

It's a clean sweep



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SINGAPORE — The Republic's young sailors made a clean sweep of the Asian qualifiers for the 2010 Youth Olympics in Pattaya over the weekend.

They beat 50 others from Thailand, Japan, United Arab Emirates, India, China, Malaysia and Indonesia in the first continental qualifier for the Youth Games to be held in Singapore from Aug 14 to 26.

This year's Byte CII world champion and Asian Youth Games gold medallist Darren Choy (picture), 15, finished first among the Youth Games hopefuls in the boys' category with 38 points from 16 races. Team-mates Nathan Tang and Terence Choo were second and third on 42 and 46 points respectively.

In the girls' event, Singaporeans Airlie Ruth Ho, Natasha Michiko Yokoyama and Asian Youth Games silver medallist Najwa Jumali finished in that order.

With Singapore already assured of two automatic slots (one boy and one girl), the three qualifying places for boys went to Thailand's Supakorn Pongwicchan, Muhamad Amirul Shafiq Jais of Malaysia and China's Wang Zili, while the trio of Gu Min (China), Khairunneeta Mohd Afendy (Malaysia) and Thailand's Jittiwat Thanawitwilat took the slots for girls.

Thailand's Keerati Bualong claimed the Open Byte gold medal, and Singaporeans Darren and Nathan took the silver and bronze, respectively. The girls' Open crown was claimed by Airlie, with the silver and bronze going to Kamolwan Chanyim of Thailand and Natasha.

Darren, Terence and Najwa will now head to the Byte CII European Championships in Imperia, Italy, from Dec 3 to 7 for more races. **LOW LIN FHOONG**