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SHOOTING

S'pore shooters off target at World Cup

Doha Asian Games women's 10m air rifle silver winners fail to make the cut-off

By Jeanette Wang

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UNDER PRESSURE: Vanessa will see a sports psychologist when she returns to Singapore.

SINGAPORE'S shooters were off target at the World Cup in Fort Benning in United States yesterday.

Vanessa Yong, 18, fired 382 out of a possible 400 to finish 79th among 98 shooters in the women's 10-metre air rifle event.

Anderson Junior College student Jasmine Ser, 16, was the Republic's top-placed shooter at 21st spot with 394. Her sister, National University of Singapore freshman Adrienne, 19, was 47th with 390.

Their scores were not good enough to make the eight-woman final. The cut was 397.

China's Zhang Yi took the gold with 503.3 points, followed by Germany's Si Pfeilschifter (502.7) and American Jamie Beyerle (502.6).

Zhang and Pfeilschifter were joint top qualifiers with 399 points while Beyer had 398.

The Singaporeans, silver medallists in the 10m air rifle team event at last December's Doha Asian Games, were off the mark.

In Doha, Jasmine had shot 396, Vanessa (394) and Adrienne (393).

Singapore Shooting Association's high-performance manager Lim Meng Kia said that Jasmine and Adrienne shot close to their training averages.

Speaking over the phone from Fort Benning, he said: 'We need to give Vanessa time to settle down. She's feeling a lot of pressure since she became part of Project 0812.'

The 2006 Melbourne Commonwealth Games bronze medallist turned full-tir shooter after the Asiad. She is part of the Singapore National Olympic Council's \$7 million project to help local sportsmen win medals at the 2008 2012 Olympics.

Vanessa was so exhausted from the competition that she slept early and could not be reached for comment.

Lim said: 'She is getting a lot of media attention. She knows people are expecting her to perform. This is all new to her.'

Equipment trouble also left Jasmine and Vanessa feeling slightly frazzled th day before the event.

During the practice shoot, Jasmine discovered that her rifle was faulty. It w serviced in time for the event.

Vanessa's shooting gear did not get clearance initially. It required some modifications before it was approved by officials.

Said Lim: 'We don't know why it happened. She has taken part in many competitions and it has never happened. Many others faced the same problem, too.'

Fort Benning is the first of four ISSF World Cup events this year to award winners Olympic spots.

Olympic qualification for the 27 women's 10m air rifle slots began in 2005. slots are left.

Sydney will host the next World Cup at the end of this month, followed by Bangkok next month and Munich in June.

Kuwait's 11th Asian Shooting Championships in December will offer the fina two slots.

Vanessa, who has a personal-best of 399, told Lim that she would seek hel from a sports psychologist when she returns home.

'She knows what she has to do to improve, and that's good,' said Lim.

In the men's 10m air rifle event, Singapore's Zhang Jin shot 585 out of a possible 600 for 54th spot. Jonathan Koh was 74th (572).

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