

TODAY 15 Apr 2009 © 2009 Mediacorp Press Ltd

SINGAPORE SPORTS

Darren stars at Byte trials

He tops the field and is in the running for Asian Youth Games sailing squad

TANYO-HINN

yohinn@mediacorp.com.sg

AT just 15 years of age, Darren Choy is already one of Singapore's top young sailors. Yesterday, he took a big step towards representing the Republic at the inaugural Asian Youth Games, which will be held here from June 29 to July 7.

The teenager posted a nett total of 32 points from nine races at the five-day Asian Youth Games Byte CII selection trials at the National Sailing Centre (NSC) to win the boys' and overall categories.

In a field of 16 sailors, he finished seven points clear of second-placed Najwa Jumali, who was the top female sailor.

When he entered the final day of competition yesterday, Darren had 31 points after one discard, only behind recently-crowned National Byte youth champion Terence Choo (30). By staying cool, the 2008 International Optimist Class Team Racing champion came out on top in the end.



Darren (front) kept his cool despite the difficult conditions to clinch top spot. SINGAPORESAILING

"I led the first race but the winds changed and several boats that caught the sudden gust overtook me and I finished last. It was very frustrating," said Darren, a Secondary 3 student at the Singapore Sports School. "But I told myself to forget about it and focused on the last race."

A second-place finish in Race 9 saw him clinch the top overall spot.

Najwa, who turns 15 on April 29, also kept her a cool to emerge the top girl, for an early birthday present.

"I tried not to give myself added pressure by taking unnecessary risks and treated it like a regular training session," said the Secondary 3 student at Raffles Girls School.

Only nine of the 11 allotted races were completed due to poor wind conditions.

Darren, Najwa, and 14-year-olds Chuah Jun Ler and Audrey Yong, who topped the selection trials for the boys' and girls' windsurfing classes respectively at the

Pattaya Windsurfing Cup two weeks ago, will now be considered for nomination to the Singapore National Olympic Council (SNOC) for the Asian Youth Games.

A seven-strong selection committee headed by SingaporeSailing chief executive officer Andrew Sanders will meet later this month to finalise the list of nominated sailors to be submitted to the SNOC by April 30.

"There are also other selection criteria, such as the quality of the trials and races, the sailors' fitness levels, attitude and potential to consider," said Sanders.

The continental Youth Games will feature over 1,000 athletes aged 14 to 17 years from 45 countries competing across nine sports.

The sailing competition, to be held at the NSC, will feature four classes — the Byte CII (single-handed dinghy) boys and girls, and Techno 293 (windsurfing) boys and girls. Some 70 sailors from 18 countries are expected for the Games.