



North Korea, which returned to international competition for the first time in five years at the Hangzhou 2022 Asian Games, has avoided contact with countries other than China.

In some sports, such as basketball and soccer, the country's name has been used to refer to South Korean reporters.



North Korea's flagship sport, weightlifting, was a different story.

In the post-match press conference, the North Korean athletes answered questions from South Korean reporters and congratulated a Chinese athlete on his birthday. This was a far cry from other sports.

North Korea swept the gold and silver medals in the women's 76-kilogram weightlifting event at the Games, which were held at the Xiaoshan Sports Center in Hangzhou, China, on May 5. [박 카라사이트](#)

[Sung Kuk Hyang](#), who lifted 117 kilograms in the snatch and 150 kilograms in the jerk for a total of 267 kilograms, won the gold, while North Korea's Chung Chun Hee, who lifted 117 kilograms in the snatch and 149 kilograms in the jerk, took home the silver. The bronze medal went to South Korea's Kim Soo-hyun, who lifted a total of 243 kilograms.

After winning the gold medal, Sung said at the post-event press conference, "I won the gold medal, but I can't be satisfied. My goal was to break the world record (total of 278 kilograms) held by Lim Jung Shim (North Korea), but I'm disappointed that I couldn't achieve it."

China's Liao Guifang, who also competed on the day, abruptly withdrew from the competition after completing the second phase of the lifts. It was believed that the withdrawal was due to an injury sustained during the second round.

The North Korean players were concerned about Liao Guifang's condition. Sung Kuk Hyang said, "The Chinese player couldn't participate (because he withdrew midway through), but it would have been more interesting if he was with us. I'm worried about his condition now."

Chung Chun-hee also said, "I know that today is the Chinese player's birthday, and I want to congratulate him. I'm worried that I didn't play well on his birthday. I want to try to play with real skill in the future."

In the process, Kim Soo-hyun said, "I didn't know it was the Chinese player's birthday, but I want to congratulate him," causing the scene to burst into laughter.

With the win in the 76-kilogram category, North Korea has now won every women's weightlifting event at the Games.

When asked about the secret to North Korea's success in women's weightlifting, Sung Kuk Hyang said, "The goal of the DPRK athletes is to win convincingly," adding, "We were able to perform well because everyone put their strength and hearts together."

They say that a good student has a good teacher, and I want to show off my coaches." Sung Kuk Hyang even broke down in tears for a moment as he recalled the hardships of his training.

A North Korean weightlifting official who also attended the press conference said, "The athletes have shed a lot of sweat in the four years they have not participated in international competitions."

Not only the women but also the men have trained fiercely and have the skills to stand up to China and other world powers," he said, adding, "This is the result. We will continue to face the world, showcase our talents, and win more gold medals."