As sweet as Cherie

Singapore bowling star makes it three golds after a stroll in the women's masters final

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JAKARTA — Her team-mates burst into song with just four frames to go in the second game of the women’s masters bowling stepladder final.

“Oh Cherie Tan, oh Cherie Tan is No 1”, they sang, they didn’t care about petting the 23-year-old off as she was all but certain to win her third gold medal at the 26th SEA Games.

Cherie eventually posted a convincing 497-372 victory over Malaysia’s Sharon Koh at the Jaya Ancol Bowling Centre yesterday to end her tournament on a high.

She had been in red-hot form all week and there was no letting up as the southpaw claimed the lead from the roll-off on short-oil conditions with a total of 267 pinfalls in the first game.

Koh, the 2010 Macau Open winner, was clearly feeling the heat, scoring only seven pins in her sixth frame to close the game with 219 pinfalls.

It was all downhill for the Malaysian legler as a disastrous second game saw her scoring only 153, while Cherie finished with 230 for a 497 total to clinch the coveted women’s masters title.

National University of Singapore undergraduate Cherie had already claimed both the women’s singles and team golds earlier in the week, and she said: “It was a bit anti-climatic for me because I knew from the fifth frame that it was more or less a win so I just went and made the shots. It was not as exciting as fighting for every point to the end.

“I beat Sharon to pole in the masters so I guess she was a bit affected.”

There was heartbreak for team-mate Jazreen Tan, though. Jazreen had topped the women’s all events list but was beaten to a qualifying spot in the stepladder after finishing fourth.

Koh earned the right to meet Cherie in the roll-off after disposing of her team-mate Zandra in the stepladder final.

Younger sister and team-mate Daphne Tan — who was part of the unit that won women’s team gold and also bagged two silvers in the doubles and trios — was the first to offer Cherie a hug after her win.

“I’m super-uber proud of her, this is really the cherry (Cherie) on top for me,” said Daphne.

The bowling contingent will return to Singapore this afternoon with a medal haul of three gold, two silver and two bronze medals, while the men’s team of Keith Saw, Jason Yeong-Nathan, Ng Tiac Pin, Ng Chiew Pang, Eugene Low and Basil Low will have nothing to show for their effort.

It’s been quite a good year for me. We expected to take all five in the women’s events but three is better than nothing. It’s been quite good, considering that at the 2007 SEA Games (there was no bowling at the 2009 Games) we came back empty handed.

Three-gold star Cherie

Singapore Bowling Federation president Jessie Phua was beaming after yesterday women’s masters victory and said: “She was just awesome. I was joking with the Minister that if she had moved to the men’s event, she would have won. Out of the six women we brought here, everyone of them was capable of doing this.”

Asked about the poor showing by the men, Singapore Bowling Federation president Jessie Phua said: “At the last SEA Games in 2007, the ladies bombed so we worked on them and we might have overlooked the guys a bit. Quite a bit of work needs to be done with the men, and we hope to replicate what we did with the women.

“Then, 2014 will be an exciting year with the Asian Games.”