

SPORT

Schooling wins 50m fly, happy with his timing

Olympic 100m butterfly champion Joseph Schooling won the 50m event at the second stop of the Texas Senior Circuit on Thursday, as he steps up his preparations for next month's swimming World Championships.

The Singaporean won in 23.51 seconds, ahead of American Bryce Bohman (24.43) and Turkey's

Turker Ayar (24.44). His time is the 12th fastest in the world this year and is not far off his personal best (PB) and national record of 23.25sec.

Schooling, who turns 22 next Thursday, has qualified for four events at next month's world championships – the 50m, 100m and 200m fly, as well as the 100m

freestyle. The meet will be held in Budapest, Hungary.

He told The Straits Times: "I am pleased with the time I clocked at this meet. I have been working on a number of things, especially the starts for this race and it is good to see that it is all coming together. Clocking the 12th-fastest time this year is not too bad and with about

45 days to Budapest, it feels good."

The University of Texas at Austin student said last month that he is confident of winning more than one medal at the world championships.

He clinched the 100m fly bronze at the last edition of the biennial meet in 2015.

Schooling also has his eye on

Michael Phelps' 100m fly world record (49.82sec). His PB is 50.39sec, set en route to winning gold in Rio last August.

He said a good swim in the 50m fly, his first event, could set the tone for the rest of the meet.

The butterfly specialist said: "The 50m fly is important as it is part of the 100 and 200 fly so you always

want everything to go well in the first 50. That will get rid of the nerves and give you confidence that you can stick to the plan for the remainder of the race."

The Texas Senior Circuit is organised by professional swim coaches and aims to provide top-quality racing for college swimmers in the United States. It is held in the long-course metre format (50m pools), a departure from the short-course yards (25-yard lengths) typical of US collegiate racing.

Chua Siang Yee

TRIAL WINNER A DOUBT FOR GAMES

Perth-based Howe unlikely to get nod from TAS after failing to meet other criteria

Chua Siang Yee

Winona Howe, the top woman finisher at the Triathlon Association of Singapore (TAS) SEA Games selection race in January, could miss out on the biennial affair in August.

The Straits Times understands that the TAS' SEA Games selection panel has informed Howe, who is studying and training in Perth, Australia, that it will recommend the withdrawal of her nomination during a TAS management committee meeting this weekend.

The top two finishers at the selection race were nominated for the SEA Games. Howe finished in 2hr 14min 24sec, ahead of Denise Chia (2:15:15).

A national sports association's final nominations have to be submitted to the Singapore National Olympic Council before Friday.

The three-member panel said it arrived at this decision as Howe did not fulfil other obligations listed as part of its Games selection criteria, including submitting a training plan and keeping TAS "updated on their (the athletes') training programme and racing progress".

TAS high performance manager Eugene Ong, who sits on the panel, told ST: "Athletes were required to submit training plans but Winona submitted hers very late despite numerous reminders.

"After the selection race, we had a briefing where we specified what the athletes needed to submit."

Howe said she had tried to comply with the TAS' selection guidelines. The 22-year-old admitted that she submitted her training plan late and was told by Steven Chan, chairman of TAS' development committee, that it was not comprehensive enough.

Howe, who also competed at the 2015 SEA Games where she crashed out in the bike leg, said: "I was told it was not detailed enough but TAS didn't tell me what details they wanted. I know it's urgent so I asked Steven for examples but he didn't give me any. It wasn't like this in 2015. Previously, we listed what we were doing each day and



the distance and it was enough." To that, Ong replied: "Athletes have to be responsible for their actions. These are elite athletes we are talking about."

A poor race in Taipei on Sunday did Howe no favours either. She finished last in a 15-strong field with a time of 2:44:51, although she said she was suffering from a viral infection. Fellow Singaporean Jeremia Christy Suriadi was ninth in 2:20:27 and is on the Games' squad's reserve list.

Howe, who is pursuing a diploma in hospitality management at the Australian Professional Skills Insti-

tute in Perth, has been given till today to appeal against the decision.

She said she would submit more training plans to the TAS before the appeal deadline although she remains unclear on what is required.

She said: "It's very tiresome, with all the documents they want from me. The whole incident is really stressing me."

"If they feel that there is someone better than me, I will accept their decision and concentrate on qualifying for next year's Commonwealth and Asian Games."

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DIFFERENT REQUIREMENTS

It wasn't like this in 2015. Previously, we listed what we were doing each day and the distance and it was enough.



WINONA HOWE, Singapore's triathlon representative at the 2015 SEA Games, on TAS' selection criteria this year.

BE ACCOUNTABLE

Athletes have to be responsible for their actions. These are elite athletes we are talking about.



EUGENE ONG, TAS high performance manager, on the expectations the national sports association has of its athletes.

Winona Howe (right) and Denise Chia racing during the SEA Games triathlon selection trial in January. They were the top two finishers and were nominated to compete at the Aug 19-30 Kuala Lumpur Games but Howe could miss out.

ST PHOTO: ARIFFIN JAMAR

Dragon boaters flushed with success in HK

Nicholas De Silva

Singapore sent a full squad of 46 rowers to compete across three main categories at the recent Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races and reaped the rewards.

Both the men's and women's national dragon boat teams put up a solid performance last weekend, achieving a record medal haul of eight golds and one silver.

The results were a massive improvement on last year's showing when they had to settle for a string of second-placed finishes.

Over 5,000 athletes from 12 countries and regions contested a total of 27 titles. Singapore's entries were in the open, women's and mixed categories.

The men's team accounted for two golds and one silver.

They won the International

Open 22-crew standard boat final and grand final. However, in the 12-crew small boat final, the team were pipped to the gold and had to settle for second place.

The women's team contributed three golds, winning the female iteration of the same races.

A combined effort by selected members from both teams added three more gold medals to the tally when they won all the events in the International Mixed category.

Women's team captain Chua Jia Min, 21, attributed her team's success to hard work and consistency: "I think everyone was very committed and gave their best during training... this allowed us to gel well."

The Singapore Dragon Boat Association (SDBA) said the meet served as a build-up to the World Nations Championships in October and is one of the key performance indicators used for selection.



Said SDBA vice-president Heng Wei Quan: "The results augur well but they still need to work hard as there will be stiffer competition from various international teams in October."

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• The SDBA is conducting a crowdfunding initiative for the teams' bid to participate in October's World Nations Championships in Kunming, China: <http://bit.ly/2rTGzwr>

The Singapore team beat Chinese Taipei and the United States to become International Open standard boat champions. In addition, they won seven other gold medals and one silver. PHOTO: HONG KONG TOURISM BOARD

SportsWorld

Lee twins take gold and silver at diving c'ships

SEA Games-bound local divers Timothy and Mark Lee clinched the gold and silver respectively in the men's 1m springboard on Day 1 of the National Diving Championships yesterday.

Compatriots Myra Lee and Ashlee Tan settled for silver and bronze behind Kiwi Shaye Broddington in the women's 1m springboard.

Moyes slapped with \$52,000 fine for remark

LONDON • Former Sunderland manager David Moyes was fined £30,000 (\$52,000) yesterday for suggesting to a female reporter in March she might "get a slap", England's Football Association announced. The 54-year-old made the

remark, for which he apologised to BBC reporter Vicki Sparks because he was unhappy with a question following the Black Cats' 0-0 draw with Burnley in the Premier League on March 18. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Hull announce Slutsky as new boss to replace Silva

LONDON • English Championship football team Hull said yesterday that they have appointed Russian Leonid Slutsky as manager after the departure of Marco Silva, following their relegation from the Premier League.

Slutsky led Russian side CSKA Moscow to three Russian league titles during his 2009-16 tenure, and also became the head coach of the Russian national team in 2015, before stepping down last December. REUTERS