

Archers target ROK aces

ROWERS, CYCLISTS AND FIELD HOCKEY SQUADS LOOK TO RECAPTURE GLORY

Archery

China's young archers have been given the responsibility of breaking the Republic of Korea (ROK) monopoly of the sport. Besides veteran Yang Jianping, all the Chinese archers are young and none represented the country at the Beijing Olympic Games.

The ROK swept all four archery gold medals at the 2006 Doha Asian Games, and has never failed to claim the overall title at any Asian Games. Meanwhile, China claimed only one silver (in women's team) and one bronze (women's individual) at Doha.

Cricket

Chinese women cricketers hope for a podium finish as their sport debuts at the Asian Games.

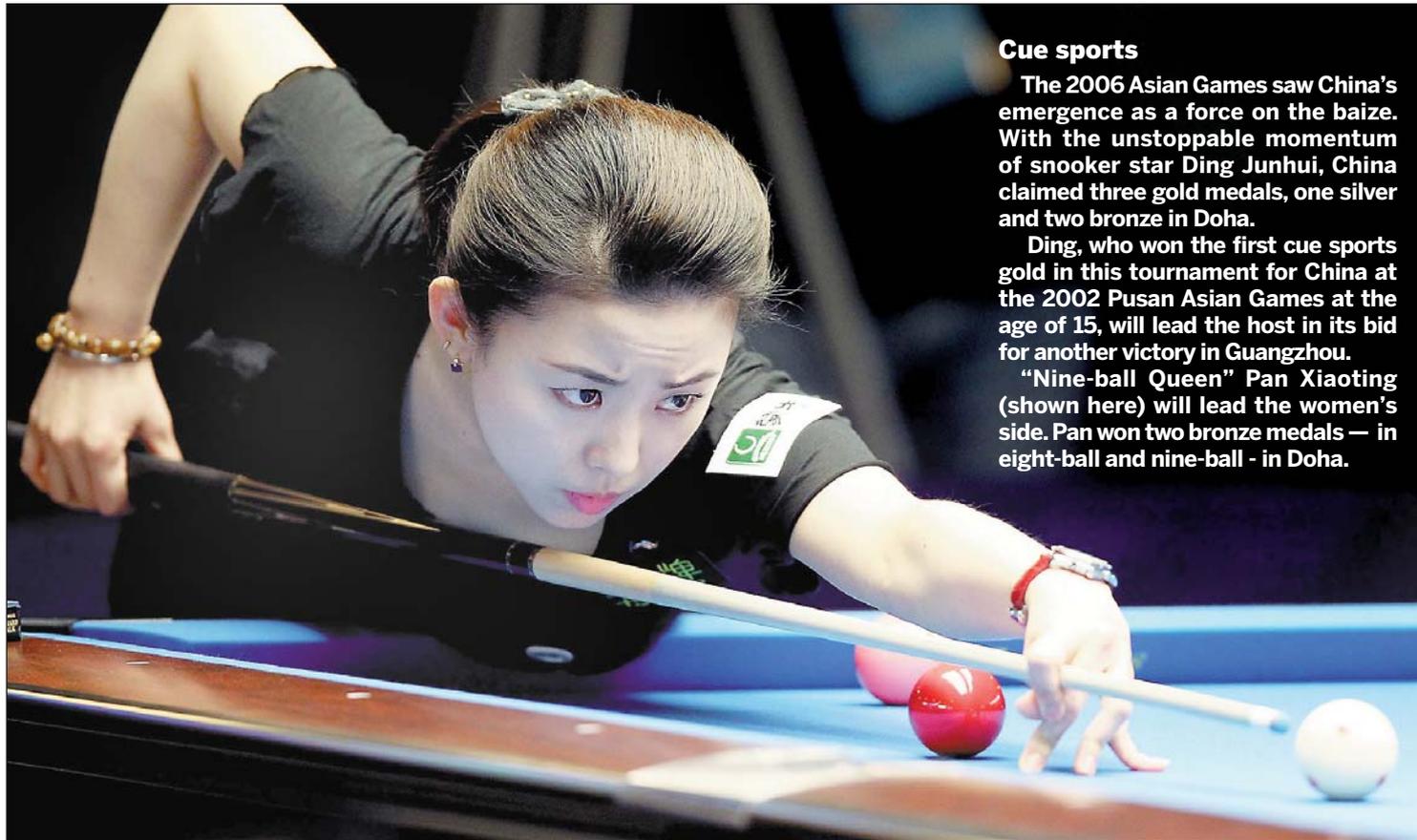
Despite a humble start and a lack of international competition experience, their Indian coach Mamatha Maben said, China's women have good medal chances in Guangzhou, proven by their fast progress over the past two years.

The team reached the semifinals of an Asian Cricket Council Twenty20 tournament last year, though it was only given official sanction three years ago.

China takes on Malaysia in its first match on Saturday, but its real challenges come from the sport heavyweights Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Cycling

Chinese cyclist Guo Shuang will start her second Asian Games' journey in Guangzhou. At the 15th Asian Games, 20-year-old Guo won gold in the sprint and 500m time trial and broke the



Cue sports

The 2006 Asian Games saw China's emergence as a force on the baize. With the unstoppable momentum of snooker star Ding Junhui, China claimed three gold medals, one silver and two bronze in Doha.

Ding, who won the first cue sports gold in this tournament for China at the 2002 Pusan Asian Games at the age of 15, will lead the host in its bid for another victory in Guangzhou.

"Nine-ball Queen" Pan Xiaoting (shown here) will lead the women's side. Pan won two bronze medals — in eight-ball and nine-ball — in Doha.

events' Asian Games record.

The Chinese cycling team topped the medal table with six gold medals in Doha, including four at the velodrome. The track team hopes to claim even more medals this time around and has been training for quite some time in Guangzhou. On the road, the women's team has already set its sights on gold, and the men's team will also be in the race for medals.

Chess

Xiangqi (Chinese chess) and *weiqi* will make their Asian Games debuts in Guangzhou, which will present numerous opportunities for the host country to win its first Asian Games chess medal on home boards.

China's chess players captured two silver and one bronze medal in Doha. The host's target is two gold medals in chess, one in *weiqi* and two in *xiangqi*.

Fencing

"China should win at least six gold medals at the Guangzhou Asian Games," said former captain of the national foil team Ao Jie, who currently works for the International Fencing Federation.

China grabbed 17 medals,

including seven gold, at the 15th Asian Games and hopes for even more in Guangzhou; though traditional rivals the ROK and Japan will continue their efforts to break the host's monopoly.

China dominated the men's and women's sabre in 2006 Doha Game, and Olympic champion Zhong Man will make his Asian Game debut with the desire to achieve another career high.

Hockey

China's hockey teams will battle for London Olympic quali-



fication in Guangzhou, and that means they have to march into the finals.

Kim Sang-ryul, who led the Chinese men's team to a second-place finish at the 15th Asian Games, will work with fresh lineup of women in Guangzhou. The team finished eighth at the Hockey World Cup in September and will find a tough foe in the Doha Asian Games runner-up, the ROK.

The men's team has admitted it will be hard for it to repeat the glory of four years ago, and its biggest challenges will come from India, ROK, Pakistan and Malaysia.

Rowing

With the rise of several central Asian countries, Chinese rowers face a tough task at the 16th Asian Games. According to the national team's deputy manager, two-time Olympic gold medalist Meng Guanliang, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan have already reached the world top three in rankings.

China won six gold medals at the Doha Asian Games, staking a four-gold lead over runner-up Uzbekistan. The team hopes to win at least five gold medals in Guangzhou.

Gymnastics

The Japanese men's team is the only threat to the Chinese gymnasts in Guangzhou. Winning four gold medals, four silver and one bronze at the World Championships last month, China will send the same team to Guangzhou.

The men's team runner-up at the Worlds, Japan will try its best to break China's domination. The Chinese women's team will face no such threat. At the Doha Asian Games, China won 11 gold medals.

