



SAEED KHAN / AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Nicol David of Malaysia leans to pick up a drop shot by Annie Au Wing Chi of Hong Kong during the women's squash individual final at the 16th Asian Games in Guangzhou on Sunday. Nicol defeated Au by 3-1.

Double happiness for Malaysia

DAVID, ISKANDAR IN TOTAL CONTROL EN ROUTE TO GOLD MEDALS

By YU YILEI
CHINA DAILY

GUANGZHOU — World No 1 Nicol Ann David dismissed Hong Kong's Annie Au Wing Chi 3-1 to clinch the women's squash singles title in Guangzhou on Sunday and keep her career in the sport's stratosphere, while fellow Malaysian Mohamad Azlan Iskandar followed suit in the men's competition.

David said she felt like she was on another planet after winning the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi in October, and her feet have barely touched the ground since.

"I'm still hanging around (up there) somewhere," said the five-time world champion after cruising to her second Asiad title.

"This gold medal means a lot to me, because I'm fighting for my country and I've got the whole of Malaysia behind me."

Meeting world No 17 Au in the title game seemed predestined for David, who has been matched with a Hong Kong player in all four of her Asiad finals over the last 12 years.

The first three were against Rebecca Chiu, who traded titles with her after Chui claimed their first encounter in Bangkok in 1998.

David's loss in Doha four years ago led to a period of introspection for the then teenager, who was so put out that she needed four months away from the sport to get her head right — a period of self-healing that won't be necessary this time.

Her recent surge made her the overwhelming favorite in Guangzhou, where she arrived fresh after claiming her 50th tour title at the Qatar Classic and with the confidence of having spent



SQUASH

the last 56 months as the world's best.

She said she was expecting a tougher ride to the final, but in the end only dropped one game, against Dipika Rebecca Pallikar of

India in the second round, before squaring up against Au.

"She is a great player," said David, 27. "She has made a lot of progress and now has a much higher ranking. She is a strong opponent and it wasn't easy to win the final."

The Asiad title adds another glittering string to David's bow after she pocketed the World Open, Asian Championships and Commonwealth titles. But she is still hungry for more gold.

"The team event is coming up now, so I just want to focus on that and do my best to keep the level up," she said.

Au said she would have been shocked if she had managed to

upset David and reprise Chiu's success at the Asian Games.

"I'm surprised, because I never thought I'd perform as well as I did. Now my goal is to get my ranking up a bit and hopefully break into the top 10," she said.

In the men's final, top seed Iskandar won a resounding three-game victory against close friend and third seed Aamir Atlas Kham of Pakistan.

Iskandar, silver medalist at Doha 2006 and bronze medalist four years before that in Busan, was in total control before he wrapped up the match in 39 minutes with a score of 11-6, 11-7, 11-6.

"We've known each other for 12 years and he's just like my elder brother," said Iskandar, who is based in London and is of Scottish-Malay parentage.

"Winning and losing between us is sometimes like a flip of a coin. I just got lucky this time," he said.

GOLD RUSH >> TODAY'S MEDAL EVENTS

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Archery

15: 42 Men's Team

Athletics

17: 00 Men's Pole Vault
17: 10 Women's Hammer Throw
17: 50 Women's 400m
18: 00 Men's 400m
19: 15 Women's 100m
19: 30 Men's 100m

Bowling

9: 00 Men's Team of Five
13: 30 Men's All Events
14: 30 Women's Team of Five
18: 30 Women's All Events

Cycling Road Race

9: 00 Men's Individual Road Race

Diving

14: 00 Women's Synchronized 3m Springboard
17: 00 Men's Synchronized 10m Platform

Equestrian

14: 00 Jumping Team

Fencing

18: 00 Men's Team Sabre
19: 00 Women's Team Foil

Football

19: 00 Women's Finals

Tennis

11: 00 Women's Doubles Final
11: 00 Men's Doubles Final
11: 00 Mixed Doubles Final

Trampoline Gymnastics

16: 00 Women's Individual
16: 26 Men's Individual

Weiqi

15: 00 Mixed Doubles

Wrestling

17: 20 Men's Greco-Roman 74kg
18: 15 Men's Greco-Roman 84kg
19: 10 Men's Greco-Roman 96kg