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## NO MEN HONOURED

Straits Times, 29 May 2013, Page 21

 Article also available on Microfilm Reel NL32595

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Silat world champ  
Shakir among  
those snubbed  
for Sportsman title

By ( / GOH JUN YONG

A WORLD champion, an Olympian, a doubles winner in his sport's top professional competition and a man who is third in Asia. Yet silat's Muhammad Shakir Juanda (world champion), sailor Colin Cheng (15th in the men's Laser class at the London Olympics), table tennis player Gao Ning (ITTF Pro Tour Grand Finals doubles winner), and wushu's Seet Wee Key (Asian Championships bronze medallist) have been snubbed for the country's top male athlete award.

It is just the third time since its inception in 1967 that the Singapore Sports Awards (SSA) will not have a Sportsman of the Year. The other two times were in 2009 and 2010.

Said Singapore Bowling chief Jessie Phua, who also chairs this year's SSA: "We acknowledge the athletes for their achievements. However, the bar has been raised and, this year, there just wasn't a milestone that was significant enough for us to give this award out.

✉ [jygoh@sph.com.sg](mailto:jygoh@sph.com.sg)

"There are definitions of World Championships that the selection committee does not agree with.

"You must take a look at how many people and countries are actually participating in the event.

"We can't begrudge the athlete for conditions that he or she can't control but, at the same time, we will not compromise on the standards of the award."

The Singapore Silat Federation was disappointed by the decision of the panel, which includes senior sports officials, athletes and journalists, to withhold the award.

Sheikh Alauddin, its chief executive officer, said: "Is Shakir's world title not good enough? What criteria are we using to decide who is deserving of the award? These are the questions I would like to ask the committee.

"There were 25 countries in the 2012 world meet and Shakir was a clear winner. He is the best in his sport and he deserves the award.

It's pretty sad to the silat community that the SSA committee does not agree with us."

Shakir, 24, said he was disappointed but not surprised, saying: "I did not expect to win the award. It's part and parcel of being a silat exponent because we don't get much recognition."

The Singapore Table Tennis Association was equally frustrated.

make a choice based on the nominations received. Not presenting the award would only belittle the achievements of the athletes."

Sheikh, himself a four-time world champion, was nominated twice for Sportsman of the Year in 1994 and 1999, added: "Are silat's World Championships not recognised? Must the sport be an Olympic sport? As far as I know, bowling is not an Olympic sport. So if Shayna Ng (a bowler) wins Sportswoman of the Year, there is clearly something wrong."

Ng won the QubicaAMF Bowling World Cup in December. Although bowling is not an Olympic sport, its participant base is broad. For instance, there were 84 countries represented at the 2012 World Championships.

But Low Teo Ping, vice-president of the SNOC, explained: "The award doesn't have to be given out every year, just for the sake of it. It should be given only when the athlete is very deserving."

The award winners - including Sportswoman, Sportsboy and Sportsgirl - will be announced on June 11.

Said its president, Ms Lee Bee Wah: "It is quite sad that no male athlete will receive the Sportsman of the Year award again.

"National Sports Associations which have made submissions on behalf of their athletes would obviously have felt that their athletes were deserving of the award.

"Instead of not presenting it, perhaps the committee should

## The nominees

**Sportsboy of the Year**

Keith Saw Hui Xun (bowling),  
Quah Zheng Wen (swimming),  
Samuel Tan Wei Han (wushu).

**Sportsgirl of the Year**

Elisa Yukie Yokoyama (sailing),  
Vera Tan Yan Ning (wushu).

**Sportsman of the Year:**

No finalist

**Sportswoman of the Year**

Shayna Ng Lin Zhi (bowling),  
Feng Tianwei (table tennis).

**Coach of the Year**

Babella Balazs (canoeing),  
Radojko Avramovic (football),  
Fernando Javier Alegere Arbulu

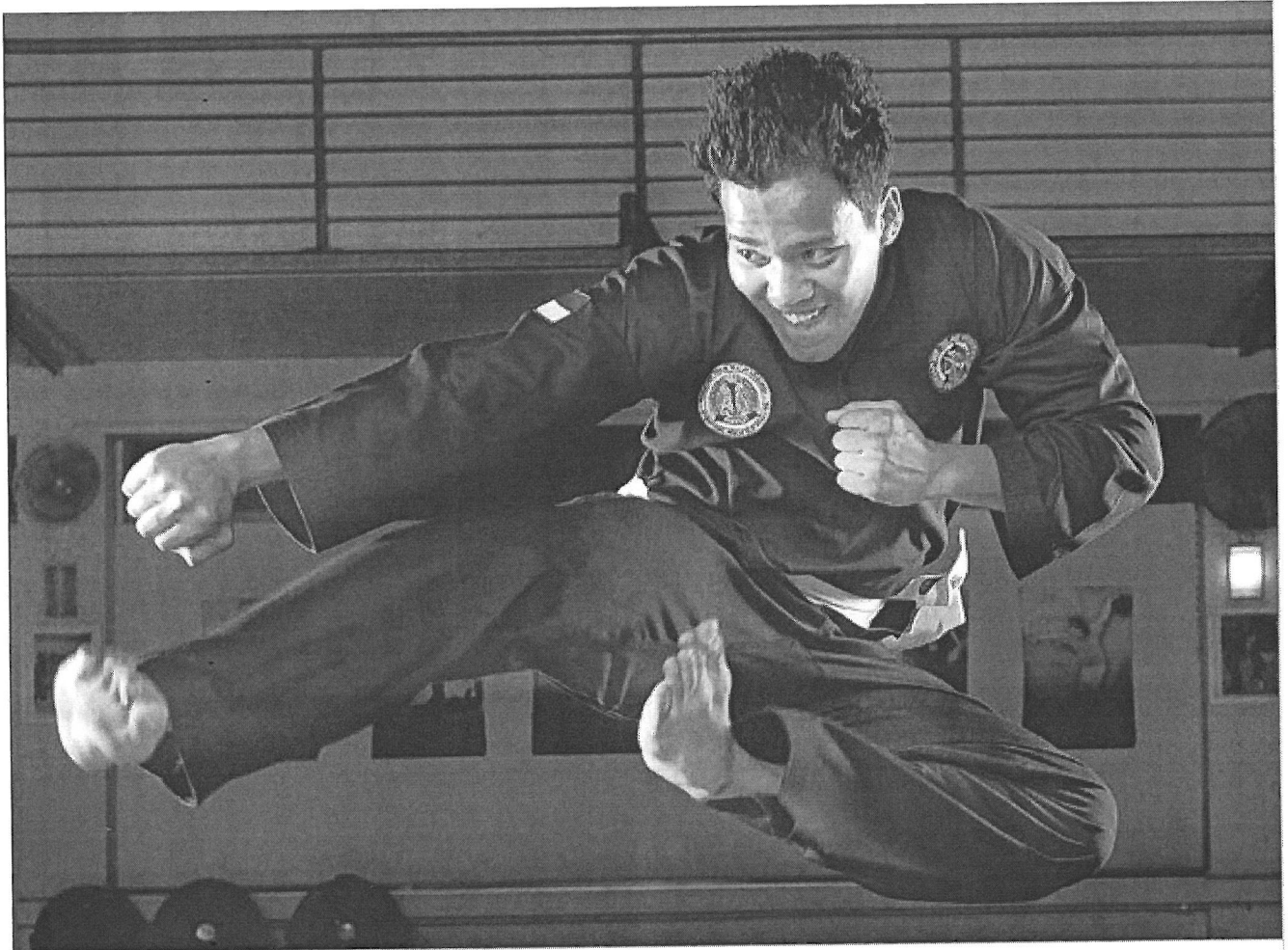
(sailing).

Mohamad Hidayat Hosni (silat),  
Zhou Shusen (table tennis).

**Team of the Year**

Bowling women's team (Amanda  
Ng Li Chen, Cherie Tan Shi Hua,  
Daphne Tan Shi Jing, Jazreel Tan  
Shi Hua, New Hui Fen, Shayna Ng  
Lin Zhi); Sailing 420 women's  
team (Rachel Lee Qing, Cecilia  
Low Rui Qi); Table tennis  
women's team (Feng Tianwei,  
Wang Yuegu, Li Jiawei, Sun  
Beibei).

\*Awards to be presented on  
June 11



National pugilist Muhammad Shakir Juanda, who was crowned world champion at the Pencak Silat Championships in Thailand last November, is disappointed that silat exponents "don't get much recognition". ST FILE PHOTO

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