

Johnathan believes everyone has equal chance for shooting gold

By TAN MING WAI

KUALA LUMPUR: National pistol shooter Johnathan Wong (*pic*) faces a clear and present danger in Rio Olympic champion Hoang Xuan Vinh at next month's Kuala Lumpur SEA Games.

But the 24-year-old Johnathan, who made his Olympic debut last August, insists that Xuan Vinh is just "another competitor" as he chases his first SEA Games gold.

"Many have asked me what I think about him (Xuan Vinh) since he's an Olympic gold medallist," said Johnathan.

"But I believe that everyone stands an equal chance of winning the SEA Games gold. I don't really bother

about their status because they are all the same to me."

Johnathan clinched a silver in 10m air pistol and bronze in 50m pistol in the Singapore Game two years ago.

In the 10m air pistol final, Johnathan pipped Xuan Vinh to second placing.

That wasn't the only time that Johnathan got the better of Xuan Vinh, who is also a two-time World Cup winner.

In May, Johnathan triumphed against the 42-year-old in the 50m pistol at the 41st South-East Asia (SEASA) Shooting Championships in Subang. The Malaysian also won the 10m and 50m team titles.

He made his Games debut at Myanmar 2013,

claiming two bronzes in the 50m pistol individual and team events.

Johnathan has every reason to be optimistic about his chances at the KL Games.

Besides his three-gold effort at the SEASA, he also did well to finish sixth at the ISSF World Cup's opening leg in New Delhi.

"My preparations have been good. I managed a season-best of 580 in a local competition during my South Korea training stint," he said.

"It's very encouraging because it's not far from my personal best of 585 (also a national record).

"Now, I'm working more on my mental strength. Once you're in the final, it's a different game altogether."

