

15th NATIONAL GAMES

A star's farewell

Chinese star sprinter Su Bingtian of team Guangdong bids farewell to spectators as he ended his professional career after the men's 4x100m relay final at the 15th National Games in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Thursday. In his final race, Su finished fourth with his teammates to conclude his exemplary 21-year career. ZHOU WEI / FOR CHINA DAILY



Wushu needs more events in GBA, coaches in Macao say

Shared training, standardized cooperation can elevate sport

By STACY SHI and LU WANQING in Hong Kong

As wushu's global prestige reaches new heights — confirmed by its debut in the 2026 Summer Youth Olympic Games and a spotlight from International Olympic Committee officials at the 15th National Games — Macao's wushu leaders are calling for intensified and standardized cooperation within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. They argue that shared training, standardized coaching, and more regional competitions are the crucial next steps to harness this momentum, elevate the martial arts-based sport to new levels, and nurture new champions. The three-day wushu set routine event at the 15th National Games — the first national sports meeting co-hosted by Hong Kong, Macao and Guangdong province — drew attention from sports heavyweights including IOC Honorary President Thomas Bach and President Kirsty Coventry. They attended wushu competitions at the Guangzhou Nansha Gymnasium, praising Chinese sports development and expressing their excitement at bringing the sport to the 2026 YOG in Dakar, Senegal. Also among the spectators was Li Yi, who won Macao a gold medal in the women's Changquan event at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou, Zhejiang province. Every time Macao's junior players faced strong opponents, Li watched the rivalry with particular admiration. “These young competitors are



Macao athlete Lei Cheok-ieong competes in the wushu set routine event during the 15th National Games in Guangzhou, Guangdong province, on Nov 7. PARKER ZHENG / CHINA DAILY

remarkably brave,” she observed. “Making the finals means ranking among the nation's top twelve — that brings immense pressure, yet they truly rose to the occasion.” Selected for wushu training at the age of 8, Li emphasized that her journey from novice to champion was fueled by perseverance. Now a coach, she focuses on building strong fundamentals while prioritizing character development. “There will be only one champion,” Li noted. “What matters more is shaping resilient and responsible individuals through wushu.” Switching to a coaching career two years ago, Li said she has observed positive momentum in regional exchanges for this sport, including training sessions with teams from other regions such as Guangdong province and Malaysia. Lao Chon-in — a former world champion and now the head coach

of Macao's wushu team — is also a stout promoter and practitioner of cross-regional exchanges. Regular interactions with fellow athletes and coaches from other wushu powerhouses are a vital catalyst for raising Macao's athletic caliber and “hugely beneficial” in ensuring the team moves with the most advanced training approaches, Lao said. He championed a “veteran-led-newcomer” training model, through which local wushu schools can single out 10 to 20 trainees annually from a pool of over 250 candidates to join the city's representative team, thus forming a stable career ladder from rookies to elites. Li, too, suggested more cross-regional competitions to train green recruits. “Events like the National Games will serve as ideal platforms for joint training camps and performances.

Athletes can spend extended time together, experiencing each other's training environments firsthand and fostering meaningful exchanges.” She also advocated for better integration of wushu with Macao's positioning as a world center of tourism and leisure, suggesting curated tours that combine competitions with cultural site visits to offer immersive experiences. Lao said long-term career planning and logistical support for the sustainment of athletes' skills remain persistent challenges for Macao's wushu development. Some of the most promising athletes have a tendency to leave the sport in their mid-20s to start families or pursue studies, causing a recurring talent drain, said Lao, likening the situation to “a plate of chicken but no soy sauce”. Fundamental support is in place, but critical incentives are still missing to retain the city's best talent, he said. The head coach also urged stepping up medical and nutritional support to athletes, and above all, offering a dual-track career development pathway that helps young athletes balance training with academic needs, which is crucial for a smoother transition to a post-athletic career and long-term success. Li encourages young athletes to enjoy wushu. “Though it was tough, I gained a lot. In the end, it all boils down to two words: extremely joyful.” Li said she is dedicated to passing on this joy and resilience to junior athletes, hoping one day to see students she coaches inherit Macao's wushu traditions and shine on the stage she once graced.

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Cities in Guangdong vow to boost sports legacy

By ZHENG CAIXIONG in Guangzhou zhengcaixiong@chinadaily.com.cn

Riding the momentum of the 15th National Games, various cities in Guangdong province are vigorously developing their own distinctive sports events, playing a part in promoting the development of the country's sports culture. Senior city officials say their residents' enthusiasm for sports will remain intact long after the National Games flame is extinguished. The games that opened on Nov 9 ended after a closing ceremony in the Shenzhen special economic zone on Friday. The country's largest comprehensive sports event was jointly hosted by various cities in Guangdong and the Hong Kong and Macao special administrative regions for the first time in its history. “Half of the country's volleyball players come from Taishan city,” said late Chinese premier Zhou Enlai in 1972. “It is an affirmation of Jiangmen's volleyball excellence. More than that, it is the highest praise for the sportsmanship of the city,” said Lin Jiansheng, vice-mayor of Jiangmen city, which administers the county-level Taishan city. Lin promised his city would continue to promote the sport's development in the city even after the National Games. “Volleyball is not merely an exclusive domain for professional athletes, but a cherished pastime embraced by the entire community in Jiangmen,” he said. Taishan, with a resident population of about 900,000, is home to an impressive 3,300 amateur volleyball teams. Nearly 350,000 residents, or about 38 percent of the population, regularly participate in volleyball activities. From farmlands to professional courts, people across all professions and age groups engage in the sport, creating a nationwide fervor where “every village boasts a volleyball court and fields its own volleyball team”.

According to incomplete statistics, Jiangmen has so far sent 542 elite athletes to provincial and municipal teams across China and nurtured 62 national-level masters of sports. At the recent National Games, 22 athletes from Taishan competed in the volleyball events. Wu Guoxiong, vice-mayor of Zhanjiang, said the city would continue to make great efforts to build on its “home of diving” legacy, inspiring more people to appreciate and love the sport and allowing the reputation of “diving town” to go global in the months to come. As one of China's pioneering cities in competitive diving, Zhanjiang has established a comprehensive training system that spans both urban and rural areas and covers all school age levels, said Wu. “The system not only preserves scientifically grounded training methodologies but also excels at identifying promising talent and providing individualized coaching,” he said. By forming a complete “selection-cultivation-transition” pipeline, the city ensures a continuous emergence of new generations of diving talent, said Wu. Located in the western coastal area of Guangdong, Zhanjiang is home to Olympic gold medalists Quan Hongchan, He Chong and Lao Lishi. Chen Zhiwei, a member of the standing committee of the Dongguan committee of the Communist Party of China, said organizing the basketball event was a significant opportunity for Dongguan to enhance its reputation as the “national basketball city”. Chen pledged that Dongguan would continue to promote basketball after the National Games, contributing to the sport's development in the country, besides sending more athletes to the national teams. Guangdong men's basketball team, mainly consisting of athletes from Guangdong Hongyuan Southern Tigers, won the championship with a perfect record in the games. Guangdong Hongyuan, which Chinese basketball icon Yi Jianlian once played for, is a holder of 11 CBA titles. “From the citywide phenomenon of “Village BA” and “Factory BA” to the dynamic street basketball culture, Dongguan has become a key case study for observing the development of basketball in China,” said Chen, who is also director of the united front work department in the city. “Every village has a basketball court, every town has a basketball arena: that is now the most vivid portrait of the city,” he added. Dongguan was named the national basketball city by the General Administration of Sport in 2004. Yan Hongyu, vice-mayor of Zhaoqing, said his city government would vigorously develop judo, promoting its dual nature — both soft and strong — to shape the city's unique sports character. “Relevant departments will systematically promote the introduction of judo programs in primary and secondary schools across the city, and construct an integrated judo talent training system with the mechanism of ‘popularization, selection, and transportation’.” “Judo enjoys widespread popularity among teenagers and young adults in Zhaoqing, which has two-time Olympic gold medalist Xian Dongmei,” said Yan, adding that the city has built 18 schools with a judo-focused curriculum, while 62 schools have incorporated standardized judo exercises into their programs, achieving the goal of “ensuring judo lessons in every classroom and basic judo skills for every student”.

HK powers the nation's equestrian development

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A team of seasoned Hong Kong veterinary surgeons was standing by at the Shenzhen Guangming International Equestrian Center — the hosting venue of the 15th National Games' equestrian competitions — when riders and horses from across the nation were vying for glory from Nov 10 to 19. The surgeons, who were based at an on-site equine hospital — the first in the event's history — were dispatched from the Hong Kong Jockey Club. Apart from providing standard clinical care, the full-fledged hospital also enabled them to perform surgery, with a fully equipped operating theater and a blood testing laboratory. As the only sporting event to involve animals at the nation's top level games, the establishment of such a hospital marks a living embodiment of Hong Kong's contribution to the National Games and its equestrian development. The hospital was a joint effort between the HKJC and the games' organizing committee. The club provided guidance on its design, lending professional equip-

ment free of cost, while also working with the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong authorities to facilitate the procurement and import of veterinary drugs and equipment. Home to a world-class horse racing operator, the city has accumulated much experiences and expertise in equestrian development. Apart from providing the vets and support, the club sent a team of experts from Hong Kong to help ensure the smooth operation of the racecourse for this year's games, co-hosted by Hong Kong and its neighbors Guangdong and Macao. Ronald Chan Ngok-pang, head of the club's mainland affairs, said the cross-jurisdictional endeavor posed unique operational challenges. At the Greater Bay Area Conference, a high-profile gathering co-hosted by China Daily in October, Chan said that these challenges prompted the club and other stakeholders to develop more cross-border innovations. These hurdles could come in different forms. For Hong Kong vets to work on the mainland would need innovative tryouts. An ad hoc mechanism was therefore introduced to allow veterinarians to work and prescribe at the equestrian center, with

special approval granted for exporting medications from Hong Kong. Vet service was just one of the ways the club backed the games. As it marked Hong Kong's debut in co-hosting the event, the club, which is deeply rooted in the city, demonstrated a strong sense of responsibility. It backed the games with over HK\$500 million in funding and had its largest-ever squad of 11 horse-and-rider pairs competing across all categories. Moreover, leveraging its expertise in equestrian sports and extensive experience in organizing competitions, the club offered comprehensive support encompassing horse welfare, venue design, anti-doping protocols, stable management, event services, and more. Long-term contributions Long before the recent games, the club had been a significant contributor to the nation's equestrian sector with pioneering initiatives. For the Beijing 2008 Summer Olympics, the club allocated HK\$1.2 billion to venue construction and oversaw the process, while providing round-the-clock veterinary services. At the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, it donated 30 million

yuan and provided technical support, particularly in transport logistics and veterinary services. Such support, at the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, became more comprehensive, adding biosecurity, stable management, farriery services, venue operations, and international stakeholder engagement. Notably, for the Guangzhou Asian Games, the club helped establish the mainland's first internationally recognized equine disease-free zone. This zone spanned from Hong Kong to Guangzhou's Conghua area — the Asian Games' equestrian venue designed and built by the club. The venue was later transformed into the Conghua Racecourse with the club's support and has since been operating as its training center. Beyond event support, the club keeps expanding its footprint on the mainland. The club recently announced that it had acquired the land for an equine transfer center, which will streamline horse importation into the mainland and potentially help foster China's horse breeding industry. Racing into the future Also at the GBA Conference, Chan announced a significant update: the



Hong Kong athlete Isaac Wong in the equestrian dressage event at the 15th National Games in Shenzhen, Guangdong province, on Nov 10. PARKER ZHENG / CHINA DAILY

Conghua Racecourse will host its inaugural regular race meeting starting from 2026, marking the commencement of world-class racing on the mainland. The specific date was later confirmed by the club as Oct 31. The club said the timing will allow it to align its planning with China's new five-year national equine industry plan, which is expected to be released in March 2026. This milestone, Chan said, will further elevate GBA as “a hub of world-class sporting events” and bolster the region's sports entertain-

ment and tourism portfolio. To further contribute to national equestrian development, Chan believes that international resources and networks, apart from professional expertise, are also Hong Kong and the club's unique strengths, noting that “the best international experts in our field are all willing to come work for the club”. “Marrying Hong Kong's international connectivity with the mainland's resources and experience, we are going to open doors to boundless opportunities,” Chan said.