

# Young champs more confident, open-minded than predecessors

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**T**hirteen-year-old Cui Chenxi became China's youngest gold medalist at the Asian Games in Hangzhou when she won the women's street skateboarding event on Wednesday.

Two days ago, 15-year-old Chen Ye won the men's gold medal in the Hangzhou Asian Games skateboarding park finals, grabbing Chinese national team's first skateboarding gold at a large-scale global competition.

"I always wanted to win gold at the Asian Games," Cui said after her victory.

"I completed 90 percent of what I'd planned. That trick I missed was really difficult. But my coaches respect my choice, so it's OK if I fail doing the tricks I want to do."

Apart from their young age, this new generation of future Chinese sports stars, with a broader vision, appear to be more confident and open-minded when facing cameras and media compared to their predecessors.

Senior Chinese sports reporters still recall China's star diver



Winner Cui Chenxi (center) poses on the podium with compatriot and runner-up Zeng Wenhui (left) and third-placed Ito Miyu of Japan. — Ti Gong

Fu Mingxia creating history by winning the platform-diving world championship in 1991 at the age of 12, becoming the youngest diving champion of all time.

She then earned a gold at the 1992 Barcelona Olympic Games in Spain when she was just 13 years and 345 days old — the youngest Olympic champion

at the time.

Fu captured her fourth gold medal at the 2000 Sydney Olympics in Australia, joining Americans Pat McCormick and Greg Louganis as the world's only quadruple Olympic diving champions.

But that young Fu was shy and cautious in front of the world's media. Shaking her head and

saying "I don't know" were her most common reactions when answering questions during the Goodwill Games — her international diving debut — which was held in Seattle in 1990.

Some of those questions were quite basic like "Do you miss your parents," or "Do you feel tired in training." Fu's reactions left some foreign media confused.

Her cautious demeanor could be the result of instructions from her coaching team, as their aim was to "protect" Fu, and didn't want the teenager to make any mistake when facing the world.

A few years later, after garnering more international experience, Fu gradually found it easier to do interviews.

For foreign media, Fu in a way represented the image of China's reform and opening up. Without restraints, she began to show her own personality.

A few decades have passed, China's young athletes now appear to be much more relaxed

and straightforward when taking questions and facing the world. This is even more obvious in a young and trendy sport like skateboarding.

After winning her gold medal in Hangzhou, Cui ran all the way through the mixed interview area without stopping, much to the shock of waiting reporters.

The little girl shouted while running, "I have to go to the bathroom!" sparking a round of good-natured laughter.

Cui explained that she started roller-skating at a very young age of 3, and picked up skateboarding only three years ago. "When I initially started skateboarding, I just felt it was quite fun. It was later that I realized you can suffer a lot of injuries in the sport. But that is actually the spirit of skateboarding."

Cui has already set her sights on next year's Paris Olympics. "First I will concentrate on getting there, then I can make a big attack," she said.



Fu Mingxia won two gold medals at the Atlanta Olympic Games in 1996. — IC



15-year-old Chen Ye competes during the men's skateboarding park final at the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou on Monday. — CFP