

## Shakir floored by illegal punch

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# Shakir floored by illegal punch



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**REPORTING FROM  
NAYPYIDAW**

**He toppled Goliath once, but Shakir Juanda could not do it again yesterday.**

The pencak silat world champion put up a gutsy showing, but ended up losing his South-east Asia (SEA) Games Class H (80-85kg) semi-final against Vietnam giant Le Si Kien to win a bronze medal.

It was just 12 months ago that the 1.73m-tall Singaporean pulled off a stunning upset over Le – who is 20cm taller than him – in the final of the World Championships in Chiang Rai, Thailand.

But, in yesterday's final, Le not only took advantage of his size but also landed an illegal punch on Shakir's jaw that floored him.

The infringement, however, was not spotted by the Indonesian referee, and Le was not penalised.

Shakir recovered to continue fighting but doubled over in pain midway through the final third round, during which he was taken down twice by his opponent.

That spelt the end of Shakir's challenge, as he was forced to settle for a bronze.

"The moment the first punch connected with my jaw, I felt like my brain was shaken," said the 24-year-old. "I felt dizzy, but I could hear everyone telling me to keep going, so I did."

The Singapore silat contingent felt aggrieved about the punch that went unpunished, and felt it swung the match Le's way.

Even as Shakir sat distraught in a corner of the hall after his fight, Singapore silat chief Sheik Alau'ddin and several of his fighters watched a video recording of the fight, to see the controversial punch again.

Sheik said that in instances where a punch connects with the face, the official should deduct one or five points from the aggressor, depending on the severity of the foul.

### NOT DIRTY

If an exponent is knocked out by a punch, the aggressor will be disqualified.

Although he said Le was not a dirty fighter, Shakir's coach Hidayat Hosni, said: "The Viet guy was hitting high throughout the fight.

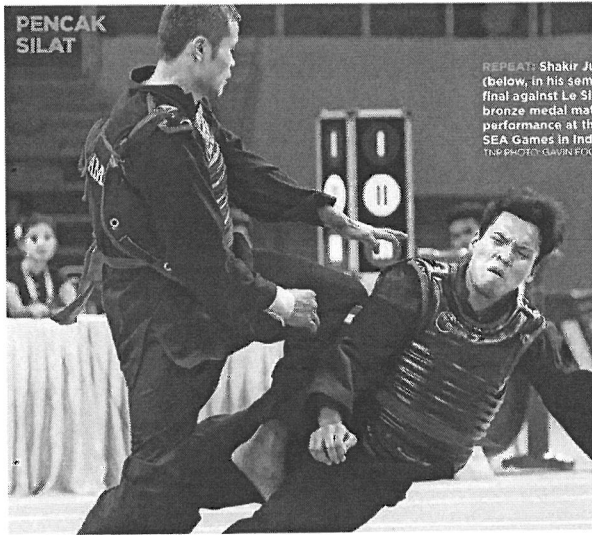
"The referee said Shakir ducked. Where got?"

Shakir, however, accepted the outcome, which helped him match his performance at the last SEA Games in Indonesia two years ago.

He said: "At the end of the day, my habit of kicking roundhouse was what gave him the chance to drop me twice in the third round.

"When he grabbed my leg, I tried to resist, but he was just too strong.

"Whatever it is, the main thing is I did my very best and I have no regrets."



**PENCAK  
SILAT**

REPEAT: Shakir Juanda (below, in his semi-final against Le Si Klen) bronze medal matches his performance at the SEA Games in Indonesia. TNP PHOTO: GAVIN FOO

REPEAT: Shakir Juanda's (below, in his semi-final against Le Si Klen) bronze medal matches his performance at the last SEA Games in Indonesia.

TNP PHOTO: GAVIN FOO



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