

## President Tsai Says Sports Is an Indispensable Soft Power at the Opening Ceremony

National Intercollegiate Athletic Games 2023 held its opening ceremony at the stadium of Chung Yuan Christian University on May 6th, which is the first National Intercollegiate Athletic Games after Covid-19.

President Tsai Ing-Wen announced that the highest level of sports competition among college students officially started and will continue until May 10th. President Tsai encouraged everyone that sports power is the national power, and encouraged the athletes to demonstrate their prowess and compete internationally in the future.

“I’m happy that the pandemic has ended.” President Tsai said. “National Intercollegiate Athletic Games can accommodate audience this year. Everything’s back to normal, and citizens can be on site to cheer on athletes and participate in the events together. Sports is an indispensable soft power of a country, and it’s also a great medium for us to communicate with others internationally. Demonstrating sports prowess is a representation of national power.”

Wen-Chung Pan, the Minister of Education, pointed out that there are more than 10,000 athletes from 146 colleges participating in the National Intercollegiate Athletic Games this year, competing for the highest level of honor within 20 competitions.

Pan hoped that all the athletes could demonstrate the whole-person sportsmanship, triumph one selves, and set new records. There are Chengdu 2021 FISU World University Games and the 19th Asian Games Hangzhou 2022 this year and the 2024 Paris Olympics next year.

Pan encouraged all athletes to look upon Asia and the world from Taiwan, expressing the passion and courage that belong to Taiwanese young generation, putting out the best performance and winning the highest honor wholeheartedly.

“After National Central University and National Taiwan Sport University, Taoyuan host the National Intercollegiate Athletic Games once again with Chung Yuan Christian University.” Wen-Tsan Cheng, the Vice Premier, said. “National Intercollegiate Athletic Games is an event that fosters national representatives. I hope that everyone can shine on the stage.”

Cheng also mentioned that he’s looking forward to the brand-new Chung Yuan Cultural Park which is under the last stage of construction.

“It has been 32 years since Chung Yuan Christian University last held the National Intercollegiate Athletic Games in 1991.” Ing-Ming Lee, the principal of Chung Yuan Christian University, said. “Sports is popular at Chung Yuan. We hold two sports days every year, which makes us the only one among colleges. All the faculty and students put out their best this time to welcome this important

event of national sports. The theme of ‘Whole-person, Whole-power, National Intercollegiate Athletic Games at Chung Yuan’ and the whole-person sportsmanship can definitely be demonstrated at the event.”

Led by the mascot “Happy-learning Monkey,” volunteers, referees and athletes entered the stadium in order at the opening ceremony. Shih-Chung Cheng, the director general of Sports Administration, Ministry of Education, San-cheng Chang, the mayor of Taoyuan City and principals of colleges were on site, giving all athletes the warmest blessings.

Archery athlete Chia-Mao Peng and the chief referee of badminton Kui-Hua Hu were representatives for athletes and referees respectively. The torch entered the stadium afterwards, and when the torch was lighted, the laser light performance brought the opening ceremony of National Intercollegiate Athletic Games 2023 to its climax.

The flame of the torch this year came from the Mao Gong Ding cauldron at Taipei Municipal Stadium, which represents the passing of the Olympic torch. After torch lighting, the torch relay continued for five days and went to 12 schools.

The Honor Guard of the Republic of China Army, Dun Qing Dance Group from Taoyuan, LongTan Philharmonia Orchestra and Laqi Na Atayal that passes on the indigenous spirits all demonstrated the energy and power of local culture and art. The opening ceremony also became a stage for sports and cultural art to combine with each other.

Moreover, the theme song of the National Intercollegiate Athletic Games this year is “Faith, Hope, Love,” which was composed by instructors of Chung Yuan Christian University and performed by Arts Salon and the faculty and student orchestra, sending blessings to all athletes from Chung Yuan.

There are 20 competitions at the National Collegiate Athletic Games 2023, including track and field, swimming, table tennis, badminton, tennis, soft tennis, taekwondo, gymnastics, archery, wrestling, weight lifting, judo, karate, boxing, shooting, woodball, cycling, rowing and canoeing.

Some competitions already started from April 28th, and the closing ceremony will be held in the afternoon of May 10th.