

# Liu and Cheng come out on top Down Under

**SINGAPORE** — The main target for national sailors Justin Liu and Sherman Cheng this year is to defend their Asian Games title.

Yesterday, the duo began their season on a winning note, when they bagged the International 420 Class 2009/2010 Australian Championship, which was held from Dec 27 to Jan 3 at the Largs Bay Sailing Club in Adelaide.

Liu and Cheng topped the 54-strong boys' 420 regatta for the second successive year. They won with 21 nett points from 12 races, finishing ahead of Australians Matthew Jerwood and Patrick Vos (24), and Angus Galoway and Alexander Gough (32).

In a telephone interview from Adelaide



Cheng (left) and Liu (right) won with 21 nett points from 12 races.  
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yesterday, both Liu and Cheng told Mediagroup the win was even more satisfying because they hadn't competed or trained together for nearly six months.

Liu had to prepare for his "A" level examinations and Cheng, a first-year student with the Auckland University of Technology,

said: "It felt strange at first. But after a week of training, everything just gelled. We knew if we could translate our form in training into competition, we stood a good chance."

Liu, a former Raffles Junior College student now awaiting enlistment into National Service, added: "We won this last

year, but I feel like we've exceeded our expectations here."

Liu and Cheng are gearing up to defend their 420 Asian Games gold medal, won in Doha in 2006. The 16th Asiad will be held in Guangzhou, China, from Nov 12 to Nov 27.

The pair will compete in top-level meets like the Asian Sailing Championships in Guangzhou in March, and will also undergo training camps in Europe before they defend their continental crown.

SingaporeSailing enjoyed their best outing at the Asian Games in Doha, emerging with five gold, three silver and two bronze medals. Said Liu: "First and foremost, we have to get selected."

Wanting to take it one step at a time, Cheng said: "Winning here has gained us selection to the Asian Sailing Championships, and that's very important in our preparations towards our main target."

**TANYO-HINN**