

THE 25TH SEA GAMES: THE MOST EXTENSIVE COVERAGE ON MEDIACORP

JIA YI GETS IT RIGHT THE SECOND TIME

She thought she had lost it, but given a second chance, Goh Jia Yi seized the opportunity.

The Singapore shooter, who turns 15 on Dec 22, got an early birthday present when she edged out Thailand's Chotphibunsin Thanyalak in a shoot-off to clinch the women's 10m air rifle individual event yesterday.

Both had finished level on 496.2 points, but in a tense finale, the Singaporean shot 10.7 to Chotphibunsin's 10.3, sparking jubilant scenes in the Singapore camp.

"I feel very relieved that it is finally over," said Jia Yi, a Secondary Three student at Raffles Girls' Secondary School.

"I was okay until the final started because I could hear the spectators and it was a bit tense. So I just blocked them out and concentrated on my routine."

Cheekily, she added: "I'm going to call my mother to tell her I did really badly and hear her reaction."

The Republic's shooters collected two other golds on the day, but it was Jia Yi's win that was the most thrilling of them all, making up for finishing ninth at the Asian Youth Games earlier this year.

The plucky teenager trailed Chotphibunsin for much of the final, with each shooter having 10 shots.

After seven shots, Jia Yi fought her way back to within just 0.3 points of Chotphibunsin, who led with 465.8.

But she flapped her ninth shot, registering a poor 9.9, while the Thai shot 10.7 to stretch her overall lead.

However, Chotphibunsin inexplicably fumbled on her 10th shot, registering a 9.4, while Jia Yi hit 10.4 to force the shoot-off.

Jia Yi, who made up for a disappointing ninth-place finish at the Asian Youth Games earlier this year, said: "I told myself not to bother so much, and continue doing what I had to do ... I didn't really feel much, I just focused on my shot and it worked." TANYO-HINN



Jiayi's victory was an early birthday present for her. AFP

Zhang Jin on target



Zhang (left) prevailed over Koh to clinch gold. AFP

He collects two golds as shooters make hay on the opening day

TANYO-HINN

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VIENTIANE — Singapore's campaign in the shooting competition of the 25th SEA Games got off to an exciting start yesterday.

The Republic's sharpshooters bagged three golds, two silvers and two bronze medals.

While the final of the women's 10m air rifle individual event was arguably the most exciting contest of the day, Singapore's gold in the men's 10m air rifle individual event — the final one of the day — saw wide smiles appear in the Singapore camp.

The only tension was from the two Singapore shooters, 21-year-old Zhang Jin and Jonathan Koh, 19, who battled each other for first place.

Zhang eventually prevailed over his team-mate, amassing 690.6 points to clinch the gold, with Jonathan Koh finishing just 0.1 behind for the silver. Thailand's

Majchacheap Varavut settled for the bronze (689.4).

"I probably put too much pressure on myself during the final few shots as I was going for an inner ten of at least 10.3," said Koh.

Zhang added: "Actually, the team gold is more important to me because of all the work and time we spent together. (Team-mate Ong) Jun Hong came up to congratulate us, and said now is our turn, but he wants the gold medal at the next SEA Games (in 2011)!"

Earlier, a Singapore delegation led by Deputy Prime Minister and Singapore National Olympic Council president Teo Chee Hean, Mrs Teo and chef-de-mission Jessie Phua watched Zhang, Koh and Ong clinch the gold in the men's 10m air rifle team event with an overall score of 1,755. Thailand (1,752) and Vietnam (1,744) took the silver and bronze, respectively.

Said DPM Teo: "It was a very close competition, and this is where character counts, and I'm glad they came through. This is what shooting is about, you have to put yourself under pressure and still stay cool.

My hats off to the shooters."

With three golds already and still eight days of competition remaining, Singapore have almost matched half the medal haul of eight golds won in shooting at the last SEA Games in Thailand in 2007.

Gai Bin matched Koh's silver, when he came in second in the men's 25m standard pistol. It was an agonising loss for Gai, who was beaten by a single point by Thailand's Karn-dee Prakarn (567). Singapore also missed out on the team silver by a single point to Vietnam (1,669). The two bronzes came in the women's 10m air rifle team and men's 25m standard pistol team events.

National head coach Deng Pei Ming said the overall performance had exceeded expectations.

"We were forecasting two golds, so to get three makes life a little easier for us now," he said.

"Apart from the slight disappointment in the men's 25m standard pistol, we did well today ... We have ambitions to do well at the Commonwealth, Asian and Olympic Games, but we must first do well in South-east Asia."

SPORTS BETTING

League	Home Team	Away Team	Match KickOff (Singapore date/time)
Laos 2009	Malaysia U23	Thailand U23	Fri, 11/12/09 4.00pm
A League	Queensland Fury	Perth Glory	Fri, 11/12/09 5.30pm
Club World Champ	Mazembe	Pohang	Sat, 12/12/09 12.00am
J Cup	Vegalta Sendai	Ksaki Frontale	Sat, 12/12/09 12.00pm
J Cup	Shimizu S Pulse	Albrx Ngata	Sat, 12/12/09 12.00pm
J Cup	Kashima Antlers	Gamba Osaka	Sat, 12/12/09 2.00pm
A League	Wellington	Sydney FC	Sat, 12/12/09 2.00pm
A League	Central Coast	Melbourne Vict	Sat, 12/12/09 4.00pm
A League	Brisbane Roar	Adelaide	Sat, 12/12/09 6.00pm
Club World Champ	Auckland	Atlante	Sun, 13/12/09 12.00am
A League	Newcastle Jets	Gold Coast Utd	Sun, 13/12/09 2.00pm

E Premier, E League Champ, Spanish, Italian and German League matches are also on sale.
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