



Ni Xia Lian

Nickname:

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Nation:

Chinese  (till 1991)

Luxembourgish  (from 1991 onwards)

Date of birth:

4 July 1963

Height:

157 cm

Place of birth:

Shanghai, China

Playing hand:

 left

Style of play:

Penhold grip, offensive with long-pimpled rubber on the backhand

Coach:

Tommy Danielsson

Current world ranking (week 51 - 2024):

60

Current European ranking (December 2024):

16

Clubs as the active player(s):

-

Senior Career Highlights

2024:

- July: At 61 years old, Ni Xia Lian competed in her sixth Olympic Games at the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics. She won her first-round match against Sibel Altinkaya of Turkey, becoming the oldest table tennis player to win a match at the Olympics.

2021:

- November: Secured a bronze medal in Women's Doubles at the World Table Tennis Championships in Houston, Texas, partnering with Sarah De Nutte. At 58, she became the oldest medalist in the history of the championships.

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2019:

- June: Qualified for the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games by competing at the European Games in Minsk, Belarus, demonstrating her enduring competitiveness on the international stage.

2013:

- At the 2013 Games of the Small States of Europe, Ni Xia Lian, alongside her partner Sarah de Nutte, secured the gold medal in the Women's Doubles event. Additionally, the Luxembourg women's team, featuring Ni Xia Lian, Sarah de Nutte, and Tessy Gonderinger, clinched the gold medal in the Team event.

2002:

- August: Clinched the gold medal in Women's Singles at the European Table Tennis Championships in Zagreb, Croatia, reaffirming her dominance in European table tennis.

2000:

- June: Won a silver medal in Women's Doubles at the European Table Tennis Championships in Bremen, Germany, partnering with Peggy Regenwetter.

1998:

- May: Secured the gold medal in Women's Singles at the European Table Tennis Championships in Eindhoven, Netherlands, marking her first major title representing Luxembourg.

1983:

- April: As part of the Chinese national team, Ni won gold medals in Team and Mixed Doubles at the World Table Tennis Championships in Tokyo, Japan, establishing herself as a world-class player early in her career.

Breakthrough Moments and Achievements

2024:

- July: By winning a match at the age of 61 during the Paris Olympics, Ni set a record as the oldest table tennis player to win an Olympic match, inspiring athletes worldwide.

1991:

- Began representing Luxembourg in international competitions, marking a significant transition in her career and contributing to the development of table tennis in her adopted country.

1983:

- Achieved international acclaim by winning world championship titles in Team and Mixed Doubles events, highlighting her as one of the top players globally.

Medals and Titles

Representing Luxembourg

- **World Championships:**

2021 Houston, Bronze medal – third place, Doubles

- **European Games:**

2019 Minsk, Bronze medal – third place, Singles

- **European Championships:**

1998 Eindhoven, Gold medal – first place, Singles

2002 Zagreb, Gold medal – first place, Singles

2002 Zagreb, Gold medal – first place, Mixed doubles

2000 Bremen, Silver medal – second place, Doubles

2007 Belgrade, Silver medal – second place, Singles

2018 Alicante, Bronze medal – third place, Doubles

2022 Munich, Bronze medal – third place, Doubles

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- **Games of the Small States of Europe:**

2009 Cyprus, Gold medal – first place, Singles

2009 Cyprus, Gold medal – first place, Doubles

2009 Cyprus, Gold medal – first place, Team

2011 Liechtenstein, Gold medal – first place, Singles

2011 Liechtenstein, Gold medal – first place, Doubles

2011 Liechtenstein, Gold medal – first place, Team

2013 Luxembourg, Gold medal – first place, Doubles

2013 Luxembourg, Gold medal – first place, Team

2015 Iceland, Gold medal – first place, Team

Representing China

- **World Championships:**

1983 Tokyo, Gold medal – first place, Team

1983 Tokyo, Gold medal – first place, Mixed doubles

1985 Gothenburg, Silver medal – second place, Doubles

1983 Tokyo, Bronze medal – third place, Doubles

Junior Career and Early Achievements

Ni Xia Lian began playing table tennis at the age of 7 in Shanghai, China. She joined the Chinese national team as a teenager, where she received rigorous training and developed her skills among some of the world's best players. While specific records of her junior achievements are limited, her early induction into China's elite table tennis program set the foundation for her future success.

2024: Detailed Overview and Achievements

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Medals and Titles

- July: Competed in the Women's Singles at the Paris 2024 Summer Olympics, winning her first-round match against Sibel Altinkaya before facing world number one Sun Yingsha in the round of 32.

Breakthrough Moments and Achievements

July: Set a new record as the oldest table tennis player to win a match at the Olympic Games, demonstrating exceptional longevity and competitiveness in the sport.

Biography and Career

Born in Shanghai, Ni Xia Lian began her table tennis journey at a young age, quickly rising through the ranks to join the Chinese national team. Her early career was highlighted by world championship victories in 1983. In the late 1980s, she moved to Europe and eventually settled in Luxembourg, where she began representing her adopted country in 1991. Over the years, Ni has become a central figure in Luxembourgish table tennis, achieving significant success in European and world competitions. Her career is distinguished not only by her titles but also by her remarkable longevity, competing at the highest levels well into her 60s.

Early Life and Background

Ni Xia Lian was born and raised in Shanghai, China, where she began playing table tennis at the age of 7. Her talent was evident early on, leading to her selection for the Chinese national team during her teenage years. Training alongside some of the best players in the world, she honed her skills and developed a deep understanding of the game, which would serve as the foundation for her future international success.

Playing Style and Personality

Ni Xia Lian is renowned for her **penhold grip** and **quick attacking playing style**, which is a rarity in modern table tennis. Her style emphasizes strategic placement, spin variation, and rapid decision-making, making her a challenging opponent for players accustomed to the more prevalent shakehand grip and power-based approaches.

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What sets Ni apart is not just her technical skills but also her adaptability and mental resilience. She has seamlessly transitioned through multiple eras of table tennis, adapting to changes in equipment, playing techniques, and competition formats.

Off the table, Ni Xia Lian is celebrated for her humility, professionalism, and positive attitude. Her cheerful demeanor and dedication to the sport have made her a beloved figure among fans, teammates, and opponents alike.

Legacy and Future Goals

Ni Xia Lian's career is a testament to the possibility of achieving greatness across decades. Her remarkable longevity, highlighted by her participation in six Olympic Games and numerous European and World Championships, has redefined what is achievable in table tennis.

Her achievements have had a profound impact on Luxembourgish table tennis, raising the profile of the sport in the country and inspiring future generations.

As of December 2024, Ni Xia Lian has expressed interest in mentoring younger players and contributing to the development of table tennis globally. While she continues to compete, her focus on nurturing talent and promoting the sport ensures her legacy will extend far beyond her playing career.

Conclusions

Ni Xia Lian's journey from a young talent in Shanghai to an internationally celebrated athlete representing Luxembourg is a story of resilience, adaptability, and passion for the sport. Her accomplishments, spanning over four decades, have earned her a unique place in the history of table tennis. As a trailblazer who has redefined longevity in the sport, she continues to inspire players of all ages, proving that determination and love for the game transcend time.

Her career serves as a beacon of excellence and dedication, ensuring her legacy will endure as one of the greatest stories in the history of table tennis.

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