



PULLING OUT ALL THE STOPS

Dominique Du Toit of Australia is dragged down by her ponytail by an opponent from China during their rugby Sevens match at the Youth Olympics Sports Park on Sunday. Australia won the opening-round encounter 15-12. PHOTO BY WEI XIAOHAO / CHINA DAILY

Aussie claims first gold

By GAO CHANGXIN
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Australian triathlete Brittany Dutton claimed the Youth Olympics' first gold on Sunday.

A strong performance in the cycling leg of the triathlon, which pushed her 30 seconds ahead of the chase group, propelled her to gold, marking an impressive comeback from a stress fracture in her back last year.

"It's awesome, I still can't believe it," said the 16-year-old.

"On the bike, I could see that maybe I could get away so I tried it and I got away. On the run I just had to hold my lead and it worked. I have a strong cycling background, so I thought I would give it a go. I had nothing to lose," she said at the Xuanwu Lake Triathlon Venue.

"It's awesome, I still can't believe it."

BRITTANY DUTTON
after winning the Games' first gold

Dutton finished in 59 min, 59 sec, ahead of American Stephanie Jenks, who turned 17 on Sunday.

"I had confidence in myself that I could do well. It's so great. It's a great birthday present, too," Jenks said.

It was an impressive performance from Dutton to hold off run specialist Jenks, who finished 37 sec back for the silver.

Dutton went into the lead on the final corner of the second bike lap, pushing ahead of Minami Kubono of Japan.

The Australian held onto that lead for the remainder of the race, and finished the cycle stage about 30 sec ahead of the chase group of 11 riders.

Earlier, the Japanese triathlete was first out of the water in the swim leg, completing it in 10 min, 5 sec.

She nearly got tangled in the course rope as she began her exit, but still managed to get onto the bike in first place.

She was followed just a couple of seconds later by Emily Wagner of Canada, Katherine Vanesa Clemant Materano of Venezuela and Jessica Romero Tinoco of Mexico.

Hot-headed pair cool in the water

By GAO CHANGXIN
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Pan Jie and Luo Yadan, who admit they are hot-tempered, don't initially seem like the best fit as a coxless pair.

Matched up by their coach less than a year ago, specifically for the Nanjing Youth Olympics, their athletic relationship has gone through turbulent times.

"Sometimes we don't even get off the boat before we start fighting," said Luo, who is 17.

Despite their differences, the two haven't let their shortcomings as a pair affect their performance at the Games.

In the qualifying heats of the junior women's pair, Pan and Luo topped a four-boat group that included rowing powerhouses Australia and New Zealand.

The No 1 finish sent the pair into the semifinals, where they are well-positioned to realize their goal of making it to the podium.

Born and raised in Sichuan province, Luo's personality matches the reputation of the region's people, whose love of spicy foods matches their fiery temperament.

Pan, who is from Zhejiang province, is not at all like the affectionate and considerate personalities stereotypical of that region.

Luo said she is all about self-discipline and

hard work, while Pan said she takes opportunities to indulge, such as sleeping in or binge-watching American TV shows and movies.

"Luo trains very hard, even when we are not training she is thinking about it. She is kind of pulling me ahead psychologically, which I appreciate," Pan said.

The two regard their differences as a way to get to know each other better. So far, that has translated into success in the boat.

Pan and Luo won gold at the Asian Rowing Junior Championships last September and are the only Chinese rowers at the Youth Olympics.

The pair's favorite places in Nanjing are the culture pavilions in the Youth Olympic Village, which present cultures from different countries.

"We have spent most of our free time over the past three days visiting these pavilions and so far the China pavilion is the best," Luo said.

They said life as the only athletes on the Chinese rowing team can be lonely, but their social skills have helped.

"We get a lot of nods of hello walking around the village," said Pan.

"That's what the Youth Olympics is about. We do take the competition seriously, but making friends is also an integral part."



Chinese rowers Pan Jie (right) and Luo Yadan are moving into the semifinals after their Sunday race. PHOTO BY GAO CHANGXIN / CHINA DAILY