



Mark Lee (left) and older twin Timothy have both qualified for next year's Hanoi SEA Games by making the grade at the National Championships yesterday. PHOTO: COURTESY OF TOMMY LOW/SSA

# Lee twins diving on in Olympic bid

Laura Chia

Divers Mark and Timothy Lee thought they would be retired by now. But, with the Olympic Games postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic, the twins are still plugging away.

Despite the "big smack" to their plans, Tokyo remains in their sights after qualifying for next year's SEA Games in Hanoi at the 11th Singapore National Diving Championships yesterday. Mark, 26, scored 354.55 points in the Open 3m springboard at the OCBC Aquatic Centre to beat the qualifying score (325.50) and win ahead of Timothy (332.90).

But Timothy said there are still things to improve on ahead of April's Fina Diving World Cup, a qualifying meet for the July 23-Aug 8 Olympics. He estimates that a score of 380 is needed to reach the top 18 at the World Cup and qualify.

He said: "I felt some of my dives could've been better... I have to work on stabilising my mental process as I go into competitions."

The twins will also have to juggle training and school – Timothy is a final-year mechanical engineering undergraduate at the National University of Singapore, while Mark is studying business at the Singapore Management University. While Timothy will graduate in May, Mark has extended his studies by a year and will graduate in 2022 instead.

"It was quite a big smack to our plans because Mark and I are planners," said Timothy, who has now pencilled the Nov 21-Dec 2 SEA Games as their swansong. "We arranged our modules in preparation of the Olympics... so a lot of adjustments had to be made."

"We still want to go to the Olympics, so we've done what's needed to be done to help us be at our best when the qualifying period comes."

Tokyo-bound Jonathan Chan and partner Max Lee scored 296.64 in the men's 10m synchronised platform. They were the only competitors in their event.

Chan, the first Singaporean diver to qualify for the Olympics, felt the competition was a good warm-up for bigger meets next year.

The 23-year-old said after his first competition since the Fina Diving Grand Prix in November last year: "What I'll be working on now is consistency of my dives. Because even if you train every day, sometimes things just go haywire and you get a bad dive on competition day."

In the women's Open 3m springboard, Ashlee Tan, 20, also qualified for the SEA Games with 242.05, just above the 241.25 needed. Fong Kay Yian (220.50) and Mira Dewan (190.80) finished behind Tan, who made her SEA Games debut in 2015.

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