

# DAZZLING JAZREEL

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## Bowler is favourite for Rookie of the Year award

BY TERRENCE VOON

SIX months after making her debut in United States collegiate bowling, Singapore's Jazreel Tan is in line for a top American sports award.

The 20-year-old, a freshman at Wichita State University in Kansas, is the front runner for the coveted Rookie of the Year honour, after blitzing the lanes at inter-collegiate tournaments across the country.

Jazreel is leading the nationwide rankings for first-year keglers, with an average score of about 200 pinfalls per game – nearly six pinfalls ahead of her nearest rival.

The Rookie of the Year award, which will be announced next month, will be decided by the National Collegiate Bowling Coaches Association.

Based on average scores, the Singaporean is also the fifth-best female college bowler in the US, fewer than five pinfalls behind the leader.

"It was a little tough at first, but I've definitely learnt a lot since I came here," she said.

"My mental game has improved. So has my consistency and my ability to read the lanes.

The sports management undergraduate was no slouch in the schoolwork department either. Her grade point average (GPA) of 3.7 out of a possible four after one semester earned her an academic

All-American award.

This accolade is handed out annually to outstanding student-athletes in US colleges with a GPA of at least 3.5.

"I certainly didn't expect to perform so well," she added. "I've spent a lot of time studying. Since I arrived here, I've been very disciplined."

Jazreel is the first Singaporean to bowl for the Wichita team, the reigning US men and women's college champions.

The Shockers, as they are known, are currently leading the men's division and are a close second in the women's division.

Jazreel, the 2007 World Women's Championships Masters silver medallist, has contributed to that success, featuring in all nine tournaments since her arrival last October.

She was part of the team that clinched titles at the Mid States Tournament in Kansas, the Blue and Gold Classic in Indiana, as well as the Team Match Games and S.I. Elite Collegiate Tournament, both in Illinois.

The season culminates next month in the National Championships. But Jazreel is already winning plaudits for her stellar form.

She is due to return in May for the Singapore Open and may yet feature for the Republic at the Asian Games in November, provided she can get time off from school.

Said national head coach Meryvn Foo:

"It's an achievement for Jazreel to maintain her scores in both her schoolwork and bowling, especially since she's on the road with the team every two weeks.

"She's a good example to our younger bowlers here."

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Jazreel Tan is the first Singaporean to bowl for the Wichita State University team. ST FILE PHOTO

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JAZREEL TAN, sports management undergraduate at Wichita State University