

## Wenger ignores 'boring' speculation

Arsene Wenger has passionately defended his position as Arsenal boss and insists he has become bored of people questioning whether he still has what it takes to continue in the job.

The 66-year-old has been accustomed in recent years to supporters and pundits alike

calling for him to end his long reign with the Gunners and, in recent weeks, he has faced a fresh wave of criticism after the team's Premier League title hopes were derailed by poor results.

But Wenger came out fighting when asked if the way fans react over the

remainder of the season would affect his thoughts about signing a new contract at Arsenal, with his current deal expiring next summer.

"Look, I have worked here for 19, 20 years and I'm always sitting here having to justify that I'm good enough to do the job," he said.

"I always have to convince you that I am good enough.

"I worked for 35 years at the top level.

"What I find just boring is always sitting here after 19 years to face, 'Do you think you are good enough?'. If I am not, somebody will tell me."

— PA Sport.

## SSI chief Gambardella warns local athletes of dangers of traditional medicine

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Sports fans in Singapore woke up to shocking news yesterday morning.

Tennis star Maria Sharapova, a five-time Grand Slam winner and arguably one of the most recognisable faces in women's sport over the past decade, revealed that she had failed a drugs test at the Australian Open in January.

The 28-year-old Russian tested positive for meldonium, a substance she said she has been taking since 2006 for health issues.

Sharapova claimed she and her team did not know that meldonium was recently declared a prohibited substance on the World Anti-Doping Agency's (Wada) banned list.

It is a scenario that could happen to top athletes here, and Singapore Sports Institute (SSI) chief Bob Gambardella wants to hammer home the message that knowledge is power.

He told The New Paper: "We work with Anti-Doping Singapore, and even though the (two bodies) are separate, we do collaborate because we want to make sure our best weapon is always education.

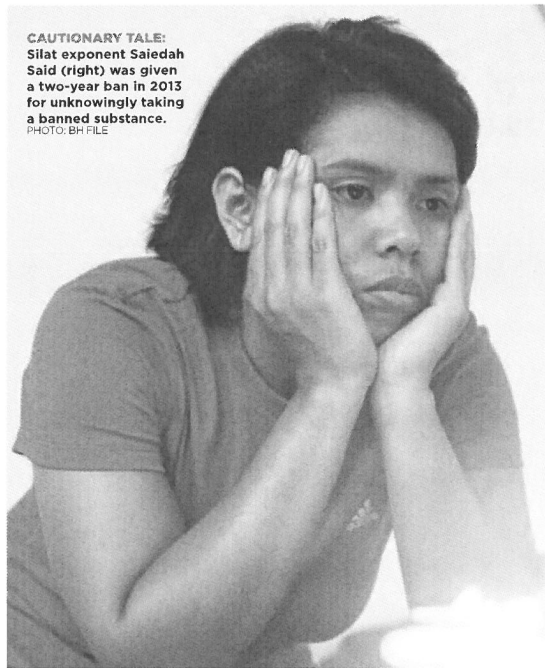
"During the lead-up to major games, we give our athletes up-to-date information about what to expect (in terms of anti-doping rules), and so on and so forth.

"So really, from that perspective, I don't think people should ever say 'I don't know'.

"There's a rule in Wada called 'strict liability' and basically, if you put something in your body... That's the way it is."

# Know your prohibited substances

CAUTIONARY TALE:  
Silat exponent Saiedah Said (right) was given a two-year ban in 2013 for unknowingly taking a banned substance.  
PHOTO: BH FILE



National athletes are subject to unannounced out-of-competition tests by Wada officials at any moment and today, the South-east Asia Games also have strict testing procedures.

Gambardella spoke to TNP on the sidelines of an International Olympic Committee ceremony at Faber Peak Singapore last night to honour three Singaporeans for their contributions to the Olympic movement.

The American, who will step down after the Rio Olympics in August after seven years at the helm of SSI, said the organisation is on top of recent trends in local sports medicine.

For example, the Basketball Association of Singapore and Singapore Athletics have signed partnerships with Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) chain Kin Teck Tong in recent months.

He wants to prevent a repeat of the situation which saw national silat exponent and 2005 Sportsgirl of the Year Saiedah Said given a two-year ban in 2013, after she tested positive for the banned substances Nor-Sibutramine and OH-Nor Sibutramine – which are appetite suppressors.

### BACK PAIN

Saiedah claimed she ingested the substances unknowingly when she took traditional health tonics given by her mother for back pain.

Said Gambardella: "Some of our NSAs have been looking at TCM and while we don't have an issue with that, we want to make sure when you (are considering) aromatherapy or taking herbs, we say 'stay away from it'.

"And we've also talked to some of the TCMS to alert them: Don't give athletes any of that, because you don't know.

"Like I said, we can only educate. That's our best weapon.

"Take for instance, the fact that on the average we see anywhere between 160 to 170 athletes, coaches and parents coming through (SSI) Athlete Services Centre a month.

"This has really been a great way for us to engage.

"So if the (athletes) have any questions, they have their way to ask them at the centre.

"And we have our science and medicine experts there to sit with them and try to work out any questions they may have."

## IOC honour for three S'poreans

AWARD RECIPIENTS:  
From near right, Chris Chan, Tan Howe Liang and Tan Eng Liang are honoured for their contributions to the Olympic movement.  
PHOTO: ST



Three Singaporeans were honoured last night by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) for their contributions to the Olympic movement.

Weightlifter Tan Howe Liang, who won Singapore's first Olympic medal when he claimed a silver at the 1960 Rome Games, Singapore National Olympic Council (SNOC) vice-president and former Olympian Dr Tan Eng Liang, and SNOC secretary-general Chris Chan were awarded the IOC Diploma of Merit at a ceremony at Faber Peak Singapore.

The award was first given out in 1905 but was discontinued in 1974.

It was revived on behalf of IOC president Thomas Bach.

The awards were presented by SNOC president Tan Chuan-Jin and Singapore IOC member Ng Ser Miang.

Tan, who is also the Minister for Social and Family Development, said in his address: "Many successful roles in sport require passion, dedication and largely, a spirit of volunteerism and willingness to do something good for the community.

### UNSUNG HEROES

"A culture of appreciation and recognition is important to express our gratitude to these unsung heroes and to acknowledge the value of such deeds; deeds which go beyond the normal call of duty,

deeds which include sacrifice and exemplary work and services, deeds which serve the community and were conducted without expectations of rewards.

"The lives of Mr Tan Howe Liang, Dr Tan Eng Liang and Mr Chris Chan espoused deeds which have served our community and created a meaningful impact to the Olympic movement."

At last night's ceremony, the IOC and SNOC also presented the IOC Trophy "Sport and Innovation" to Sport Singapore's national movement for sport and physical activity, ActiveSG, for their "innovative and effective ways" of attracting Singaporeans to sport.

— SAZALI ABDUL AZIZ