

Sights set on last-eight finish

Hong Kong women's volleyball team are aiming for a last-eight finish at this year's Asian Senior Women's Championships, which begins tomorrow in Nakhon Ratchasima, Thailand.

The 16 teams have been split into

four pools at the tournament, with Hong Kong grouped together with second-seeds Japan, Indonesia and Vietnam.

Hong Kong team member Eunice Chan Eu-eu, 24, said: "We want to reach the quarter-finals as this would be important for our team's development."

Teammate Sarah Tsang Sze-nga, 26, said: "We need to do well so that we can convince the authorities [the Sports Federation & Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China] to nominate our team for next year's Incheon Asian Games."

Hong Kong's women have often missed competing at the Games.

Chiu Siu-leong, coach of the team, said: "I don't remember when the women's team last took part in the Asian Games - maybe not since 1990."

However, Hong Kong men's team took part at the Games in Doha in 2006 and Guangzhou in 2010.

The women's team have been training hard over the summer to prepare for the competition in Thailand.

In July she competed in her final Universiade, held in Kazan, Russia.

"The Universiade inspired me because we met many teams from Europe and other continents that we hadn't played before," said Tsang, who works as a PE teacher at Cognitio College (Kowloon). "It was a tough competition. We were really delighted when we beat Norway."

Chan, who is the team's libero, or defensive specialist, graduated from City University this summer.

"Most of us in the team are university students or new graduates; we're not full-time players," she said. "But other strong Asian teams are full-time, so we must adapt quickly to the higher mental and physical requirements if we want to remain competitive."

"We haven't faced Vietnam before and lost twice to Indonesia in close matches in 2009," Chan said.

Japan, and China are the two favourites to win the competition.

Tsang said the team hope to push Japan hard when they play, even though they will be the underdogs and then win their two other pool matches so they reach the last eight.

"We've worked really hard in training during the summer - trying new tactics and combinations - and are excited that now it's time to get started," Tsang said.

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Tsang, who plays as blocker in the team, is delighted to finally play in her first major tournament.

"I suffered a serious ankle injury in 2009, when I missed both the Asian Championships and East Asian Games," she said. "I lost my motivation for volleyball."

However, she regained her passion for the sport playing for Hong Kong at the 2011 Universiade - the biennial international multisport event for university students - held in Shenzhen.



say it

convince (v)
說服

muscular (adj)
肌肉發達

motivation (n)
推動

inspired (v)
靈感

adapt (v)
適應

tactics (n)
策略

Chan (centre), wearing number 6, with Tsang, number 5, and their Hong Kong teammates and coaches, are in Thailand for the Asian Championships. Photo: Kevin Kung