Wheelchair racers finish NYC Marathon

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By Judy Zhu in New York |   
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Four Chinese wheelchair racers were invited to compete in the 2017 New York City Marathon on Sunday, and two of them finished the course for the first time in history.  
Chinese paralympics champion Zou Lihong, 33, ranked fourth place and became the first Chinese woman wheelchair racer to finish the 26.2-mile, five-borough race with a time of 2 hours, 3 minutes and 20 seconds.  
On the men's side, three Chinese wheelchair racers were invited to race for the first time, and Zhang Yong, 25, finished the course with a time of 1 hour, 50 minutes and 51 seconds.   
Unfortunately, the other two, Dai Yunqiang and Song Lei, had to drop out at the 40 kilometer-mark due to flat tires.  
Last year, Zou was invited to the event after winning the gold medal in the women's marathon at the Rio Paralympics in the summer, where she narrowly beat Tatyana McFadden, an American marathoner who had swept 17 straight victories in major marathons, including last year's.  
However, her right rear tire went flat halfway through the run at the 13-mile point. The tire could not be repaired.  
This year, despite not being in the best physical condition after catching a cold, Zou came back with three other teammates and better prepared.  
"We tested our tires with two months of training in Shanghai ahead of the race. New York City's road situation is very different, and we paid extra attention to avoid tire damage," Zou said, "all we wanted was to finish the race."

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