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China secures two air rifle gold medals on ISSF World Cup Bangkok first competition day

Yang Haoran and Yi Siling won the 10m Air Rifle Men and Women finals, during the first competition day of the 2016 ISSF World Cup in Bangkok, Thailand, where 331 athletes from 49 countries are competing in the 10 Rifle and Pistol Olympic shooting events from the 1st through the 9th of March.

The Chinese team celebrated two 10m Air Rifle Gold medals on the first competition day of the 2016 ISSF Rifle and Pistol World Cup in Bangkok, today.

Six months after winning the 2015 ISSF World Cup Final, China's 20-year old phenomenon Yang Haoran is still in the lead. Indeed, the young shooter won today's 10m Air Rifle Men match, finishing in first place with 2.2 points of advantage on his teammate Cao Yifei. Yang also set a new Junior Final World Record of 209.8 points, a score that shattered the 209.6 points record he had set at the 2014 Asian Games in Incheon.

The Chinese shooter, ranked first in the world in this event, is the reigning World Champion, as well as the World Cup titleholder, and shoots consistently on the road leading to Rio 2016. His aim is set: Yang wants to secure an Olympic title at his first participation, after winning the 2014 Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing with ease.

"My goal for the 2016 world cup season is to improve my skills and to become stronger and stronger." Yang said, commenting the match after the final. "Today I have been a bit lucky, but at the same time it's the hard work that pays off: I have been training a lot."

To finish atop of today's podium, Yang beat his experienced teammate Cao Yifei, 27, second with 207.6 points, and today's youngest finalist, Hungary's Istvan Peni, the 2014 Youth Olympic Games bronze medallist. The 19-year old shooter sealed the third place with 186.9 points.

Peni upset his teammate Peter Sidi, 37, who took the fourth place with 164.5 points, and the 2004 Olympic Champion Zhu Qinan of the People's Republic of China, 31, who took the fifth place with 143.3 points. London 2012 Olympic air rifle silver medallist Niccolò Campriani of Italy, 28, was the first to be eliminated at the beginning of today's final, placing in 8th with a final score of 79.9 points. Alexander Schmirgl of Austria, 26, left the medal match right after him, taking the 7th place with 101.4 points after a shoot-off against Ukraine's 22-year old Serhiy Kulish (which he lost 8.7 to 10.1

points). Kulish felt the pressure of the tiebreaker, and was eliminated two shots later, taking the sixth place with 122.6 points after the 12th shot.

Two hours later, it was another Chinese shooter who secured the brightest medal at the 10m Air Rifle Women final. The reigning Olympic Champion Yi Siling, 26 - the current world record holder - finished atop of the podium with an unbeatable score of 207.7 points.

Today's turned out to be Yi's seventh world cup gold medal since she started competing internationally, in 2009. Ranked second in the world, she is looking forward to Rio, where she hopes to defend her Olympic title.

"Rio 2016 is in my sights," she said after today's final. "I really have no secrets: I am training hard, and I am really self confident, both in the sport and in my private life. That's why I think I can make it: I will work through the season to improve my chances of victory."

Austria's 23-year old Olivia Hofmann, ranked 21st in the world, secured the Silver with 205.4 points, claiming her first world cup medal at her second world cup final match participation.

Duelling for a spot on the podium, Hofmann beat Singapore's Olympian Ser Xiang Wei Jasmine, 25, who took the Bronze with a final score of 184.6 points as she fired a disappointing 9.1 on her last shot.

India's finalist Pooja Ghatkar, 27, at her first experience in a world cup medal match, finished in fourth place with 164.0 points, just 0.8 points far from the podium. Following the Indian shooter, Ho Xiu Yi, the 16-year old first-time participant from Singapore, dropped out of the final with 143.5 points, taking the 5th place. Stine Nielsen of Denmark (25), Ivana Andjusic Maksimovic of Serbia (25) and Sarah Scherer of USA (25), placed in 6th, 7th and 8th, with 122.0, 100.0 and 79.6 points, respectively

The 2016 ISSF World Cup in Bangkok (THA) - which sees 331 athletes from 49 countries competing in the 10 Rifle and Pistol Olympic events from the 1st through the 9th of March - will continue tomorrow (March 4) with the 50m Pistol Men and the 25m Pistol Women finals, to be conducted at 11:30 AM and 1:30 PM (UTC+7), respectively.

Notes for the editors:

The International Shooting Sport Federation is the governing body of the Olympic Shooting events, and it has over 160 affiliated National Federations worldwide. Shooting is an Olympic sport since the very first edition of the modern Olympic Games, Athens 1896. Find out more about the International Shooting Sport Federation at www.issf-sports.org.

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