

TEONG SETS SIGHTS ON AN EVENTFUL YEAR

S'pore freestyle specialist hopes to expand Asian Games schedule

Lester Wong

He rapidly rose to prominence after claiming a shock win in the 50m freestyle at last year's SEA Games but Teong Tzen Wei believes he can expand his repertoire to include the 100m free and 50m butterfly at August's Asian Games.

Since completing national service last November, the 20-year-old freestyle specialist has doubled his workouts to 12 a week, with three gym and nine pool sessions.

The increased intensity has increased his confidence of breaking Joseph Schooling's 50m free national record (22.47sec) at this week's Singapore National Age-Group Swimming Championships (Snag) and achieving new personal bests in the 100m free and 50m fly.

Teong, whose fastest 50m free is 22.55, believes he can go under 22.3 at the OCBC Aquatic Centre on Sunday. He said: "That'd set me up well for a sub-22 at the Asian Games."

While the 'A' qualifying time of 22.91 is within his grasp, he is cautiously optimistic of adding more



COMING ALONG

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STEPHAN WIDMER, national head coach, on Teong Tzen Wei's (above) prospects in the 100m freestyle.

events for the Indonesian Asiad.

He recorded a 52.82 personal best in the 100m free heats yesterday while his best 50m fly timing is 24.6. Both times are some way off the 'B' marks of 50.61 and 24.32.

"I'm definitely not giving up on the 100m free," said Teong, who skipped yesterday's 100m free final to rest for today's 50m fly.

"My coaches have been training me for that and I'm going to give it and the 50m fly my all. The Snag will be a good platform to gauge the effects of my training."

National head coach Stephan Widmer said that Teong has the potential to clock 50sec in the 100m free but emphasised that improvement will be incremental rather than exponential.

Said the Australian: "He is naturally talented at movement and feeling the water. He is doing everything the coaches tell him to do.

"But he is still a step away. Improvement is going to be step by step – from 53sec to 52 to 51."

Teong's week got off to a good start on Monday, when he was announced as one of two recipients of the Singapore Management University's (SMU) Yip Pin Xiu Scholarship alongside wakeboarder and multiple SEA Games gold medallist Sasha Christian.

The bond-free bursary is named after Paralympic champion and SMU social sciences alumna Yip.

Teong and Christian, 24, will enrol in August to study business management and social sciences respectively.

Said Christian, who is in Chile for a training stint before Sunday's IWWF World Wakeboard Championships in Argentina: "I am very excited to be joining SMU this August and look forward to growing holistically as a scholar-athlete, fully immersing myself in a dynamic environment where the world is constantly evolving."

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