



Spectacles still flying in Shenzhen

THE CHINESE 100M GOLD WINNER FAMOUS FOR WEARING GLASSES FINDS NEW FOCUS WITH TV SHOW

By LU YUN
CHINA DAILY

BEIJING — “Flying spectacles” is back.

This time, he has a camera in hand.

Hu Kai, who became the first Chinese winner of the men's 100m in an international tournament when he won gold at the 2005 Izmir Universiade in Turkey, retired from the sport recently.

Retirement wasn't nearly powerful enough to keep him away from the Universiade.

This time, he's shooting a TV program called *Hu Kai's view of Universiade* for China's national television station, CCTV.

His ever-present glasses still in tow, Kai gives viewers a chance to explore the places he remembers fondly, including the Athletes' Village and the 100m track in the main stadium.

“I will show my audience a more detailed Universiade from an athlete's point of view,” Hu said.

The program is broadcast nationally every other day during the Games.

So, which job is more difficult: Athlete or journalist?

“Well, I think it will be more troublesome for me. You have to prepare many questions,” he said with a grin. “I'm less experienced in this field.”

Hu captured the country's imagination in Izmir when he dashed across the finish line in 10.30 seconds.

He became a national idol, and was praised as the rare product of college sports who could reach the level of the Chinese athletes who had established themselves through the traditional state-supported system.

Hu said he enjoys his “dual identity” as a good student and a good runner. He is pursuing a doctorate in marketing management at China's prestigious Tsinghua University.

“Professional athletes would not have the opportunity to receive higher education while living in the vibrant campus,” he said. “Ordinary university students would not have the chance to travel abroad to compete. As an athlete and a student, I can take advantage of both.”

Hu could be always spotted on the track thanks to his signature



VALERY HACHE / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

China's Hu Kai acknowledges the crowd after competing in a men's second round 100m heat at the “Bird's Nest” National Stadium at the Beijing Olympic Games on Aug 15, 2008.

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HU KAI
FORMER CHINESE
SPRINTER

eyeglasses.

“I got used to wear glasses when training. When I was young, I was told by doctors that I could not wear contacts and I began to wear glasses,” Hu said.

“Wearing spectacles does not affect me.”

On Aug 15, 2008, Chinese spectators were thrilled to watch “flying spectacles” dash into the second round of the 100m race at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, clocking 10.39 seconds.

Although he failed to advance to the semifinals, Hu became the first Chinese man to get past the first round of the 100m in the Olympics.

“I've tried my best. At least I'm the fastest graduate student in China,” Hu said.

After the Olympics, he faced a hard choice: sports or school.

“Though many people think a good education would help my understanding in training, I still tell myself that if you want to make it to the mountain top, you have to be focused on one thing. I have to

give up one of them if I wanted to advance in either,” Hu said.

Although reluctant to say goodbye to track, Hu chose academics.

“Gradually, people would not see me running on the track, but sport will always be my love,” he said. “I will be more than happy to contribute my own effort to it.”

The 29-year-old was a torchbearer in Shenzhen. He was thrilled when he ran into Beijing's Peking University campus holding the torch high to conclude the relay.

“This may be the perfect ending of my sports career. I jumped to fame because of the Universiade. Now I'm retiring. It feels good to know I can leave my footprints here,” Hu said.

“Although I have left the track, I will still pay close attention to the performance of Chinese athletes in the Universiade.”

FACTBOX

Birthday: Aug 4, 1982 (age 29)

Birthplace: Qingdao, Shandong province, China

Height: 1.77m

Personal best

100m: 10.24s in May 2008 in Beijing,

200m: 20.57s in April 2006 in Chongqing

Major Achievements

2004 100m&200m champion, National Athletic Grand Prix

2005 100m champion, National Athletic Championship

2005 100m champion, 23rd World University Games

2005 100m champion, East Asia Games

2008 100m champion, Osaka Athletics Grand Prix