



Martina Veloso at the KL SEA Games where she won the 10m air rifle gold. She kept up her good form at yesterday's CSF & OSF C'ships. ST FILE PHOTO

Pressure galvanises Veloso to a bronze

Lim Say Heng

Three months after winning the SEA Games gold, Singapore shooter Martina Veloso maintained her good form by clinching a bronze in the women's 10m air rifle at the CSF and OSF (Commonwealth Shooting Federation and Oceania Shooting Federation) Championships in Gold Coast, Australia, yesterday.

In her first overseas meet since the Kuala Lumpur Games in August, the 18-year-old Nanyang Polytechnic student scored 224.8 points in the final. The championships are a test event for next April's Commonwealth Games, which will also be held in Gold Coast.

Indian duo Pooja Ghatkar (249.8) and Anjum Moudgil (248.7) were first and second respectively, while Singapore's Tessa Neo (204.4) and Jasmine Ser (162.8) were placed fourth and sixth.

Ser, 27, had topped the qualifiers with 420 points while Veloso was second with 418 points and Neo, 19, qualified seventh with 413 points.

The trio will next compete in the 50m rifle prone event on Saturday, as well as the 50m rifle three-positions event on Sunday.

The Singaporean shooters were not available for comment yesterday.

Of Veloso, Singapore Shooting Association (SSA) high-performance manager Jeanine Heng said: "Her results show that perhaps she has come to a point where her performance has stabilised.

"Her qualification score of 418 is a very good score and it is a good sign for her that even after the SEA Games break, she has managed to maintain her standards."

Heng added that all three Singaporean shooters had done well in the event, partly because of the added competition within the national women's air rifle team.

While Ser, Veloso and Neo have been the main national-level rifle specialists, younger sharpshooters such as 18-year-old Adele Tan, Ho Xiu Yi (17) and Lim Yee Xien (21) have come to the fore since last December.

The athletes compete regularly in internal SSA shoots, which range from twice a month to once every two months.

The shooters have until the end of February next year to convince the SSA selectors of their places in the Commonwealth Games, with only two athletes to be chosen for each event.

Results from specified local and overseas meets, like next month's Asian Airgun Championships in Japan, will be taken into consideration.

"Since there are at least six of them (who are national-level rifle specialists), they are no longer sure of their places in overseas competitions," Heng said.

"They'd feel the pressure to keep up with their training and standards."