

Tao Li, Shakir inducted into Sport Hall of Fame

When swimmer Tao Li touched down at Changi Airport days after winning the 50m butterfly gold at the 2006 Asian Games in Doha – Singapore swimming’s first in 24 years – she was greeted by supporters who had turned out to congratulate her on her achievement.

Calling it a treasured moment, the China-born athlete said: “I’m not actually from Singapore but I

came here when I was 13, and the way they welcomed me back and for them to actually support me, like I’m one of them, was something special for me.”

Tao went on to repeat the feat in Guangzhou in 2010, adding a second Asiad gold to her collection of 29 SEA Games titles.

She also made a splash at the 2008 Beijing Olympics by qualifying for the 100m fly final – a first for a Singaporean swimmer on the world’s biggest stage. She eventually finished fifth.

Her contributions to Singapore did not stop after her retirement following the 2015 SEA Games, as Tao was appointed chef de mission at last year’s Youth Olympic Games.

Her swimming academy, the Tao Li Swimming Club, also organised a charity swim this year to raise money for SportCares and the Rainbow Centre Special School to provide free swimming lessons for its students.

Yesterday, the 29-year-old was honoured for her achievements as she was inducted into the Sport Hall of Fame alongside two-time world silat champion Muhammad Shakir Juanda in a ceremony at Our



Two-time Asian Games swimming champion Tao Li and twice-world silat champion Muhammad Shakir Juanda at the Sport Hall Of Fame induction ceremony at Our Tampines Hub yesterday. ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

Tampines Hub.

The duo join over 50 other athletes in the Hall of Fame, including Olympic champion Joseph Schooling, football icon Fandi Ahmad and

sprint legend C. Kunalan.

“It’s a high achievement for Singaporeans and to get in is an honour,” said Tao.

For Shakir, 31, the award was

recognition for a 13-year career marked by triumphs as well as challenges and self-doubt.

After securing his first world title in the Match Class I (85-90kg) in 2012, Shakir missed out on gold three years later.

“When I lost the title, it was a depressing moment that really affected my mind,” he said.

“I thought, maybe, I was too old to win another time and that I should retire and focus on the next thing.”

But support from his family and friends inspired a comeback and he reclaimed the title in 2016.

He retired from the sport last year, but continues to coach young athletes and contributes to the community through the Jamiyah Foundation.

In 2015, he was conferred the Singapore Youth Award.

Shakir, who works at the Singapore Sport Institute’s High Performance department, dedicated his award to the sportsmen in Singapore “who inspire the athletes to give the best in their sporting careers and give back to society”.

Kimberly Kwek

BIG MOMENT

I’m not actually from Singapore but I came here when I was 13, and the way they welcomed me back and for them to actually support me, like I’m one of them, was something special for me.



TAO LI, two-time Asian Games 50m free gold medallist, who was born in China.

LOW POINT

When I lost the title, it was a depressing moment that really affected my mind.



MUHAMMAD SHAKIR JUANDA, two-time silat world champion, on losing his world title in 2015, which he regained in 2016.

four-digit draw

Nov 09 2019

First ▶ 2296
Second ▶ 1279
Third ▶ 7765

STARTERS

3632 4298 4694
5032 6736 7714
8171 8464 8742
9181

CONSOLUTIONS

1613 3378 3734
6879 7117 7513
7536 7591 7889
8970