



A shopping mall in Jiading's Anting Town hosts a "smart" table tennis qualification match for the 4th Shanghai Citizen Games, drawing hundreds of consumers. — Photos/Liu Ruihan

Sport events boost active lifestyles, tourism income

Local cyclists take the opportunity to ride with their foreign counterparts during the "Tour of Shanghai."



To increase community involvement and fitness, Juyuan New Area's "15-minute community life circle" initiative holds a square dance demo and sports event training.

Liu Ruihan and Yang Yang

The light volleyball team from Jiading District was crowned the champion at the recently concluded 4th Shanghai Citizen Games. "We didn't lose a single game, and as the champion, we will represent Shanghai in the 15th National Games in 2025," said Qian Jun, coach of the Jiading Light Volleyball Association team, during the award ceremony. Originated in the 1980s in

Hohhot, Inner Mongolia, by a group of retired railway workers, the mass sport, also known as balloon volleyball, integrates sports, recreation and entertainment. While the play and score rules of the light volleyball games are similar to the traditional volleyball, the ball is slightly larger, lighter and softer. The net is lower, and the games are typically played on a smaller court. Since balloons are so light, a simple touch with the fingers can accomplish serving and returning a ball, making light volleyball a game anyone can play.

In Jiading, the sport has gained popularity among middle-aged individuals and seniors, as well as won over a group of young players. The district's professional team and about a dozen amateur teams recruit members from different age groups. In the Juyuan New Area, there is a professional light volleyball team known for its members in their 20s and 30s.

"We have a recent retiree from the Shanghai men's volleyball team, a Nanjing Sport Institute graduate who previously specialized in professional boxing, a standout player from the China University Volleyball Association, and several researchers from the Shanghai Institute of Ceramics,

Chinese Academy of Sciences," said Xing Xiaofei, the team's setter. "But the majority of us started from a beginner's level." Established in March 2023, the Jiading Light Volleyball Association is the only district-level association of its kind in Shanghai. Zhang Aiguo, its chief, is a volleyball enthusiast with more than 20 years of experience.

"We've launched exchange games with teams from Liancheng County in Fujian Province, and Tiantai County of Zhejiang Province," said Zhang. "Light volleyball in those places is already well-established, while we are still in the budding stage. But we have plenty of aspiration and determination."

Finding ways to attract more people to play sports has been a goal of officials for some time. Reducing entry-level difficulties has proven to be effective.

During the 5th Shanghai Urban Amateur League last year, the light volleyball game was introduced for the first time at the beach volleyball competition held at Beishuiwan Sports Park in the Juyuan New Area.

The event attracted nearly a hundred enthusiasts. "We hope more people will show an interest in light volleyball and learn its rules and how to play it," said Shen Jian, chief of the



A member of the Jiading light volleyball team scores a point during a match at the 4th Shanghai Citizen Games.

3 fitness centers open under welfare project

Zhou Yulin and Yang Yang

JIADING District has newly opened three citizens fitness centers as part of its civilian public welfare project in 2024.

The newly launched Nanxiang Town citizens fitness center, with its gym zone, aerobics room, basketball court, swimming pool and billiard room, is attracting a large number of sports enthusiasts.

"It's the perfect spot for a workout. After a good sweat, I feel completely refreshed," said a visitor surnamed Wu, who lives nearby and chooses the fitness center for its spacious layout, diverse exercise options, state-of-the-art equipment and reasonable prices.

The center is equipped with dedicated zones for aerobics, anaerobics and free weight training. It not only boasts more than 30 gym facilities, but also prioritizes safety with an automated external defibrillator and offers fitness testing services.

It also caters to the exercise needs of parent-kid families and young ladies by offering

special rooms for golf simulation, Pilates, and other novel exercises, in addition to its one-stop fitness service.

"My kid and the grandparents were playing golf in the golf simulation room while I was practicing Pilates," said a resident surnamed Sun.

Situated in a densely populated region, its service can cover Baoxiang, Ruilin and Fanglin residential areas and benefits about 30,000 residents.

"We'll launch parent-kid competitions, health lectures and sports training lessons in the future," said Yang Ju, chief of the center.

The other two fitness centers are in Anting and Waigang towns.

By November, Jiading boasted a total sports area of 8.3467 million square meters, an increase of 133,900 square meters from the previous year.

As planned, by 2025, the newly built gym facilities will cover 220,000 square meters and the average sports area per capita will exceed 4.2 square meters.

A latest yearly survey found that by December 31, 2023, the district had a total of 4,392 sports courts, ranking second citywide. It also hosts high-quality sports events, such as the F1 and FE world championships.

Sports are creating new business opportunities.

F1, FE and the Karting Carnival, all highlights of the Shanghai Auto Culture Festival, are turning spectators into consumers.

From January to May, the total revenue of the district's regular sports industry reached 150 million yuan (US\$20.55 million), up 143 percent year on year and ranking first citywide.

The district's tourism attractions, such as the Shanghai International Circuit, Yuanxiang Lake and Nanxiang Old Street are benefiting from the sports galas.

In the first half of this year, district-level sports competitions such as the Shanghai Vehicle Model Championship, Floor Curling and smart table tennis matches took place at commercial complexes like Nanxiang Incity Mega, LifeHub@Anting and Bailian Jiading.

Meanwhile, UEFA Euro 2024, the Copa America tournament and the Paris Olympics all helped boost the regional night economy with events like night jogging, game watching and mini-sports galas.



Fitness centers within the community are a great benefit for promoting health and wellness among residents. — Zhou Yulin