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SILAT

HE'S ALL ABOUT STARS

World champion Farhan has juggled his schoolwork pretty well

Report by SAZALI ABDUL AZIZ
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He's only 17, but his lightning-quick punches and kicks made opponents see stars at the Pencak Silat World Championships in Phuket earlier this month.

It turns out Singapore's newly-crowned silat world champion (Class J) Sheik Farhan is used to seeing stars himself.

The 1.86m-tall, 91kg heavyweight champion scored four distinctions in his GCE O levels examinations last year – in Elementary Mathematics, Additional Mathematics, Combined Humanities and Pure Chemistry.

The Singapore Sports School alumni is currently studying for a Diploma in Digital and Precision Engineering at Nanyang Polytechnic.

Speaking to The New Paper earlier this week, Farhan said: "I guess I just manage my time well and try my best to make sure I understand what is being taught in class."

UNFAZED

Nothing seems to faze this young man.

When he qualified for the semi-finals of the world championship, he didn't beat about the bush and told TNP he was determined to go all the way.

There was no "I'll do my best and see what happens" rubbish.

"You don't go into a competition wanting to lose or be second-best, right?" he said.

"I don't know how or when I started to have that mindset, but that's just the way I approach competitions.

"Before a match, I just think about what it means to me and what happens if I win. I don't think of anything else, not even about my opponent."

With at least a decade more of silat

ahead of him, anything's possible.

There is already talk silat could make its debut at the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia.

Dad, two-time silat world champion Sheik Alau'ddin, says Farhan's no-fuss attitude is one of his main strengths.

"This guy is in his own world, sometimes," said the four-time South-east Asia (SEA) Games champion.

"He keeps to himself, he's very quiet, but he learns very fast.

"And, most importantly, he listens. As a father, what more can I expect?"

Sheik, who is the president of the Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) Federation of Singapore, recalled how his son's fearlessness shone through two years ago.

"I also hold an invitational MMA competition at the National Pencak Silat Championships.

"Since Farhan was helping me out with the event, I suggested he should take part," Sheik recounted.

"He just said, 'Okay,' and went for the weigh-in. No qualms at all.

"In the end, he won his weight class and took home a big trophy and some cash."

Chuckling at the story, Farhan said: "I already had the basics of competitive fighting with silat, so it was quite normal for me. The only difference is I can beat up my opponent when he's lying on the ground."

The youngster is not worried about the pressure of living up to his father's legacy.

"I just want to become my own man, and I'm sure if I do that, I'll make him proud, too," said the teenager.

"I don't want to think about breaking records or anything. I don't want to get obsessed with targets.

"I just want to win as many competitions as I can."



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