

## 5TH S'PORE NATIONAL SWIMMING C'SHIP

# Ting Wen on fire

Asian Youth Games flagbearer breaks her own national mark and leaves Tao Li in her wake

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IT WAS billed as a heavyweight clash between Tao Li and Quah Ting Wen, but in the end, the duel didn't even create a ripple.

Ting Wen, 16, proved the star turn on the opening day of the 5th Singapore National Swimming Championship at the Singapore Sports School yesterday, rewriting the women's 100m freestyle national record of 55.80sec she set in March with a time of 55.65.

Amanda Lim (56.15) and Mylene Ong (56.99) came in second and third, respectively, with Tao Li (57.94) a distant fourth.

The top four went below the 'A' qualifying mark of 58.45s for December's SEA Games in Laos and while the top two will swim the individual event, the quintet could form the 4x100m relay team there.

The much-anticipated clash between Ting

Wen and Tao Li, 19, failed to materialise. The top four swimmers went stroke-for-stroke in the first 50 metres, but Ting Wen pulled away on the final lap to win with ease.

Ting Wen will be Singapore's flagbearer at the inaugural Asian Youth Games, which officially opens here on June 29, and she is pleased with her form.

"This is a confidence booster for me. I came here to see where my level of fitness is right now. I feel better now that I know I can go faster," she said.

"I'm looking forward to the Asian Youth Games and the honour of carrying the flag out for Singapore."

### TAO LI DISTRACTED

This year's national championships is the only qualifying meet for the SEA Games, except for swimmers based overseas who will have to stipulate which event they will use to try to make their mark.

Tao Li's coach, Peter Churchill, was not surprised with the outcome. He said his charge had been concentrating on her studies and had come to the event aiming

Rewriting national records is all in a day's work for Ting Wen, who set a new mark in the 100m freestyle. AFP



only to finish in the top four to qualify for the relay squad.

The Sports School student was back in the pool six minutes after the 100m race for the 200m backstroke, and the Olympic finalist in the 100m butterfly did not fare much better, finishing third with a time of 2:32.21s, way off her national record of 2:17.55s.

Shana Lim was the only qualifier for the SEA Games in the event when she touched home first with a time of 2:19.16, going under the 'A' qualifying mark of 2:21.43.

Said Tao Li: "I didn't expect to swim such a bad race. Maybe it's because I've not been putting in enough work. Swimming back-to-back finals was also to my disadvantage. I hope to be given another chance to qualify for the SEA Games, perhaps for the Hong Kong Open coming up."

Rainer Ng won the men's 200m backstroke event in 2:08.32, one second under the SEA Games 'A' qualifying mark.

In the men's 400m IM, Pang Sheng Jun and Marcus Cheah qualified for the SEA Games.