

# Chasing more water polo glory

**Jonathan Wong**

The title of the book is "Glory". It pays tribute to Singapore's water polo teams, past and present.

Inside, photographs of the players, either in black and white or colour, litter the pages.

The title is fitting as they have clinched 22 consecutive gold medals at the South-east Asia (SEA) Games since 1965.

National captain Luo Nan, 29, has been part of three successful campaigns. He is chasing his fourth and the Republic's 23rd at this year's Games in Laos from Dec 9-18.

"Of course, I can remember my first Games back in 2003," he chuckled. "I was so nervous.

"There's plenty of pressure. You don't want to be part of the team that doesn't win the gold and end the country's streak."

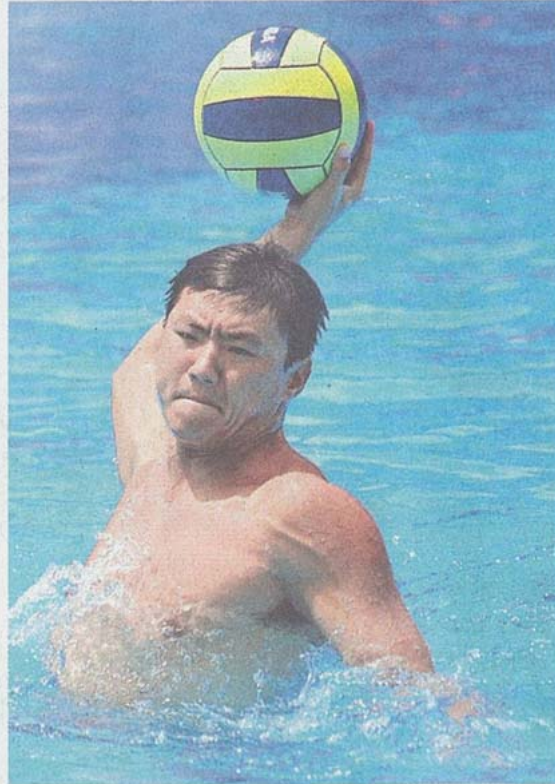
Being part of Singapore's most bemedalled sporting team – past luminaries include Singapore National Olympic Council vice-president Tan Eng Liang – is an honour, said Benjamin Tan, 20.

He has deferred his army enlistment from October to next February in the hope of making the 13-strong SEA Games team.

The former Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) water polo captain is aware of the challenge ahead.

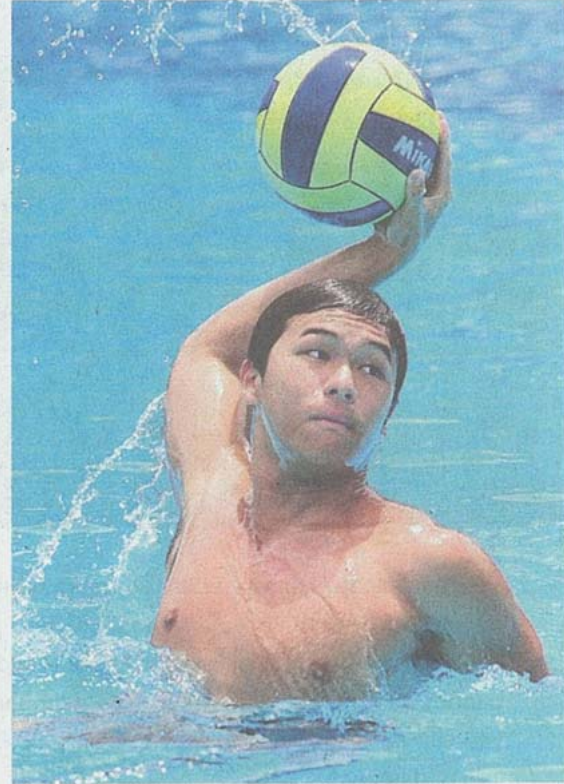
For one, there is stiff competition for his centre-forward position, not least from Eugene Teo and Lin Di Yan, both 22 and members of the side who competed at the last SEA Games in 2007 in Thailand.

Benjamin is hoping a strong performance at the five-day Singapore Water Polo Open Invitational, which begins today at the Toa Pay-



ST PHOTO: ALPHONSUS CHERN

**National team captain Luo Nan, 29, has three SEA Games gold medals in his trophy cabinet.**



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**National team player Benjamin Tan, 20, is hoping to join Singapore's most bemedalled sporting team.**

oh Swimming Complex, will help secure him a seat to Laos.

The tournament – featuring the Philippines and Thailand (second and fourth in Korat respectively) – will help gauge the younger players, who are participating as Singapore's second team.

"It's useful for them to spar against likely SEA Games contenders," explained water polo vice-president Ivan Tan.

He noted that Benjamin's strengths are his good positional sense in evading defenders and creating space for his teammates.

Benjamin, who is in the B team,

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**LUO NAN, national captain who will be chasing his fourth and Singapore's 23rd gold at the Laos SEA Games**

said: "If we can beat the Philippines, it will give the coaches something to think about and give us a chance to make the final team."

But what about the burden of preserving Singapore's unblemished record?

"No pressure," he replied immediately.

But, moments later, he conceded: "Okay, maybe a little..."

But that is the only concession he makes.

He is no student of history, he admits freely. But, perhaps, he has glanced at the opening chapter of "Glory".

It reads: Dare to Dream.