



YANG SHIZHONG / CHINA DAILY

Tao Li of Singapore celebrates her win in the women's 50m butterfly swimming event at the 16th Asian Games in Guangzhou on Thursday.

Tao stakes claim to 50m crown

SINGAPOREAN STAR CLAIMS NO ONE IN ASIA CAN TOUCH HER AFTER DEFENDING TITLE

By LEI LEI
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — Singapore's Tao Li defended her title in the 50m butterfly on Thursday and now has her sights set on a podium finish at the 2012 London Olympics.

"With this result, I can say I have no opponent in the 50m butterfly in Asia," said the China-born Singaporean. "I hope I continue to do well at the World Championships in Shanghai next year and then stand on the podium at the 2012 London Olympic Games."

Tao led all the way on Thursday in a time of 26.10 seconds, relegating favorite and Olympic silver medalist Jiao Liuyang of China to fourth. Yuka Kato of Japan won the silver in 26.27, followed by China's Lu Ying in 26.29.

Butterfly star Jiao was described by local media as being without an opponent in the event at these games, and that only served to motivate Tao.

Before the start of the race, she put two fingers to her eyes, which meant that no one should look down on her.

"The reports on Jiao motivated me a lot," said 20-year-old Tao, who is studying sports administration at a university in Auckland, New Zealand.

Moving to Singapore from China in 2002, Tao received a Singapore citizenship in 2005.

In December 2006, she claimed the gold medal in the 50m butterfly at the Doha Asian Games, beating China's multi-gold winner Xu Yanwei and breaking her own national record in the process.

She became Singapore's most successful medal-winning athlete at the 2007 Southeast Asian Games in Thailand, winning four gold.

Earlier in the year, she also became the first Singaporean female swimmer to reach a FINA World Championships final, finishing seventh in the 50m butterfly.

Tao made her Olympic debut at the 2008 Games in Beijing.

She qualified for the 100m butterfly final, ranking fourth after the semifinals with a time of 57.54 seconds and setting two Asian records in the process. She also became the first Singaporean swimmer to make an Olympic final. She finished fifth in 57.99.

"After the 2008 Olympic Games, I haven't performed well for a long time. To prepare for the Asian Games, I gave up on the Commonwealth Games and focused on getting good results here," said Tao.

"It was not easy for me to gain this result as I went to study after the 2008 Olympics and just picked up training again six months ago.

"I never could say I had no serious rivals in Asia before, but now I think my results can do the talking. I don't think that is an aggressive statement."

GOLD MEDALISTS >> OTHER OUTSTANDING ATHLETES



AFP

TAEKWONDO

Jordan wins taekwondo gold

Gold medalist Nabil Hassan of Jordan poses on the podium at the end of the men's -80 kg taekwondo final at the Guangdong Stadium in Guangzhou on Thursday. Hassan defeated Nesar Ahmad Bahawi of Afghanistan 4:3.

The bronze medals went to China's Zhao Lin and Iran's Farzad Abdollahi.



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SWIMMING

Super Sun set Asian mark

China's Sun Yang narrowly missed out on Grant Hackett's 1,500m freestyle world record on Thursday, denying ROK's Park Tae-hwan a fourth gold at the Asian Games.

Sun's time of 14 minutes 35.43 seconds was less than a second slower than Hackett's time of 14:34.56, but he still obliterated the Asian record by more than 10 seconds.



AFP

CYCLING

HK's Chan pedals to gold

Hong Kong's Chan Chun Hing on Thursday won the men's cross-country cycling gold at the Asian Games, with Kohei Yamamoto of Japan earning silver and China's Duan Zhiqiang setting for bronze.

Chan finished in two hours 11 minutes 33.91 seconds, with Yamamoto 15 seconds behind and Duan 2 minutes 32.68 seconds off the winner.