

Kevin now chases Olympic spot in 400m freestyle

KUALA LUMPUR: Indonesia SEA Games gold medallist Kevin Yeap is aiming for double Olympic qualification in the national age-group swimming championships at the National Aquatic Centre in Bukit Jalil this weekend.

The 23-year-old long distance swimmer met the London Olympic invitational mark for the 1,500m freestyle at the Singapore national age-group meet last month and has set his sights on dipping under the 400m freestyle mark as well.

Kevin, who has never competed in the Olympics, said he won't be doing the longer distance this time so as to give himself a better shot at making the cut for the 400m freestyle.

"I'm only swimming the 200m and 400m freestyles this time. I hope to get under the Olympic invitational time for the 400m freestyle as I'm just one second away based on my personal best time," said Kevin.

"It's very close and I will go for it this weekend."

Kevin clocked a personal best of 15:40.54 in Singapore for the longest race in the men's division and it is inside the Olympic invitational time of 15:43.74.

The Universiti Putra Malaysia undergraduate in business studies also bagged the gold in

the 400m freestyle in 3:55.32, just outside the Olympic invitational time of 3:54.13.

Kevin clocked 3:55.07 when he won his first SEA Games gold in Indonesia last year.

He is the only male swimmer from Malaysia to have reached Olympic qualifying standards so far.

Three women swimmers – Christina Loh, Siow Yi Ting and Khoo Cai Lin – have also met the invitational time in their respective pet events but they are not guaranteed of places.

A swimmer reaching Olympic invitation time standard is eligible for entry depending on the rankings where they will need to better their times before the deadline passes in June and a country can only have one representative in each event.

This year's three-day meet has been accepted as an Olympic qualifier for South-East Asia and the organisers, the Amateur Swimming Union of Malaysia (Asum), are opening the event to foreign swimmers for the first time.

Hong Kong, India, the Philippines and Guam have confirmed participation.

The Malaysian Open, followed by the inaugural South-East Asian Championships, both taking place next month, and the Singapore Open in June are the other remaining Olympic qualifying meets.



Not done yet: Kevin Yeap is the only Malaysian swimmer to have reached Olympic qualifying standards.