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Headline: A step forward for S'pore weightlifting

Chua set to be first local male lifter to compete at Commonwealth Games in 24 years

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**SINGAPORE** – He lifted 286kg at the World Championships last October in Wroclaw, Poland. Two months later at the Commonwealth Championships in Penang, Malaysia, he managed 308kg.

On Sunday at the Singapore National Championships held at the Singapore Management University, 22-year-old Lewis Chua heaved a personal best of 316kg (snatch 136kg, clean and jerk 180kg), a total that was 4kg better than the minimum set by the Singapore National Olympic Council (SNOC) to qualify for the July 23-Aug 3 Commonwealth Games.

For Chua to win his place in Glasgow in four months' time represents a step forward for weightlifting here.

The last time a Singapore lifter competed at the quadrennial event was four years ago in New Delhi, when Helena Wong became the sport's first Singapore woman at the Games. She finished eighth in the 53kg class.

Chua, who will compete in the 105kg-and-over category if he is allowed to go, will be the first local man since Teo Yong Joo wore national colours to the 1990 edition in Auckland, New Zealand. Teo came in fifth in the 56kg competition, having taken bronze four years earlier.

Singapore Weightlifting Federation (SWF) President Tom Liaw was a relieved man yesterday as he rushed to submit Chua's mark to the

SELECTION PANEL HAS TO ENDORSE HIS QUALIFYING MARK

# A STEP FORWARD FOR S'PORE WEIGHTLIFTING



SNOC for consideration.

"We are slowly making progress and I hope he gets the nod for Scotland," said Liaw. "Slowly, we will raise standards and the only way our lifters can improve is to go for competitions like these."

SNOC Secretary-General Chris Chan said Chua will be given the go-ahead once the selection panel endorses the lifter's qualifying mark.

"We are always trying to help our

**Lewis Chua will compete in the 105kg-and-over category at the Commonwealth Games if he is allowed to go.**

PHOTO: NORMAN JAILLET

athletes compete at such Games and, if they meet the benchmark, they will go," said Chan.

Last December's Myanmar SEA Games did not include the 105kg-and-over category and weightlifting has been dropped from the 2015 edition, to be held here.

Had it been included, Chua would have needed 330kg to qualify for the SEA Games, which features a higher quality field, and with Indonesia,

Thailand and now Vietnam dominating, Singapore is unlikely to offer a meaningful challenge.

That has not deterred Chua from setting his sights for the 2019 Asian Games in Vietnam and dreaming about the Olympics in Japan the following year.

"With my lift, I am now ranked fifth among the competitors heading to Glasgow," he said. "There will be powerful lifters from Australia and the Pacific Islands and I am going to work hard to get on the podium. It won't be easy but I think it is possible."

Singapore weightlifting legend Tan Howe Liang first struck gold at the Commonwealth in 1958 before going on to bag the Republic's first Olympic medal at the 1960 Games in Rome, with silver in 60-67.5 kg category.

The sport drifted into obscurity after the 1993 SEA Games, with Liaw reviving it in 2001 after registering the SWF as the new governing body here.

Said Liaw: "It takes time to rebuild the sport, but lifters like Lewis, Helena and (former national thrower) Scott Wong are giving new life to the sport."

"It is a pity weightlifting won't be here for the SEA Games next year because it would have given us a big push to promote it. But we will work on the sport and take each step at a time."