



A Moment for the History Books: Shanti Pereira Reaches the Commonwealth Games 200m Final

Description

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Shanti Pereira in the 200m semi-finals at Glasgow 2026 – Photo: TeamSG/Lim Weixiang

There is a phrase that gets thrown around far too easily in sport. –Historic.– It is applied to routine upsets, modest milestones, results that would barely warrant a footnote in the annals of any truly well-resourced sporting nation. But on Thursday night at the Scotstoun Stadium in Glasgow, when Veronica Shanti Pereira crossed the finish line of the women’s 200m semi-final in a season-best time of 22.81 seconds – and became the first Singaporean in history to qualify for an individual sprint final at the Commonwealth Games – the word earned its place without qualification.

Historic. Genuinely, unambiguously, profoundly historic.

A Barrier That Seemed Immovable

To appreciate the magnitude of what Shanti has achieved, you need to understand just how elusive this moment has been. Singapore has produced fine sprinters over the decades, athletes who trained hard, competed with pride, and reached respectable levels on the regional stage. But the Commonwealth

Games sprint final — a stage occupied by athletes from Jamaica, the Bahamas, the United Kingdom, Australia — has always sat beyond Singapore’s reach. Semi-finals, yes. Finals, never. That barrier has now been broken, not by some improbable fluke or favourable draw, but by a sprinter running the fastest time of her season under pressure, when it mattered most.

She finished third in her semi-final heat and eighth overall across the three heats. The top two from each semi-final qualified automatically; Shanti came through as one of the two fastest remaining qualifiers. She had to earn it the hard way — running against athletes who had been faster than her, in a stadium crackling with atmosphere, with the weight of a nation’s hopes on her shoulders. And she delivered. Twenty-two point eight one seconds. A new season best. A page of history.

The Long Road to Glasgow

None of this happened overnight. Shanti’s journey to this moment has been one of the most compelling storylines in Singapore sport over the past several years — a story of incremental improvement, occasional heartbreak, and a singular refusal to accept the limits that others set for her.

She burst into continental consciousness at the 2023 World Championships, where she ran her national record of 22.57 seconds in the 200m. That same year, she won the sprint double at the SEA Games in Cambodia — 100m and 200m gold — becoming the first Singaporean woman to achieve back-to-back sprint victories at the regional Games. She repeated the feat in Thailand in 2025. At the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games, she reached the semi-finals of both the 100m and 200m, setting national records in both events. And at the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou, she claimed gold in the 200m against the finest Asian opposition, confirming her status as the continent’s premier women’s sprinter.

Each step upward has required not just physical conditioning but a particular brand of mental fortitude — the ability to compete without the infrastructure, the training depth, or the high-performance ecosystem that produces world-class sprinters in Jamaica or the Bahamas. Shanti has built herself into an elite athlete through uncommon discipline and an almost stubborn belief in what she can achieve. Glasgow is the proof of concept.

What the Final Holds

The 200m final at the Scotstoun Stadium is scheduled for Saturday morning Singapore time, and Shanti will line up against the very best that the Commonwealth has to offer. The fastest qualifier across the semi-finals was Adaejah Hodge of the British Virgin Islands, who set a Games record of 22.01 seconds — a full eight-tenths faster than Shanti’s qualifying time, and well inside Shanti’s personal best of 22.57 seconds.

The honest assessment is that a podium finish will be extraordinarily difficult. But Shanti Pereira has spent her entire career doing things that honest assessments said were extraordinarily difficult. Her national record of 22.57 seconds would put her in medal contention if she can reproduce it on Saturday. And the woman who just ran a season best in the heat of a Commonwealth Games semi-final is clearly in the form of her life.

“After coming out of the previous two races, I knew I had so much more in me and I knew I could put up a performance today,” she said after qualifying. “Under 23s I’m so happy. It’s been such a long time coming.” Asked about the final, she was characteristically undaunted: “It’s another race, it’s another opportunity, it’s another chance to run in this stadium which has a really good track and really good atmosphere. I’m just excited, I can’t wait.”

That is Shanti Pereira in a sentence. Not overawed. Not satisfied with simply qualifying. Excited for another race. Ready to compete.

More Than a Result

Whatever happens on Saturday, Thursday’s semi-final has already secured its place in Singapore sporting history. Shanti has broken a barrier that previous generations could not breach, and she has done so in convincing fashion – not scraping through on a technicality, but posting a genuine season best and qualifying on merit.

For a sport-mad nation that has long punched below its economic weight at major international events, moments like this carry a significance that transcends the scoreboard. They tell young Singaporean children – particularly young girls who dream of running fast – that the limits they are told exist are not as fixed as they appear. They demonstrate that with the right coaching, the right mentality, and a relentless commitment to excellence, a Singaporean can stand in a Commonwealth Games sprint final alongside the world’s best and belong there.

Shanti Pereira belongs there. She earned her place. And on Saturday morning, Singapore should be watching.

The women’s 200m final at the Glasgow 2026 Commonwealth Games is scheduled for Saturday, 2 August, with live coverage available on meWATCH.

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