

Headline:	World champ just like dad		
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Description:	Singapore silat exponent Sheik Farhan, 17, defeated Vietnam's Mach Quoc Hung 3-2 in their Class J (90-95kg) final at the Pencak Silat World Championships to be crowned new silat world champion in Phuket yesterday.		

WORLD CHAMP JUST LIKE DAD

Farhan emulates Sheik Alau'ddin's feat with 95kg title in Phuket

By CHUA SIANG YEE

SHEIK Farhan Sheik Alau'ddin took the first steps towards emulating his famous father when he was crowned world champion at the Pencak Silat World Championships in Phuket yesterday.

The 17-year-old, son of two-time world champion Sheik Alau'ddin, beat Vietnam's Mach Quoc Hung 3-2 in the Class J (90-95kg) final, bagging Singapore only gold medal at the prestigious tournament.

And, just like his father, it was his confidence and big-match temperament that laid the groundwork for victory at the Saphan Hin Sports Centre.

In a phone interview, Farhan told The Straits Times: "It's my biggest final, but I wasn't really nervous. I knew I was the last hope for a gold medal, but it made me want to win it. I like the responsibility, and the feeling of being depended on."

"Although my team didn't show it, I know everyone wanted me to bring back the gold medal, and I'm happy to have done the nation proud."

While he won the semi-final convincingly, leading Malaysia's Azrul Abdullah throughout en route to a 4-1 victory, Farhan started the final on the backfoot.

He trailed his aggressive Viet-



Newly-crowned silat world champion Sheik Farhan (centre) with his father, Sheik Alau'ddin, and national match coach Muhammad Figri. The 17-year-old Nanyang Polytechnic student came from behind to beat Vietnam's Mach Quoc Hung for Singapore's only gold in the world championships. PHOTO: SINGAPORE SILAT FEDERATION

namese opponent after the first round, and had to play catch-up.

The pivotal moment came in the third and final round. With five seconds left and still down by one point, Farhan connected with a kick as Hung tried to trip him, scoring two points and putting him into the lead instead.

Said Farhan: "I fell behind because I paid too much attention to what (Hung) will do. It was only in the second round when I changed my strategy, that I started to catch up."

The victory has reinvigorated the Nanyang Polytechnic student, and while he credits his dad as a

big influence, he hopes that the constant comparisons between him and his father will end soon.

He said: "I still have a long way to go before I can achieve what he has done, but I hope this win has shown that I am my own man."

"I want people to see me as Farhan, and not the son of Sheik

Alau'ddin. There won't be much celebrating after this. This will only make me train harder... I know I can be better and stronger."

Singapore's 20-man squad, who will return from Phuket this afternoon, finished with one gold, three silvers and four bronzes.

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