

# One leap, three records

## Matthew now a SEA Games medal hopeful after record-breaking long jump in Hanoi

Valerie Chia

With one leap, Matthew Goh rewrote three long jump records and also qualified for December's South-east Asia Games.

The 18-year-old's fourth jump of 7.53m at the SEA Junior Championships in Hanoi yesterday won him the gold and bettered the meet mark, national open and the national Under-20 records.

It also met the SEA Games qualifying mark of 7.48m – the bronze medal distance at the last Games.

Matthew's teammate, Mariam Shazana, was also in record-breaking form.

The 17-year-old erased her own

national open and junior triple-jump marks of 11.70m with 11.73m in her second attempt.

Despite her achievement, Mariam's coach, Valeri Obidko, said he was not completely satisfied with her performance. He felt she could have jumped over 12m.

However, Matthew's performance put a smile on the Russian's face.

"He has qualified for the SEA Games, so we can peacefully prepare as he won't have to compete any more till then," said Obidko, adding that a SEA Games medal is a realistic target.

Yet, it had not begun well for Matthew. His first jump was a dismal 6.78m, after which he over-stepped on his next two attempts. Then came his record-breaker.

Said Matthew, who retained his 2008 title: "I wasn't expecting to jump 7.53m. When I heard the re-



PHOTO COURTESY OF MACH GOH

Matthew Goh recovered from a poor first jump to register 7.53m and win gold at the SEA Junior Championships.

sult, my knees went weak. I couldn't believe it, it's one of the happiest moments of my life.

"This is a breakthrough as I've never done a personal best overseas before. It's given me confidence to do well at the SEA Games too."

His distance eclipsed Calvin Cheng's national open and junior marks of 7.45m, set last year, and

the 2007 SEA Junior meet mark of 7.19m.

Dipna Lim Prasad added to the record haul when she clocked 15.20sec in the 100m hurdles, shaving 0.27sec off Amanda Tan's 2008 mark.

There was also more good news for Singapore jumpers – albeit from off the track.

National triple-jumper Stefan Tseng kept his hopes of qualifying for the SEA Games alive after an MRI scan on his right heel revealed that he had suffered only a bruise.

He picked up the heel injury in April and further aggravated it last week at the Singapore Junior Athletic Championships, amid fears that it could have been a stress fracture.

But Stefan has been advised not to put impact on his right foot for two weeks. However, he will resume training soon as he seeks to qualify for the SEA Games at July's Vietnam Open.

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