

TAY COMPLETES GOLD SET

S'pore bowler wins world youth singles event, the only title to elude her in 2022

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Having worked on her physical and mental game, Arianne Tay improved from failing to reach the semi-finals two years ago to winning the women's singles gold medal at the International Bowling Federation (IBF) World Youth Championships on July 18.

The 20-year-old national bowler defeated Finland's Stella Lokfors 216-168, 199-156 in the best-of-three final at the Fiesta Bowling Centre in Incheon, South Korea, to clinch the only title to elude her in the previous edition in 2022.

"It definitely feels pretty surreal, I didn't expect it going into this competition," said the second-year business student at the Singapore Management University.

Tay, who had to win a tiebreak to



From far left: The Singapore quartet of Ning Tay, Colleen Pee, Arianne Tay and Nur Irdina Hazly clinched the women's team silver at the IBF World Youth Championships on July 18. PHOTO: ASIAN BOWLING FEDERATION

reach the semi-finals, added that she was also "lucky".

After finishing third in the 87-strong field, she progressed to the matchplay phase as part of the top 16, who were then split into two groups.

Her pre-tournament preparations, which included building her ability to handle pressure and improving on her accuracy, came into

good stead after she was tied-second with Japan's Kiri Watanabe in Group B, behind Lokfors.

Steadying her nerves and making her shots count, she beat Watanabe 268-192 in a roll-off to reach the semi-finals, where she overcame Yumi Seragaki of Peru 228-211, 242-222, paving her way to gold.

Tay, who had earned a joint-bronze in the women's doubles

with Colleen Pee on July 14, then teamed up with Pee, Ning Tay and Nur Irdina Hazly to win a silver in the women's team event, after losing 221-211, 236-190 to Malaysia in the final.

With a tally of one gold, one silver and one bronze, Singapore finished as the women's champions, and were second in the overall medal table behind Germany, who won

two golds (men's singles and doubles).

At the 2022 edition in Sweden, the Republic had finished top with four golds (women's singles, doubles, team and mixed team) and one bronze (women's doubles).

Pee, 20, the 2022 women's singles champion, said after their defeat by the Malaysian women's team: "Standing on the podium with a silver medal around our neck is an amazing yet disappointing feeling as we had our heart set on the gold medal, but Malaysia were exceptionally tough opponents."

Ning Tay and Irdina shared similar sentiments. "It's a mixed feeling. While I'm really happy that we made the final and walked away with a medal, there's somehow still a tinge of disappointment lingering wishing that things worked out our way," said Ning, 20.

But Singapore Sports School student Irdina, 17, who was making her tournament debut, added: "The memories and lessons learnt were better than the gold medal because with that we can work on our weaknesses to further grow as a team."

National assistant coach Faizal Chew credited the women's team for staying spirited throughout the tournament.

The 39-year-old said: "Arianne bowled great the whole week and also did really well to focus on her process and keeping her and the team's focus on the present. Together with the team, they did really well to stay together and keep spirits up despite the long days of the tournament format."

Meanwhile, Singapore's Peter Khor reached the men's singles matchplay round, where the 20-year-old finished fifth in his group, three places below a semi-final spot. That was the furthest that the Republic had gone in the men's events.

Following her singles gold, Arianne has set her sights on her upcoming tournaments, starting with the July 31-Aug 3 Thailand International Open in Bangkok.

She said: "I'm hoping to make Singapore proud anywhere I compete, continue doing the best I can in all the tournaments I go to and enjoy every game."

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