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MEDIA RELEASE

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Izaac Quek and Zeng Jian book their tickets to Paris



Singapore's national paddlers, Izaac Quek and Zeng Jian, booked their tickets to the Paris 2024 Olympics after winning their respective singles finals at the Southeast Asian Regional Qualification Tournament in Bangkok, Thailand on Friday, 10 May.

Both defending SEA Games Singles Gold medalists will be making their debuts in the July showpiece event.

Izaac, who turns 18 in two weeks, received an early birthday present when he emerged victorious against veteran Phakpoom Sanguasin, 41, of Thailand in the final, 7-11, 12-10, 8-11,



11-3, 11-5, 11-5. The rising star of Singapore table tennis blocked out the noise from the 300 strong home crowd to become the youngest ever Singapore paddler to qualify for the Olympics.

“Of course I am very happy to have qualified for the Olympics. It is something that I told myself would be my goal for this year, and I am glad to have achieved it”, said Izaac.

“Despite being the current SEA Games champion, I told myself during this competition that everyone is on a level playing field, and I just focused on what I needed to do”, he added.

Earlier, Izaac faced John Russel Misal of the Philippines in the semifinals, and survived a fightback from the Filipino to clinch his place in the final after a thrilling 4-3 victory.

Despite losing the first set 7-11, Izaac stormed his way to win the next three sets, 11-5, 11-7, 11-7, but the Filipino had other ideas as he levelled the tie at 3-3 after taking the fifth and sixth sets 11-8, 11-8.

However, with the small Singapore contingent behind him, Izaac gained in confidence and rose to the occasion, winning the deciding set, 11-5.

Singapore’s number one female paddler, Zeng Jian, 27, had a relatively straightforward game against Vietnam’s Nguyen Khanh in the Women’s Singles Final. Zeng stormed to a 3-0 lead, winning 11-7, 11-6, 11-8, before dropping the fourth set 9-11 to the Vietnamese. It was a see-saw battle in the fifth set, with Khanh looking to stay in the match and Zeng looking to book her ticket, and it was the Singaporean who held her nerve to win 12-10.

“I am thankful for the support from the team, and with the confidence of having won the SEA Games gold medal, I managed to book my spot. All the top players will be at Paris, so I would like to perform to my best and go as far as possible and leave with no regrets”, said Zeng.



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