BIG NAMES AT KL2017

Olympic gold medallists and world champions join the fray

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THOUGH known as a development platform for up and coming athletes from around the region, the Kuala Lumpur Sea Games will also feature a number of world class athletes for local fans to savour first hand.

The following athletes are among the big names who have been registered for the games and barring injury or any unforeseen circumstances, the following athletes will compete in track cycling, diving, swimming, weightlifting, taekwondo, shooting and badminton.

Olympic bronze medallist Azizulhasni Awang will lead the nation’s charge in track cycling at the National Velodrome in Nilai from Aug 27 to 29.

Azizulhasni, who entered the history books last year as the first Malaysian to win a medal in cycling at the Olympics, is in fine form, having recently secured his maiden World Championship title in his pet event, the keirin.

The 22-year-old has since apologised for the remark but it will be interesting to see how the Malaysian crowd receives him during the competition from Aug 21-26 at the National Aquatics Centre in Bukit Jalil.

All eyes will be on Indonesian Eko Yuli Irawan in the weightlifting competition at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) on Aug 21-26. Eko, a three-time Olympic medalist (Beijing, London, Rio), will be eager to defend his men’s under-62kg gold as the sport was not included at the Singapore Games.

Vietnam’s hopes in the shooting competition at the National Shooting Range in Subang on Aug 21-26 will rest on the shoulders of pistol specialist Hoang Xuan Vinh. Xuan Vinh made his Olympic breakthrough at the Rio Games last year where he won a gold in the men’s 10m air pistol and silver in the 50m free pistol.

China-born Feng Tianwei will feature for Singapore in the women’s table tennis competition on Aug 20-26. Tianwei, 30, is a three-time Olympic medallist and will be the outright favourite at MITEC.

Thai exponent Tawin Hanprab will be the man to watch in the taekwondo competition at the KLCC on Aug 21-26. The youngster, who turned 19 on Aug 1, is a rising star in the sport having won silver in the men’s under-58kg class at the Rio Olympics last year.

The badminton World Championships in Glasgow has robbed the tournament of many big names, including Lee Chong Wei, though Chan Peng Soon, who delivered the mixed double silver in Rio together with Goh Liu Ying, will be competing.

He will partner Cheah Yee See in the mixed doubles and they are expected to challenge for the gold.