

1ST ASIAN YOUTH GAMES 2009

Shooters not flops, says Chng

Youngsters need greater funding and exposure, says shooting association chief

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AS ONE of the national sports associations in the top bracket for government funding, shooting could be deemed to have come up short at the Asian Youth Games with only one bronze medal.

Abel Lim was the only Singaporean to get on the podium, when he won bronze in the boys' 10m air rifle event.

Over the years, the Republic's shooters have done well at international and regional competitions, and shooting has been earmarked as one of the sports capable of winning a medal at the Olympics.

Singapore Shooting Association (SSA) president Chng Seng Mok said yesterday that the shooters' performance at the Games should be viewed in perspective, considering the funds available to them and the time they had to train.

"There is a misconception that with the funding we get, we have the luxury of spending more on the training of our shooters compared to other sports," said Chng.

"Few realise shooting is an expensive sport. Each shot fired can cost us up to \$1. Our budget allows us to have 44 training sessions a year for our 35-strong senior team and that is less than once a week."

The 59-year-old jeweller claimed that although the association have had a youth training programme for eight years, it was not designed to enter them into serious competitions. He said: "It was only when the Youth Olympics and the Asian Youth Games were announced that we had to scramble to put a team together for serious competition."

Said the SSA president: "Other sports start training youngsters earlier, but shooters only get a taste of the sport in secondary school. However, we have been working with the Ministry of Education and we hope to change that sometime soon.

"We did not slack in preparing our shooters. We sent them to Germany earlier this year for competitions and the fact the rifle team scored personal bests at the Asian Youth Games speaks of our efforts."

Abel's cumulative score was 685.6, compared to the winning score of 686.2 posted by China's Wu Jianing. Goh Jia Yi and Jodie Tan registered 391 and 395 (out of a maximum 400) respectively, in the girls section.

However, the air pistol shooters did not perform as expected, admitted Chng.

"Pistol shooting is only three years old in Singapore, so give us time," he said.

Chng pointed out that his young shooters faced stiff competition from China and South Korea at the Games.

"They are world-class shooters. At the 2007 Asian Shooting Championships, their 16-year-old shooters were posting scores comparable to that of adults," he said.



Jodie (left) posted a personal best, Abel's bronze was the only shooting medal for the hosts.

PHOTOS: SAYSOC

FACING WORLD-CLASS COMPETITION

Comparisons with other sports were unfair, Chng added.