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SHOOTING

Jasmine 10th at Bangkok World Cup

By Jeanette Wang

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ALL IN THE HEAD: Jasmine Ser's ability to concentrate helped her do well this time round. -- THE NEW PAPER

SHE is young, fearless and was nearly on target at the International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF) World Cup in Bangkok.

Singapore's Jasmine Ser, 16, fired 396 out of a possible 400 targets to finish 10th in the 107-strong field in the women's 10-metre air rifle on Sunday.

Among the big guns at the Olympic qualifier were world record-holders Barbara Lechner of Germany and s Zhao Yinghui and Wu Liuxi of China.

Czech Katerina Kurkova, the 2004 Olympics bronze medallist, also took part.

Jasmine, an Asian Games team silver medallist, missed the eight-woman final on a countback.

Zhao and compatriot Zhang Yi, Lechner and Kazak Olga Dovgun all qualified for the final with 399 points.

Kurkova and Norway's Gyda Ellefsplas Olssen scored 398, while Serbian Lidija Mihajlovic and Ukraine's Lessia Leskiv had 396.

Still, the result was Jasmine's best in the four-legged World Cup circuit.

Last month, she was 21st among 92 shooters at the first leg in Fort Benning, USA, with 394 points.

Two weeks ago, she fired a 390 to finish 54th in the 74-shooter field at the Sydney stop.

The difference - it was all in her head.

Said the Anderson Junior College first-year student: 'After Sydney, I had some mental training with my sports psychologist, coach and high-performance manager, and that helped me to refocus.'

Her psychologist, Singapore Sports Council's Zhao Jinhong, helped Jasmine to deal better with pressure.

'A lot of young athletes can be pressured by competition goals set for them by

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the association,' said Zhao.

'But we help the athletes see these goals as motivation instead of pressure.'

So, instead of focusing on winning a slot to next year's Beijing Olympics, Jasmine channelled her concentration to her shooting action.

The result: She was 'not feeling nervous' and 'shot peacefully'.

Zhao won the closely-fought final with a 502.6 total, ahead of Fort Benning champion Zhang (502.1). Lechner bagged the bronze (502.0).

Jasmine's sister, Adrienne, was 59th (391), while Vanessa Yong was 77th (388).

Jasmine's next chance at Olympic qualification will be at next month's Munich leg.

Only three of the 27 slots for Beijing are remain, as qualifying began in 2005.

With a personal best of 399, there is no doubt she can give the big guns a run for their money - especially when paired with her fearless attitude.

'I don't care about them, even if they're big shots or Olympic champions,' said the youngster.

'In the end, in competition, it's just me shooting my own target.'

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