

2010 YOUTH OLYMPICS

A good report card

Four S'pore swimmers have met 'A' qualifying mark as year-long window closes

TANYO-HINN

yohinn@mediacorp.com.sg

SINGAPORE — By the end of this month, the Singapore Swimming Association (SSA) will form a 16-strong provisional squad for this August's 2010 Youth Olympic Games.

And when the year-long qualifying window for the Games closed yesterday, only four athletes — national swimmers Amanda Lim, Clement Lim, Shana Lim and Rainer Ng — met the Youth Olympics' "A" qualifying mark set by aquatics world body Fina.

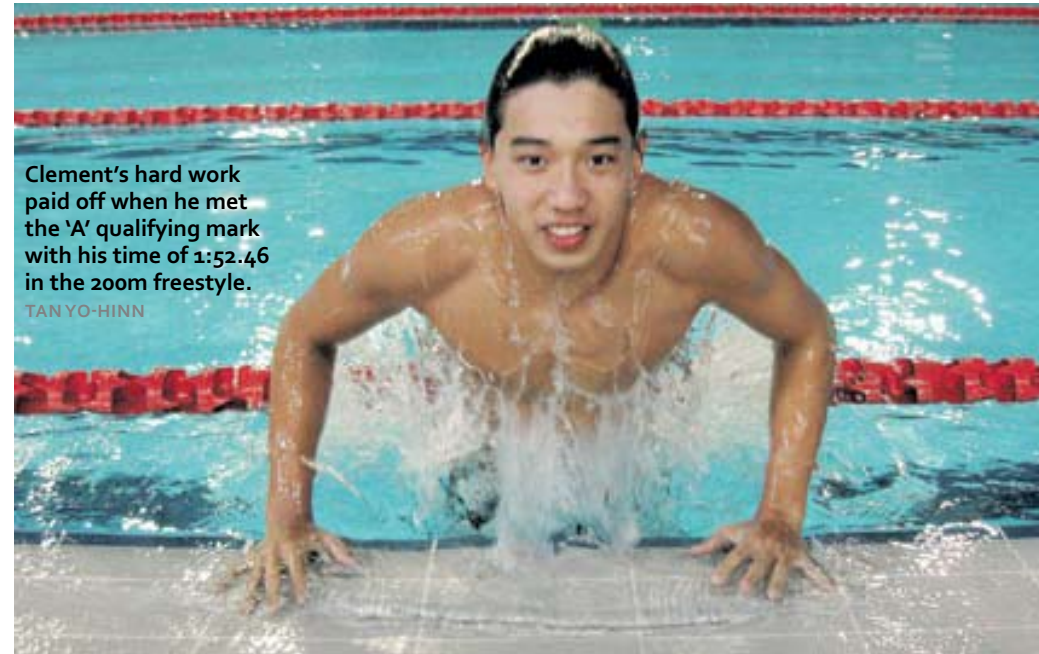
Nonetheless, SSA president Jeffrey Leow believes it is a sign that the sport here is progressing.

"I don't think that's a problem," he told MediaCorp last night at the 41st National Age Group Championships (NAGC) at the Singapore Sports School.

"For the (2008) Beijing Olympics, we only had Tao Li who made the 'A' qualifying mark. But now we have four making the mark for an Olympic event. In fact, it demonstrates we're moving forward that more are achieving an Olympic 'A' mark.

"That we now have four who have met that mark is a very good sign."

Amanda, 17, met the "A" qualifying



Clement's hard work paid off when he met the 'A' qualifying mark with his time of 1:52.46 in the zoom freestyle.

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mark for the girls' 50m freestyle (26.32secs) after registering 25.38 at last year's Asian Youth Games.

Shana, 17, also met the mark in the girls' 50m backstroke (28.87) with a time of 28.58 at the 41st NAGC, and 100m backstroke (1min 03.86s) with a time of 1:03.25 at last year's Fina World Championships in Rome.

In the boys' category, Rainer, 17, met the "A" mark in the 100m backstroke (57.07) after clocking 56.73 at last year's SEA Games. Meanwhile Clement, who turns 17 next month, did likewise for the 200m freestyle (1:52.53), registering 1:52.46 at the meet.

DEADLINE: FRIDAY

Today, the SSA are expected to receive nominations and appeals from the various coaches for places in the provisional squad.

A four-man SSA selection committee, which includes Leow, will study the nominations and appeals and are expected to decide the final 16 of eight boys and eight girls by Friday for nomination to the Singapore National Olympic Council for the Games.

The 16 will be trimmed to a final squad of eight — four boys and four girls — by June

for the Youth Olympics from Aug 14-26.

Despite having met the "A" qualifying mark, Amanda and Clement know they are not guaranteed a spot.

"I'm very honoured and happy, as I worked really hard for this, and it's paid off," said Clement, a first-year student in the Sports School's Auckland University of Technology thru-train programme and the Most Valuable Male Swimmer of the 41st NAGC.

"I was at the Countdown (at the Padang) when Singapore won the bid to host the YOG, I've been looking forward to participate in it. Being the first YOG and on homegrown is something special."

Amanda, the region's fastest female swimmer after winning the 50m freestyle dash (25.82secs) at last year's SEA Games in Laos, hopes to use this week's Amsterdam Swim Cup — a Youth Olympics qualifier for Dutch swimmers — to help improve her standard.

"I take part in a lot of meets, but usually not with my own age group," said Amanda. "So I'll be looking out for those who may qualify for the Youth Olympics and see where I stand against my European peers."

CAN I LEARN TO FACE MY FEARS?

