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Good at Games, bad at games

Jonathan's hopeless at shooting video games, despite two air rifle golds at SEA Games

By Terrence Voon

BANGKOK - HE WON two South-east Asia Games gold medals in his favourite air rifle event.

But 17-year-old Jonathan Koh claims to be hapless when it comes to shooting games on his Xbox console.



FIRING ON ALL CYLINDERS: With two SEA Games golds in the pocket, Jonathan now dreams of winning an Asian Games medal. -- ST PHOTO: EDWIN KOO

'I'm not very good because the action is fast and the bad guys sneak up on you,' admitted the 17-year-old.

Thankfully for Singapore, he is a lot better with a real weapon in his hands.

Jonathan soared to overnight fame when he trumped the region's best to claim the individual title in the 10m air rifle event on Wednesday.

He also bagged the team title with Ong Jun Hong and Zhang Jin to end Singapore's 34-year SEA Games gold-medal drought in the rifle and pistol events.

'If you have a dream, don't give it up. Even if I have to make detours, I will make sure my dream is kept alive.' - JONATHAN KOH, on his lifelong ambition to win an Asiad gold

For good measure, it was the Republic's 600th gold at the Games - a fact that was not lost on Jonathan when he mounted the winner's podium.

'I have helped to bring glory to Singapore. It feels good to be a part of the team that did it,' he said modestly.

The quiet teenager looks more at home with books than a fearsome rifle.

He picked up the sport as an extra-curricular activity when he was a Secondary One student at Raffles Institution (RI) four years ago.

'I wanted to get out of the uniformed group that I was in, and the air rifle looked interesting,' he said.

To his surprise, he did exceptionally well, landing regular inter-school titles in the team event.

Last year, he won the Schools National B Division individual title - and the national selectors came knocking on his door.

Since then, his rise has been meteoric.

Two golds at the South-east Asia Shooting Championships last year were followed quickly by a fifth-placed finish in the team event at the Doha Asian Games.

A win at the Singapore Open in September, coupled with this week's triumphs, confirmed his status as one of the Republic's rising stars in shooting.

His Achilles heel: handling the immense pressure that comes during competitive finals.

'The stress gets to me - that's why I admire China's Olympic champion