

Ong secures Bahrain title

Singapore's No.1 gets first win of the year and \$30,000 cheque after ousting Kuwaiti

Jonathan Wong

Singapore's top bowler Remy Ong finally returned to the winner's podium – nearly nine months after his last individual title.

The 30-year-old claimed victory at the Bahrain International Open in the capital Manama yesterday.

Ong scorched the lanes at the Fun Land Bowling Centre, notching 279 pinfalls in the stepladder final to beat Kuwait's Mohammed Kamel's score by 75 pinfalls.

In a phone interview, he said: "It's nice to get this title. Winning is definitely not easy, it takes that extra edge to get there. I'm glad I had that today."

In the final qualification round he registered 1,979, a mere 11 pinfalls ahead of second-placed Kamel, to finish as the top qualifier for the five-man step-ladder finals.

He said: "It was crazy out there

today, everyone was bowling really well. The scores were very high, especially in the beginning. A 220 game would have been poor."

Remy averaged 247 pinfalls for the eight games in qualification. He attributed the unusually high scores to the lanes and oiling patterns.

"I had to change my position quite a few times during the games, to try and get the right carry," he said.

"I was just hanging in there and trying to grind out a result," added the seasoned international, whose biggest victory came in 2006 when he was a double gold medallist (Singles and All-Events) at the World Championships in Busan.

Yesterday, the left-handed hook bowler claimed the top prize of US\$20,000 (S\$30,000).

The win follows his last individual triumph – the singles title at the Storm San Marino Open last July.

In November, he also captured the men's doubles title (with Shaun Ng) and mixed doubles (Jazreel Tan) at the Commonwealth Ten-pin Bowling Championships in Belfast.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TERENCE YAW

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The Bahrain tournament was the 2002 Asian Games triple gold medallist's second trip to the Middle East in a few weeks. He finished ninth in Qatar's H.H. Emir Cup tournament last month. He will return at month's end for a tournament in Saudi Arabia.

The Bahrain win validates the Singapore Bowling Federation and Ong's decision to compete in more international tournaments, instead of just focusing on the Asian circuit.

Said Ong, who started travelling to more European and Middle Eastern events last year: "The exposure has made me a better bowler.

"Competing alone, without your teammates, can be tough. But it make you more independent and mentally stronger."

He still hopes to compete against the world's best in The Professional Bowlers Association Tour. But he is not yet prepared to turn pro.

He said: "That would mean not being able to represent Singapore at the Asian Games. I still want to win medals for Singapore."

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