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Hong Kong Rowers Kick Off Asian Games Campaign with Medals in Germany

The Hong Kong Asian Games Squad began a two-month European training and competition tour with the Ratzeburg International Regatta in Germany over the weekend. Racing for the first time this season, Hong Kong crews won gold medals in the men's lightweight eight, men's lightweight four, men's lightweight single and men's U23 lightweight single, as well as second places in lightweight women's single and lightweight men's four.

One of the most exciting races came in the men's lightweight single sculls where Hong Kong Olympic rower, **CHIU Hin Chun**, went head-to-head with 2016 World Champion Florian Roller of Germany. The German sculler lead from the start and held this position until the last 250m of the race when Chiu mounted a massive sprint to win in a photo-finish by 0.6s.

In the women's lightweight single sculls, **Lee Ka Man** finished second to 2016 European Champion Anja Noske from Germany, and ahead of World U.23 bronze medalist Vera Spanke.

Top U.23 sculler **CHAN Chi Fung** also took a hard-fought gold medal in the U.23 men's lightweight single against Jorke Kooijenga of the Netherlands and Jonas Ningelgen of Germany.

Hong Kong entered two crews in the men's lightweight fours and, after a rather slow start, both boats were able to overhaul their German rivals to place first and second at the line. The winning boat with **WONG Wai Kin, James WONG, TANG Chiu Mang** and **LEUNG Chun Shek** were just 0.11s ahead of the second Hong Kong crew of **YUEN Yun Lam, LAM San Tung, CHAU Yee Ping** and **Kenneth LIU**.

The two Hong Kong crews also combined together to race in the men's lightweight eight. Steered by Royal Hong Kong Yacht Club coxwain **Keith CHEUNG**, the HKSAR crew took gold ahead of a German composite crew from Essen, Bayern Leverkusen, Hansa Dortmund and Mannheim.

Ratzeburg is home to the German Rowing Academy and the International Regatta has been held for 59 years. This year's event attracted entries from 12 nations and over 200 crews. It also served as part of the selection trials for the German National Team.

Head Coach, **Chris PERRY**, was satisfied with the team's performance for the first major event of the season:-

"This year we did not race at our usual early-season events in Australia or Japan, so this was the first competition of the season for the Asian Games team. After a longer period of spring training, the physical base of the athletes was good but we now need to find more speed and pace as we build up to Asian Games. CHIU's performance in the lightweight men's single was particularly promising against a top-class opponent".

The team will now move to Hazewinkel in Belgium for training before going on to race at the Dutch Open Championships (Holland Beker Regatta).

The Hong Kong, China Rowing Association wishes our rowing team every success in the coming competitions.

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