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## Golden tears of joy

**Jasmine gets over the team missing out on a medal to be Singapore's first woman winner**

**By Terrence Voon**

BANGKOK - A TEAR ran down Jasmine Ser's face when she missed out on a team medal yesterday morning.

The shooter was still crying in the afternoon - only this time, with joy.

For the 17-year-old had turned in an Olympic-class performance to clinch the women's 10-metre air rifle gold medal.



AFTER COMING BACK FROM TWO POINTS DOWN IN THE FINAL, a teary Jasmine Ser is congratulated by sister Adrienne (left) and Vanessa Yong (right). -- ST PHOTO: EDWIN KOO

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It boosted Singapore's tally in the South-east Asia Games to eight golds, all from shooting, even before the opening ceremony on Thursday.

'Our team didn't shoot well in the morning,' said Jasmine, who was teaming up with sister Adrienne, 20, and close friend Vanessa Yong, 19.

The trio, the 2006 Asian Games silver medallists behind China, were favourites for the gold.

But it was not to be.

They finished fourth with a combined 1,158, just two points behind Vietnam on 1,160.

Gold and silver went to Thailand (1,169) and Malaysia (1,165).

The silver lining was that Jasmine was well-placed after the qualification shoot - just two points behind Thai leader Kusuma Tavisri's 393.

Adrienne and Vanessa, after failing to qualify for the eight-woman final, were busy psyching up their teammate for the final shoot.

'They told me to just go out there and whack,' said the Anderson Junior College student.

'I didn't want to disappoint them.'

She did not.

The steely teenager shrugged off the pressure, erasing the deficit halfway through the 10-shot final.

It came down to the last shot. Needing just 9.6 points out of a possible 10.9, she hit the bull's-eye for a 10.1.

Her supporters, including Singapore Shooting Association president Chng Seng Mok, erupted with relief.

The poker-faced Jasmine heard the cheers and allowed herself a rare smile.

She finally broke into tears, when Singapore rifle coach Zhang Manzhen rushed over to give her a congratulatory hug.

'Her score of 103.1 in the final is of Olympic standards,' said Zhang.

During the 2004 Athens Olympics, European champion Katerina Kurkova of the Czech Republic carded the same score to win a silver medal.

'I didn't want to look at my scores during the shoot because it would make me nervous,' said Jasmine, whose final scorecard included a near-perfect 10.8, a 10.7 and two 10.6s.

In doing so, she became Singapore's first woman gold medallist at this Games, and bagged a \$10,000 monetary award.

She was not alone, for the Republic's shooting contingent has enjoyed a