

AROUND JIANGSU

# LOCAL HEROES

Jiangsu province is home to some of the country's most dominant athletes of the modern era



## CHEN RUOLIN

At the age of 22, diver Chen Ruolin became the indisputable leader of women's professional diving. She won gold in the women's 10m platform and 10m

synchronized platform at the 2008 Summer Olympics in Beijing. She won the same events at the London 2012 Summer Olympics.

She is the first Chinese woman diver to win gold in women's platform events at the Olympics, FINA Diving World Cup and the FINA World Championships.

## GE FEI & GU JUN

One of the most successful women's doubles partnerships in the history of badminton, Ge Fei and Gu Jun are two-time Olympic gold medalists and have won two Badminton World Federation Championship gold medals.

They dominated women's doubles for more than a decade — winning more than 30 international titles — until their retirement after the 2000 Olympics. For 4 1/2 years, they went unbeaten before losing to compatriots Yang Wei and Huang Nanyan at the Japan Open



in April 2000.

A native of Nanjing, Ge joined the Chinese national team in 1993,

the same year as Gu. In 2008, Ge was inducted into the Badminton Hall of Fame.

## DING JUNHUI

The face of Chinese snooker, Ding Junhui, began playing the cue sport at the age of 9. Ding and Scotland's John Higgins are the only teenagers in the history of the sport to win three ranking titles. In 2002, Ding won the Asian Championship and the Under-21 Snooker Championship. He became the youngest winner of the IBSF World Under-21 Championship at the age of 15.

At the age of 27, Ding has racked up more than 350 century breaks, which is a score of 100 points or more within one visit at the table without missing a shot.

A key figure in Ding's success is his father, who persuaded Ding's



mother to sell their house in order for their son to pursue snooker as a career. In December 2006, he

enrolled at Shanghai Jiao Tong University to study business administration and management.

## WANG HAIBIN

The current head coach of the Chinese men's foil team, Wang Haibin made his first Olympic appearance in 1992 when he lost in the second round in individual foil and finished 10th in the team foil event. He made it to the round of 16 in the individual foil at the 1996 Olympics and won the silver medal as part of the Chinese foil team in 2000. In 2004, he won silver again in team foil.

As a coach, Wang led the Chinese men's foil team to gold at the World Fencing Championships.



## HU WEIDONG

Hu Weidong is a former Chinese basketball player. In 1985, Hu joined the Jiangsu Dragons junior team and made his debut with the national team two years later. He is a two-time MVP of the Chinese Basketball Association, and led the league in scoring three times. Hu made a halfcourt shot in the 1994 Goodwill Games, in which China collected the bronze medal, its only podium finish in a major international tournament. Considered to be China's answer to Michael Jordan, Hu was offered the chance to play in the NBA in 1998, but was injured when the Dallas Mavericks offered him a contract, thus failing to become the first Chinese to play in the NBA. He was then offered a short-



term, 10-day contract with the Orlando Magic in 2000, but was injured shortly after and was unable to take up the offer.

## WU JINGYU

Chinese taekwondo practitioner Wu Jingyu won gold at the 2008 and 2012 Summer Olympics in the -49 kg class. Experts say she is well prepared to repeat in 2016.

Wu began learning taekwondo at the age of 12, overwhelming competitors with her technique and explosive power. Her signature axe kick is her deadliest weapon.

Wu is currently continuing her college education at the Tianjin University of Technology and the Suzhou University of Science and Technology. Her hobbies include music, movies and porcelain art. The Nanjing Youth Olympic Games Organizing Committee invited Wu to



help promote the event in the hope she could pass her knowledge and experience to a new generation. She recently attended the unveiling of the mascot for the Nanjing Games.