

Jazreel back on track

Singapore teenager bowls world's elite over, missing coveted crown narrowly in final

BOWLING

World Women's Bowling Championships

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LAST December, Jazreel Tan was not included in the Singapore team for the Asian Games in Qatar. National selectors had left her out because her form had dipped before the final list for the team was confirmed.

The setback inspired the Singapore Sports School student, who turns 18 on Wednesday, to get back on track.

Just days before the bowling squad left for the 15th Asiad, Jazreel won her second Singapore National Bowling Championship title – her first in 2004 made her Singapore's youngest national champion at only 14. But it was too late to get her on the plane to Qatar.

On Saturday (*yesterday morning, Singapore time*), the prodigy took silver at the World Women Bowling Championships, Singapore's best ever individual finish at the event following a doubles bronze in 1995 (Catherine Lee and Jasmine Ho) and trios silver in 2005 (Jennifer Tan, Valerie Teo and Alice Tay).



TODAY FILE PHOTO

Jazreel, the 2005 Sea Games silver medallist, came agonisingly close to striking gold.

She took the first and third games of the best-of-five Final before going down 3-2 to American Diandra Asbaty.

Jazreel, speaking to TODAY on the phone from Monterrey, Mexico, said that her crit-

ics and doubters were the furthest thing from her mind. "I don't feel like I've proven anything to anyone. I just wanted to go out there and do my best," she said.

"Mentally, I feel I've gotten stronger. I didn't feel that the pressure was getting to me at any point.

"It is still, disappointing to lose in the final. Diandra is a friend and although I cried a little after the match, I think I've gone as far as I could."

National coach Mervyn Foo, who is in Mexico with the Singapore women's team – including Evelyn Chan, Sabrina Lim, Cherie Tan, Jasmine Nathan Yeong and Jennifer Tan – lauded Jazreel's newfound temperament and said there will be more to come from her at this December's SEA Games in Korat, Thailand.

"She bowled extremely well," Foo said. "It is a magnificent achievement for a 17-year-old to go all the way to the final and taking out formidable opponents who were all much more experienced than her.

"We are all very proud and I'm sure there's more to come from her."

"We wanted her to be more focused, to be more positive in training and to be more positive during tournaments. She's gone out and proven to everybody what she can do."



PHOTO COURTESY OF JOEL BOH

SPEED ANGELS: (From left) Lee, Wong, Ann and Choo created history yesterday.

New S'pore mark

THE 34-year-old national women's 4x100m relay record fell yesterday, by just 0.02 of a second.

The quartet of Lee Yan Lin, Wong Ze Teng, Ann Siao Mei, all 20, and 18-year-old Amanda Choo clocked 46.98s in the final yesterday – taking bronze behind Thailand (45.65s) and Japan (46.95s) – at the end of the two-day 69th Singapore Open Track and Field Championships held at the Gombak Stadium.

The previous Singapore mark of 47.0s was set on Nov 23, 1973, in the Asian Championships in Manila by Heather Merican, Gan Bee Wan, Glory Barnabas and Sheila Fernando.

"The relay record has been standing for quite long, so it was a great feeling to finally break it," said the teenager yesterday.

It was the second record in as many days for Choo. On Saturday, the National Institute of Education student clocked 12.21s to better Prema Govindan's 1989 women's 100m record of 12.23s.

5 Nations Netball Cup

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Win boosts Singapore's confidence, ahead of world championships

5 NATIONS NETBALL CUP 2007
Singapore 56 Trinidad and Tobago 32

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SINGAPORE will head to November's Netball World Championships on a high after successfully defending their 5 Nations Netball Cup title on Saturday.

Cheered on by a packed Toa Payoh Sports Hall, the home side beat world No 10 Trinidad & Tobago 56-32.

The hosts had already beaten the pre-tournament favourites 55-40 in the group stages of the tournament.

The Singaporeans emerged from the weeklong tournament with a perfect record, winning all their five games.

On Saturday, they shrugged off the physical "Calypso Girls" by maximising their strengths in speed and skill.

A strong start by the hosts took them eight points clear of their rivals in the second quarter and a massive 18 heading into the final quarter.

Singapore coach Kate Carpenter was delighted with her team's performance and said: "The girls were fantastic today.

"We wanted a good start and got it. We focused on the tasks we had set, which we kept simple and sharp."

The win has given the team confidence as they prepare for the world championships in New Zealand.

After losing twice to them, Trinidad and Tobago coach Grace Parkinson-Griffith believes Singapore will put in a good account of themselves there.

"Singapore are doing well and if they continue to play as they have been, then, they can certainly be a force at the world championships."

The 5 Nations was the perfect tune-up for the team and gave Carpenter plenty of opportunities to polish their tactics against high-level sides.

"Throughout the week, we showed consistency with good performances," said Carpenter. "I was also pleased that we retained the title using a number of different players on court. It didn't mat-



PHOTO COURTESY OF NETBALL SINGAPORE

ter who we put in."

The coach also said the support they have been getting has been crucial in getting the progress of the team and their preparations for New Zealand on track.

Said the Kiwi: "We have a whole group of people helping in our preparations – the strength and conditioning staff, and the medical personnel from the SSC have

all given us their full support."

Earlier on Saturday, **Northern Ireland** beat Sri Lanka 61-51 to clinch third spot.

After losing to the South Asian side 55-50 in the round-robin stage, the Bowman sisters, Lisa and Kyla, were on song for the team and put on a scintillating display.

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