

Teos' historic dancesport podium sparks medal rush

David Lee

In just two hours, siblings Jerome and Rachel Teo did not just waltz into the history books as the first Singaporean medallists at a SEA Games dancesport event, they also mounted the podium three times at the Royce Hotel in Clark yesterday.

Their first medal was a bronze in the standard waltz, as they finished behind the Philippines' Mark Jayson Gayon and Mary Joy Renigen and Vietnam's Vu Hoang Anh Minh and Nguyen Truong Xuan.

Less than an hour later, the National University of Singapore undergraduates pocketed another bronze in the standard Viennese waltz behind the hosts' Sean Mischa Aranar and Ana Leonila Manalo Nualla and Vietnamese Nguyen Duc Hoa and Nguyen Thi Hai Yen.

Minutes later, they were back on the dance floor and went one better in the standard slow foxtrot, taking silver and finishing just 0.054 points behind Gayon and Renigen.

Rachel, a 20-year-old Year 2 economics student, said: "The first bronze pushed us to get more. Every medal means a lot and that first one spurred me on to push harder to get a better placing."

"Eventually, in our third event, we got a silver. I'm so very proud of the team. We have lots of thanks for our family for sponsoring of overseas trips, to our coaches, teachers and friends for their support."

To prepare for these Games, the siblings had to take time off school for numerous trips to train in Europe, two to three weeks at a time.

Jerome, 21, is in his first year of pursuing a double degree in electrical engineering and economics. He said: "It is a very touching journey for us and it's really beautiful we can do everyone proud."

"We weren't expecting much but, of course, we wanted to win a medal. These medals are not for us, but for everyone who supported us through this journey and believed in us."

"We are really ecstatic, so excited and grateful to have three medals in all three events we competed in."

Asked what is the best and worst thing about competing as siblings, he said: "The best part is we know each other well, and we can say it as it is to each other."

Rachel added: "But the difficult thing is we have to smile on the dance floor when we are upset with each other."

Singapore's dancesport medal rush continued in the afternoon, when Jeremy Sim picked up a bronze in the men's individual breaking event, while Gary Tsan and Shannen Tan also won a bronze in the Latin American paso doble.

Dancesport made its Games debut in the Philippines in 2005 but was discontinued after the 2007 edition. Singapore won medals in five of the 13 events this year.

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MEDALS FOR EVERYONE

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JEROME TEO, partnering his sister Rachel, won three of Singapore's five medals in the SEA Games dancesport events.



Above: Jerome and Rachel Teo performing in the standard slow foxtrot, which won them a silver medal, after they had waltzed their way to two bronzes, one of which was Singapore's first medal at a SEA Games dancesport event. PHOTO: ASSOCIATED PRESS

Left: Jeremy Sim in action during the men's individual breaking event. He won the bronze, as did Gary Tsan and Shannen Tan in the Latin American paso doble, giving the Republic five medals in this year's 13 dancesport events. ST PHOTO: SPORT SINGAPORE