



**HE'S
IN A
GOLD-
MEDAL
MOOD**

**Teo enjoys his revenge
while Ooi and Lee
make it a canoe double
at the Marina Channel**

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He was busy chatting away with the media, when his teammates filed past and shouted: "Lucas is so cool!" Lucas Teo grinned, pumping his hands in the air and whooping for joy.

The 25-year-old was over the moon, after clinching Singapore's first South-east Asia (SEA) Games men's canoeing gold at Marina Channel, clocking a new personal best while avenging a loss to an old rival.

"It feels damn good," said Teo, who was still trying to catch his breath after his men's K1 1,000m feat.

"I was quite far behind (opponent Wichan Jaitieng) at first, but I increased my pace towards the end and the adrenaline rush helped me take the lead.

"It was a very good race for me."

Teo's time of 3min 43.036sec was enough for him to avenge his loss to Thailand's Wichan at the 2011 Games.

"He's really very fast and he's been my rival since I lost to him in 2011," said Teo. "Back then, my plan was to maintain my speed throughout the race, but I just wasn't fast enough.

"This year, I managed to hold my speed better and catch up."

Teo talked about focusing on his game plan, and that also worked well for teammates Brandon Ooi and Bill Lee, after the duo bagged the Republic's second gold of the five on offer yesterday.

Ooi, 21, and Lee, 30, clocked 3:26.002 in the men's K2 1,000m race, edging out Thais Chanrit Chakkhian and Chatkamon Maneejak, who clocked 3:28.645.

"Our plan was to start slow and push ourselves hardest at the end," said Ooi, who will join the National University of Singapore (NUS) as a business analytics undergraduate after the Games.

OVERTAKE: Lucas Teo (left) manages to catch his opponent despite being behind at first.

PHOTOS: SINGSOC / ACTION IMAGES

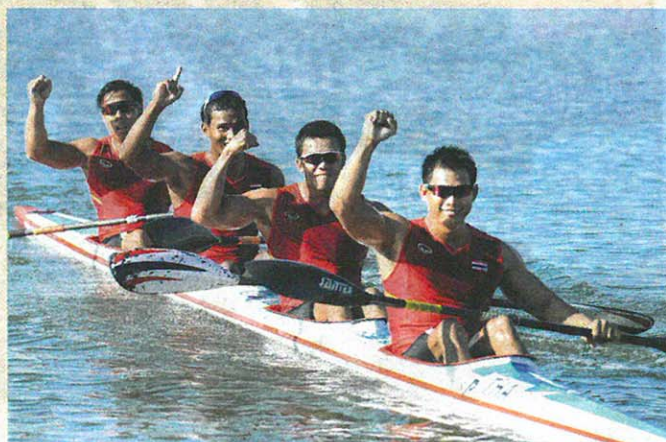
THAI CANOE TEAM A CONFIDENT LOT

Thailand's canoe team have set a target of six gold medals out of the 17 on offer at the South-east Asia (SEA) Games, but team manager Pinyo Tolieng admits it is a conservative mark.

"Of course we'll try to win in all events," said Tolieng. "I believe if our canoeists are confident they can win more events, because they have prepared well."

The Thais (right) earned their first gold in this year's competition through the quartet of Kasemsit Borriboonwasin, Piyaphan Phaophat, Anusorn Sommit and Nathaworn Waenphrom yesterday at the Marina Channel, winning the men's K4 1,000m race.

But Wichan Jaitieng



suffered a blow in his bid for a second gold medal in the men's K1 1,000m, where Singapore's Lucas Teo turned on the gas in the final 200m to win.

Wichan had wrenched the gold from Teo at the 2011 Games, and the 25-year-old Thai was not

disappointed that the Singaporean had gained revenge.

Speaking in Thai and using Tolieng as a translator, Wichan said: "Lucas has improved a great deal since 2011.

"I was full of confidence, but he was just better than

me today."

Wichan was comforted by the fact that his time of 3min 45.126sec shaved 10 seconds off his personal best.

This is his fourth SEA Games appearance and he's nowhere near the end.

A Thai official quipped: "He's only 25 and he will continue competing until he is 35!"

Yesterday's win in the men's K4 1,000m race was Thailand's third consecutive gold in the event, and Tolieng is sure his team will at least meet their overall target.

"We won one gold and two silvers today," said the 53-year-old. "There are 12 events left, so there's still time.

"We can do it."

WORTH IT

"We were tired at the end and we probably pushed ourselves to the limit but that was what we needed to win, and it was worth it."

Partner Lee, a canoeing coach, added: "Our pacing had to be spot on.

"Even when we were overtaken, we just had to keep the faith and remain focused, which was what Brandon said at the 500-metre mark."

The duo's win is the perfect boost ahead of their next event tomorrow.

"We know we can win," said Ooi, who will team up with Lee, Jori Lim and Syaheenul Aiman Nasiman for the four-man 200m sprint. "We've done it once, and we can do it again."

Teo, whose campaign is over, will be supporting his teammates until the end of the canoeing competition on Tuesday.

"I'm very relieved my training over the past few years has paid off," said the NUS undergraduate, who took a leave of absence to prepare for the Games.

"I hope they keep the gold medals coming."