

YOG PROFILES

Nanjingers make sacrifices for Games



Ni Ling, a 38-year-old English teacher, oversees the daily catering, accommodation and transportation for modern pentathlon referees and officials. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY

By XU JINGXI

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As the opening day of the Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games approaches, work has grown more hectic for Ni Ling as he checks and double-checks the schedules of visiting referees and officials from the international federation for modern pentathlon to ensure they have a pleasant stay in the East China city.

It requires meticulous attention to arrange the daily catering, accommodation and transportation across different timetables for 57 referees, officials and their retinue. That heavy load mainly falls on Ni, although he has three volunteers.

The task of coordinating the modern pentathlon's referees and international federation officials at the Nanjing Olympic Sports Center is new to Ni, a 38-year-old English teacher at the Jiangsu Institute of Commerce.

Both Ni and his wife, also a teacher at the institute, gave up a relaxing summer vacation for the challenging work at the Youth Olympic Games. Preparations began in May and has taken up all of their time after class. They have been working from Monday to Sunday since the end of the school semester.

"I'm happy that my English skills can help the Youth Olympic Games," said Ni, who works at school of tourism and foreign languages. "And I want to set a good example to my students and encourage them to perse-

vere through the tough training and do well during the Games as volunteers and performers."

A total of 72 female students from Ni's school will participate in the opening performance.

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es on Aug 16. They have been rehearsing from dusk till dawn, Ni said.

"The rehearsal is tougher than a college freshman's military training. But I hope they (the female students) will feel better and encouraged when they see their teacher is working just as hard," he said.

Ni said he suffered a heat-stroke and fainted during coordination tests at the Olympic Sports Center's venues on July 25. He resumed work after resting for only one day, but was shy to talk about how he overcame his difficulties.

"Many of my colleagues are so devoted to serving the Youth Olympic Games that they have sacrificed time with their families," said Ni, who said a colleague went to work in preparation for the Games on the same day that his wife gave birth to their child at a local hospital.

"Our sense of responsibility is what has moved us to carry on and make it work. This is also what I hope my students can learn from working for the Youth Olympic Games," Ni said.

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Yu Junping is a perfect example of someone who has a strong work ethic. Yu had major surgery in November to remove a kidney tumor, but took only three months to recover before returning to work at the Games.

The 53-year-old accountant at Fangshan Training Base, the archery and shooting venue during the Games, has spent the past two years as the venue's risk manager during the Nanjing 2013 Asian Youth Games and this year's Youth Olympic Games.

To guarantee the safety of those coming to the Games, Yu and her colleagues have checked every potential safety hazard and worked out contingency plans.

They check fire extinguishers, whether there is a warning sign for a slippery floor and whether pathways for the disabled are clear. She said there are more than 300 items in the manual of safety to check off.

"Nothing is trivial when it comes to the Youth Olympic Games," she said.

Her husband also works at Fangshan Training Base and Yu said he is busier than before. Her husband often takes unending business calls when he is at home after work.

"It is common among local families in Nanjing that all family members work for the Youth Olympic Games, either as a member of the staff or as a volunteer," Yu said.

"People in Nanjing are united as one to host a fantastic Youth Olympic Games."

To do her best at her new job, Yu learned various computer software, such as PowerPoint, with the help of her young colleagues. In her spare time, she travels and makes audio recordings of her essays read to soft music. She is an active member of an online forum where people share their recordings.

"I'm proud that I still have the opportunity to work at such a grand event at my age," Yu said. "The Youth Olympic Games is a festival for young people from all over the world. I feel refreshed to work for it."

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Yu Junping, a 53-year-old accountant at Fangshan Training Base, works as a risk manager for the archery and shooting venue. PHOTO PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY