

# SPORTS

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## Why shooter Lee felt great – despite losing final

FOR any athlete, losing in a final is bound to be a terrible experience.

But not for Asian Games-bound shooter Lee Wung Yew.

Actually, the 40-year-old described the experience as “shiook” when he lost the men’s individual trap gold at last year’s South-east Asia Games.

The reason? He lost the final to teammate Choo Choon Seng.

Said the 15-time SEA Games gold-medallist: “I would have been upset if I had lost the final to a shooter

from another country. But losing to a teammate felt great.”

Singapore’s top marksman for nearly two decades, Lee was more than happy to share the limelight with his compatriot.

He said: “My challenge to the newer shooters is ‘If you want to do well, you have to beat me’.”

“In the past, our problem was that we had no succession plan. But we now have two SEA Games shooting champions, which means there is new blood coming through.”

He was referring to Choo and Mohamed Zain Amat, the double trap champion.

In terms of youth development, shotgun shooting has lagged behind the air rifle section, which has produced Commonwealth Games medalists Vanessa Yong, Zhang Jin and Ong Jun Hong.

But, with Choo and Zain on target, some of the pressure has been taken off Lee, who won the trap gold in the Asian Games’ Test Event two months ago.

The trio will be taking part in the trap event in Doha. Choo and Zain will be making their Asian Games debuts.

Said Lee: “In the past, everything would hinge on me. If

I faltered, the team would lose. Now, if I have a bad round, my teammates can cover for me.”

For Choo, 34, Lee is not just a friend and teammate. He is also like a coach.

“We are constantly competing among ourselves. That has improved our scores tremendously,” said Choo.

“Often, he would correct my mistakes and I would do the same for him.”

The trio have been averaging a score of more than 340 in training. That should put Singapore in medal contention in the team event.

At the 2002 Busan Games, China won with a score of 353. India (340) and the Philippines (331) were second and third respectively.

Lee’s only Asiad medal was a bronze in the men’s double trap team in Bangkok in 1998.

Doha will be the fifth Asian Games for the two-time Olympian. He has competed in every edition since Beijing 1990.

He said: “It’s refreshing to have Zain and Choo as teammates. This is one of the strongest teams I’ve been in.”

CHAN YI SHEN