles gold yesterday at the Universiade.

Cheng, who lifted her world ranking to No 8 after the World Championships, stunned teammate Pai Hsiao-ma, 21-18, 21-15, in the 39-minute final to deliver the delegation's sixth title at the meet.

“(The London silver medal) definitely boosted my confidence, but it has already passed, it's already history,” Cheng said. “I won't play while thinking of anything from the past. I just concentrate on current games and enjoy the process.”

Cheng also won the doubles silver medal with Pai just two hours after the singles battle.

The demanding schedule may have taken its toll in the doubles final, as the Chinese Taipei pair lost to South Korea's Eom Hye Won and Chang Ye Na, 21-11, 21-14.

Cheng, who flew to Shenzhen right after returning from London, said her performance was hampered by fatigue.

“The jet lag really affected my play at the beginning of the tournament,” the 25-year-old said. “Psychologically, I am OK, but physically, I am so tired.”

“I felt sorry I couldn't give my best in the team event. But I am happy I made it up at the singles.”

After a string of disappointing finishes for the delegation, Pai said the side buckled down once the chance to win the team title was gone.

“We didn't actually adjust so much after the teams failure, although we were expected to win it,” Pai said. “We just focused on the rest, not regretting the past.”

The team did win eight medals at the meet, raising hopes the sport will increase in popularity in the region.

A BIT LESS SURPRISING THIS TIME AROUND



EDMOND TANG / CHINA DAILY

Chinese Taipei's Cheng Shao-chieh wins the gold medal in the women's singles badminton competition at the Universiade yesterday.



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Thai Avihingsanon Suppanyu wins the men's singles gold medal yesterday.

No bag of gold for Chinese on court

By SUN XIAOCHEN
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SHENZHEN — Without any gold medals in the bag, badminton powerhouse China ended a highly anticipated competition at the 26th Shenzhen Universiade on a disappointing note yesterday.

Wen Kai, China's only seed in the day's five singles finals, missed the last chance for gold after losing to Thai shuttler Avihingsanon Suppanyu, 21-18, 21-16, in the men's singles showdown in the gymnasium at the Shenzhen Institute of Information Technology.

Despite winning no titles, China's head coach was upbeat and full of praise for his 10 players, who did not know each other before coming together for the meet.

“Honestly, I am happy about our perfor-

mance here, although Wen's loss today was a pity. His opponent played a perfect match today and deserved the gold. But we are not as disappointed as people think. We came here without any specific goals for medals, so it didn't matter if we claimed a gold or not,” said coach Lin Liwen, who formed the squad based on his own roster at Beijing Jiaotong University.

Wen, who is also a national team member, shrugged off the pressure to clinch China's last possible title at the event while hailing Suppanyu as the “better player.”

“Definitely, I feel a little upset as the sport is always dominated by China and people expect gold at every meet. He prepared well and played his best today, but I didn't. It's a pity, but no harm to our confidence,” said Wen, who studies at the China University of Geosciences.

Beaten by Wen in the team event on Thursday, Suppanyu said he found the “secret” to outperform him in their second meeting.

“He is a tough long-rally player like an iron man. To defeat him, I must play more consistently. I am happy I did it,” said Suppanyu, who majors in sports science at the University of Chulalongkorn.

Suppanyu said the loud Chinese fans didn't bother him and he attributed the victory to his homeland's support.

After heading back to Thailand, the 21-year-old will enjoy a dinner party with his family in a Chinese restaurant as both of his parents are “big fans” of Chinese dishes.

Thailand finished top of the medal table with two gold medals on the men's side while China was second last on the six-team table with two silver and two bronze medals.