



A view of the closing ceremony of the 19th Asian Games in Hangzhou on October 8. — Hu Jun

“I still had some mistakes during the competition and I found that I could be more confident about myself,” Pan said. “In fact, after the Olympics, I had a period of downtime last year, but now I’m getting better. I know that I still have much space for improvement but I believe that hardworking will pay off eventually.”

Breakdancing was another pleasant surprise for the Chinese delegation. Liu Qingyi, 17, claimed women’s breakdancing gold medal at the games. Before that, she had won a silver in the 2022 WDSF World Breaking Championships earlier.

Both climbing and breakdancing are newly rising sports in China – as well as new events in the Olympic Games. However, both items are building up a larger base in the country.

China now has much more climbing and breakdancing athletes than before the Tokyo Olympic Games – there are nearly 2,000 registered climbers and more than 12,000 breakdancers. Athletes attend more international events than ever and various competitions are held domestically as well.

Meanwhile, more amateurs are joining such new sports as well. Take climbing for example, every year more than 1 million people join the sports

– and more than 1,100 venues are available for them around the country.

“I believe climbing is the most direct reflection of your muscle power,” said James Wang, a climbing fan in Shanghai for more than five years. “You have to have strong core strength, arm and leg strength – and a quick mind, too, because you have to select a route quickly and accurately.”

Breakdancing has also cultivated a large group of participants and supporters.

“It’s hard to popularize breakdancing from a competition perspective because it just looks like hip-hop,” said Liu Qingyi after her medal. “But if we managed to convey the charm of breakdancing to the spectators then it’s good enough.”

Shang Xiaoyu, leader of the Chinese national breakdancing team, said that for the past five years, he felt that they had a “bigger stage and bigger goals.” Although she did not claim any medals in Hangzhou, the 23-year-old dancer from Shanghai has gained a ticket to Paris Olympic Qualifying Match.

“When I was 18, I was thinking it’d be a miracle if I could stand on the stage of the Olympic Games,” he said. “And now the miracle may become real and I’ll be fully prepared for it.”

Accessories of athletes sell like hot cakes

Lu Feiran

WHILE athletes tried their best in the arenas of the 19th Asian Games, which ended in Hangzhou on October 8, spectators’ attention might drift away to something else: the clothes they are wearing on the podium, a pin on a ponytail or a plush toy on a backpack.

“Asian Games stars-style” products have gone viral on the Internet, creating huge commercial opportunities outside the games themselves.

One of the most popular products is the podium uniforms worn by the China team. Designed by Hong Kong art director and designer Timmy Yip and the China Academy of Art, the white-and-red uniform features traditional Chinese-style knot buttons and subtle cloud patterns on the collars.

The uniform, which costs 1,999 yuan (US\$278) a set, is available only at the Anta Guanjun Store in Hangzhou, which stocks 10 sets per day. The store said that nearly 30 sets had been sold, some to foreign customers.

“The uniform looks magnificent,” said a Xiaohongshu



The uniforms Chinese athletes wear on the podium have become commercially popular. — Xinhua

user who goes by the screen name Xiaonan. “It feels that if you are not sporty enough, you don’t deserve the uniform.”

Meanwhile, accessories on athletes are more accessible, in terms of both prices and availability.

The hair ornaments swimmer Zhang Yufei wore on the podium are another example. The winner of six Hangzhou Asian Games gold medals is undoubtedly one of brightest stars at this year’s Asiad, and hair decorations she wore have been selling like hot cakes.

Adorned by two mascots of the Games, Chenchen and Congcong, the hair pins are available at most souvenir stores, but after Zhang became their “model,” they sold out quickly.

Besides, a panda plush toy belonging to triple gold medalist shooter Huang Yuting also drew much attention. The 17-year-old attached the bear to her air rifle stand, and its presence impressed viewers almost as much as her shots during the competition.

Netizens have been asking where she got the plush toy and where they could buy it, and Huang explained that it was a gift she received earlier and she hoped it would bring her good luck so she always took it with her to competitions.

“The change of the broadcasts gives spectators more chances to see such products athletes take with them, and could create business opportunities,” said Li Hong, founder of Kayford Branding, a sports licensing business.

“The Internet, social media and short videos allow such products to be promoted organically and quickly, and this is probably the direction where sports businesses will head.”



“The cutest animal hugs the fiercest shooter,” read one comment by a netizen on the plush toy that accompanied triple gold winner Huang Yuting to the Asian Games. — IC