

No go for world champion Farhan

Report by
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He might be a world champion, but there is a very real chance silat exponent Sheik Farhan will not feature at June's South-east Asia (SEA) Games here on home soil.

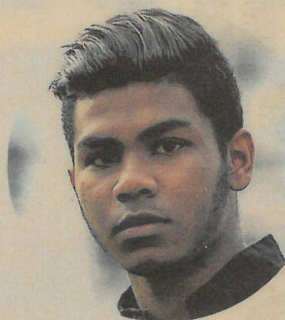
Just 11 days ago, the 17-year-old son (right) of silat icon Sheik Alau'ddin won in the Class J (90kg to 95kg) weight class at the Pencak Silat World Championship in Phuket.

But there will be no Class J category at the SEA Games.

Farhan's name was not among the more than 900 nominations on the initial list for this year's SEA Games released by the Singapore National Olympic Council (SNOC) yesterday.

Speaking after the first round of selections, SNOC secretary general Chris Chan said: "I don't decide on the sports and the events.

"The SEA Games Federation



Committees, starting from the Sports and Rules Committee, to the exco, to the council (do it).

"The charter clearly says that 12 months before the opening of the Games, all the sports and the events have to be finalised and I don't want to be accused of moving the goalposts on this."

The only way for Farhan to compete at the Games is to drop in weight class, but it will be a tough hurdle.

Only one athlete is allowed in each weight class, and the Singapore Silat Federation (SSF) already has fighters in all seven categories who have been pencilled

in, including the two closest to Farhan's division.

In Class H (80kg to 85kg) is Shakir Juanda, a former world champion.

In Class F (70kg to 75kg) is Alfian Juma'en, the reigning SEA Games champion.

Because of a recommendation made by the silat body themselves last year, there is no Class G (75kg to 80kg).

Silat chief Sheik Alau'ddin, who is overseas on a working trip, was in a fix when he spoke to The New Paper over the phone last night.

"I spoke to Sport Singapore, and they asked me why we did not include Farhan's name on the initial list last year," said the former two-time world champion.

"But, back then, he was just 16. Plus, he was in a different weight category. How were we to know then that he would go on to be a world champion in Class J?"

"I'm not sure what I will do next. I will speak to my president and general secretary and see what we can do."