



Darren Yap wins Singapore's first Asian Games taekwondo medal with poomsae bronze

Description

Darren Yap gave Singapore its [first Asian Games taekwondo medal](#) on Thursday 1 October, taking a joint bronze in the men's individual poomsae at the Toyohashi City General Gymnasium. The 22-year-old scored 9.04 in the final at the Aichi-Nagoya Games, a big step on from his round-of-16 exit in Hangzhou.



Darren Yap with Singapore's first Asian Games taekwondo medal, a joint bronze in the men's individual poomsae. Photo: SNOC/Lim Weixiang

Sixth on the mat, second on the board

Poomsae is the forms discipline of taekwondo, judged rather than fought. In Aichi-Nagoya, each athlete performs one recognised poomsae and one freestyle routine, and the final score is the average of the two.

Yap reached the final earlier in the day, scoring 8.83 to rank second in his semi-final heat. In the final, he was sixth of the eight to perform. His two routines lifted him to second place on the leaderboard with two athletes still to come, and that was enough to guarantee a medal. He pumped his fists when the scores went up.

“It took a while to process. But after a few seconds, I realised that I’ll be getting a medal and internally, I just started screaming. But I had to keep myself cool while walking out,” Yap told ActiveSG Circle.

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Yapâ??s final score of 9.04 was the average of his recognised and freestyle routines. Photo: SNOC/Lim Weixiang

South Koreaâ??s Yun Kyu-sung took gold with 9.38, ahead of Thailandâ??s Navin Pinthasute on 9.28. Yap finished fourth in the final, and with two bronzes awarded, he shares the podium with the

Philippinesâ?? Jeus Yape, who scored 9.09.

From the round of 16 to the podium

Hangzhou 2022 ran poomsae as a single-elimination tournament, and Yapâ??s Games ended in the round of 16. Nagoya is his second Asiad and his fifth major Games. He took a joint poomsae bronze at the 2025 SEA Games, and his build-up to Japan included a seven-week training block in South Korea after the world championships last month.

He started taekwondo at four, and his first international meet came in 2017. A former school team footballer, he calls himself â??very competitiveâ?•.

He also had a message for the rest of the region: â??I donâ??t even know how to describe it, but Iâ??m just very, very happy. Now, when people see the country Singapore in their bout list, they will get worried, hopefully.â?•

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Yap was sixth of eight finalists to perform at the Toyohashi City General Gymnasium. Photo: SNOC/Lim Weixiang

Khaw misses the final by one place

Nicole Khaw, 27, scored 8.39 on her Asian Games debut in the women's individual poomsae. That put her fifth in her semi-final heat, one place short of the top four who went through to the final. Khaw won poomsae silver on her SEA Games debut last year, and her brother Nicholas is a SEA Games gold medallist.

She leaves Japan with a clear target: "I do know there's space to grow and I also do know that I want to grow."

Yap is back on Friday 2 October for virtual taekwondo, which makes its Asian Games debut in Aichi-Nagoya. The Games close on Sunday 4 October.

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