



SUHAILA CONQUERS TWO-TIME CHAMPION

Singaporean makes final, while compatriot Farhan is in line for his third world crown

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Singapore silat exponent Nurul Suhaila Mohd Saiful was relishing a rematch with Selly Andriani yesterday, despite having never beaten the two-time world champion.

And that excitement was not in vain as she avenged her two losses by beating the Indonesian 4-1 at the OCBC Arena to enter today's Class D (60-65kg) final at the 18th World Pencak Silat Championship.

Suhaila reflected on the losses, in the 2015 final and again in the 2016 semi-final, and described herself as

arena yesterday.

"I implemented a lot more take-downs today and I was a lot more confident and composed," said the 23-year-old, who shed tears of joy after her win. "This is quite an emotional win for me... I'm really so happy and proud of myself."

She believes being awarded the Sports Excellence (Spex) scholarship for a second year has contributed to her improvement in skill and boost in confidence.

She added: "She was the world champion for two years, but when I entered the arena I kept telling myself, 'This is my year and this is my chance to shine... I will be better than her'."

to do it than now?"

She also explained how she reminded herself to stay composed in the final round despite being "eager to finish it."

"Every time I felt my mind (losing focus) a little bit, I would get back into it," she said.

"I do a lot of self-talk in the arena. I'm always telling myself to stay focused, don't hold back, be careful, focus on the techniques."

She will face Thailand's Janejira Wankme for her first world title.



Far left: Singapore's Nurul Suhaila Mohd Saiful after her win over Indonesia's Selly Andriani in their Class D (60-65kg) semi-final.

Left: Singapore's Sheik Farhan Sheik Alau'ddin overcomes Briton Djibrill Aoudou 5-0 in their Class J (90-95kg) semi-final. PHOTOS: SINGAPORE SILAT FEDERATION.

She said: "I'll bring a lot more enthusiasm and aggression. I feel like once I beat (Selly), I think nothing can stop me now."

Teammate Sheik Farhan Sheik Alau'ddin is seeking to celebrate his 21st birthday in style with a third world title.

Said Farhan, who beat Britain's Djibrill Aoudou 5-0 in the Class J (90-95kg) semi-final: "I feel (my performance) yesterday was more tactically sound (but) ultimately it was a good performance with not

many mistakes.

"I don't feel pressure. In my mind I'm just fighting that one person for that round, and then getting to the next stage. I'm not thinking that I am the defending champion and I have to win."

Seven of his teammates, including his older brother Ferdous (men's Class I 85-90kg), have a shot at glory as well. The other finalists are Hazim Mohd Yusli (men's Class B 50-55kg), Raaziq Abdul Rashid (men's Class G 75-80kg), Syakir Jef-

fry (men's Class H 80-85kg), Nur Syaza Insyirah Md Roslan (women's Class B 50-55kg) and Nor Shahidah Abas (women's Open above 65kg).

Farhan, the two-time Class J world champion, said: "What's significant is that this time there are more people to share (the experience) with... I'm very happy my teammates are through and feeling confident."

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