

Divers to face severe night test

THE outdoor Optus Aquatics Centre is known as one of the world's windiest venues and the decision to hold all finals at night will add another layer of difficulty for the divers at the Commonwealth Games.

Competition starts today with the men's 1m springboard, followed by the women's 3m springboard and 10m platform synchro events.

Malaysia will have two pairs in the 10m platform synchro in Rio Olympic Games silver medallists Cheong Jun Hoong-Pandelela Rinong and Nur Dhabitah Sabri-Leong Mun Yee with the former being the favourites in the event.

Dhabitah-Mun Yee will compete in the 3m springboard synchro while Ahmad Amsyar Azman, Ooi Tze Liang and Syafiq

Puteh are Malaysia's representatives in the 1m springboard.

Jun Hoong-Pandelela should finish on the podium following their recent good performances at the World Series, where they won silver in the Beijing leg and bronze in the Fuji leg.

However, Jun Hoong fears the windy and cold conditions here could affect her and Pandelela in the platform event.

"The conditions are difficult, but we can't do anything about it. The team are trying hard to adapt with it," said Jun Hoong, who grabbed headlines last year by winning the 10m platform world title in Budapest.

"It's just really windy. The pool is right next to the water which means it's always cold, it's windy and the wind is really strong.

"And diving at night makes it more challenging. We are trying to adapt with the conditions in training. Our coaches (Zhang Yukun and Christian Brooker) have told us to remain positive and to do our best.

"Diving is a sport where you need to focus throughout the competition. We will have to be mentally strong to overcome the difficult conditions."

Jun Hoong also admitted that she still has issues with her lower back problem.

"I have been carrying the injury for a long time. What I do is just condition myself properly. The injury is an ongoing thing which I have to manage," she added

Jun Hoong, as the world champion, will be tested severely in the 10m platform individual on the following day. She did not do well in the individual event at last month's World Series.



Pandelela Rinong (left) and Cheong Jun Hoong

Australia's Melissa Wu-Teju Williamson, Canada's Caeli McKay-Meaghan Benfeito and England's Lois Toulson-Robyn Birch are the other contenders in today's platform synchro event.