

After near miss, Martina breaks air rifle record

Nicole Chia

Martina Veloso almost broke the national women's 10m air rifle record last month, but faltered on her last shot to miss by a mere 0.4.

Yesterday, the 17-year-old made no such mistake, regrouping from her earlier disappointment to fire a 421.0 and better Ho Xiu Yi's national record of 420.3 set last year.

Both events were internal selection trials organised by the Singapore Shooting Association (SSA) at Safra Yishun.

While Martina revealed that coming so close to breaking the na-

tional record last month – her score was 419.9 – had made her “even more determined” to do so yesterday, she revealed that the bid had been a distraction.

She admitted that she “cannot always be thinking about wanting to break the national record” and that “thinking only of the results will divert my focus from what I actually need to do – which is to work on perfecting my technique”.

“I have to stay grounded,” she added, “even though I broke the national record, it doesn't mean I will keep shooting 421 at every competition – it may drop at the next competition and the only way to pre-

vent this is just to continue training hard and focus on the process.”

Still, the Nanyang Polytechnic student, the first female Singaporean to win a Shooting World Cup leg in Munich in 2014, was glad her training over the past few months had paid dividends.

Adding that it was not easy balancing schoolwork and travelling for competitions, including the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup in New Delhi in February, she said: “It helps that I shot this score... it means that, in a way, my hard work has paid off and I'm really happy the results show it.”

Yesterday's event marked the conclusion of the first phase of air rifle selection for the SEA Games, and the SSA's high performance executive Ng Jing Hui said Martina's score was a “good ending” and that shooters have until June to make the cut for the Aug 19-31 Games.

Ng added: “It's another milestone for Singapore shooting that Martina broke the national record during such an intense selection period.

“The (Singapore) shooters in general are very mature and they cope with their emotions and stress levels very well.”

Martina shot 415.6 in New Delhi

to finish 10th out of 41 competitors in the women's 10m air rifle qualifiers, and also made her international debut in the 50m rifle three positions at the Feb 22-March 4 meet. She was 19th in the 32-strong field with 572 points and hopes to represent Singapore at the Kuala Lumpur Games in both events.

The teenager's build-up to the Games is set to be packed, with two overseas competitions next month – the South-east Asia Shooting Championships in KL and the ISSF World Cup in Munich – and the ISSF Junior World Championships in Germany the following month.

She added: “I'm not really setting targets (for these events); I just hope to go there and do my best to prepare well for the SEA Games.”

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