



Matthew wants to compete at the Asian and World Junior meets in July. But his national service stint begins next month. ST FILE PHOTO

Long jumper's NS deferment case under review

■ BY JONATHAN WONG

MATTHEW Goh may yet compete at July's Asian and World Junior Athletics Championships in Vietnam and Canada.

The 18-year-old long jumper has received a letter from the Ministry of Defence, informing him that his appeal to defer the start of his national service stint for three months is under review and a decision will be made shortly.

Said Matthew: "It's good news that

Mindef is willing to recognise that I am trying to achieve my dreams.

"But I don't want to get ahead of myself and start celebrating when nothing is confirmed yet."

The former Singapore Sports School student had seemed destined to miss the two biennial Under-20 meets as he was due to report for nine weeks of basic military training late next month.

But the Singapore Athletic Association lodged an appeal on his behalf to the Central Manpower Base. His father Mach also

made a similar request to Central Singapore District Mayor Zainudin Nordin.

Last year, Matthew rewrote his national record at the SEA Games with a 7.62-metre leap. He is aiming to reach 7.8m by next month.

It is not an unrealistic target, said his coach Valeri Obidko, given that the jumper improved his personal best by over 40cm in the past year.

Matthew's effort in Laos would have secured him the bronze medal in the last editions of the World and Asian Junior

competitions. The last Singaporean athlete to win a medal at the Asian Junior meet was shot putter Wan Lay Chi, who finished third in 2004.

Said Matthew: "People don't understand that competing in Juniors is a very important stepping stone to the development of an athlete."

The likes of sprinter Usain Bolt, long-distance runner Haile Gebrselassie and heptathlon champion Carolina Klufft all won medals at the World Junior meet before going on to star at the Olympics.