



RI's Anson Loh heaving the shot put in the NSG track and field competition at Bukit Gombak Stadium yesterday. While satisfied with a new 15.51m season best, he did go near the age-group record in training. ST PHOTOS: SAMUEL ANG

School sports

FIRED-UP MARK SETS 2 SPRINT MARKS

ACS(I) boy makes the most of final outing after pandemic, breaks 10-year-old records

Jeremiah Ong

At his previous National School Games 100m race in 2019, Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) sprinter Mark Lee had clocked 11.33 seconds, finishing just behind Hwa Chong Institution's Zeen Chia (11.26sec).

Disappointed with his second place, Mark had pledged to work harder.

Yesterday, redemption arrived when the 18-year-old recorded a blistering 10.59sec in the A Division boys' 100m final to smash the 10.70sec record by Hwa Chong Institution's Donovan Chan in 2012.

Completing the podium were his

schoolmate Xavier Tan (10.93sec) and Tampines Meridian Junior College's Kieren Lee (11.20sec).

Yesterday's NSG record was the second one that Mark had broken in a week. On Monday, his 21.62sec effort in the 200m final also surpassed Donovan's 10-year-old record for that distance.

Recalling that 100m race three years ago, Mark, who could not compete in the NSG for the past two years due to the pandemic, said: "That race really humbled me and from then on my training almost doubled and I really committed myself to this."

"I knew that this was my last NSG and I wanted to make the most of it and I feel like I've been robbed of the last two years. I have put in so

much work and I wanted to leave my mark on this competition."

He was also motivated to shave his timing further after clocking 10.95sec during qualification in the Australian Athletics Championships earlier this month.

"I just saw how much I can improve. Having such a bad race really fuelled me so I was very determined when I came back," he said.

Mark's coach and former national sprinter Hamkah Afik credited his attitude and also thanked his parents and his team of coaches.

"Mark has a great attitude and his focus, determination and hunger for success really amazes everyone," said Hamkah, whose four SEA Games medals included silvers in the 200m (1993) and the 4x100m (2003).

"It takes a whole village to raise a child. So I am just glad that he achieved this after five years of careful planning. I hope that he



ACS(I)'s Mark Lee (far left) and Xavier Tan are neck and neck shortly after the A Division boys' 100m start. Mark won easily in an impressive 10.59sec while Xavier managed to dip under 11 seconds.

BOUNCING BACK

That race really humbled me and from then on my training almost doubled and I really committed myself to this... I just saw how much I can improve. Having such a bad race really fuelled me so I was very determined when I came back.



MARK LEE, A Division 100m and 200m champion, on the effort he put in.

can continue and be better than I was."

In the C Division boys' shot put final, Raffles Institution's Anson Loh claimed gold with a season best of 15.51m, 1.90m ahead of his closest competitor and schoolmate Gabriel Ng.

However, Anson, who had set a C Division record of 58.88m in the discus earlier this month, lamented being unable to break the age group's shot put record of 16.07m set by HCI's Tan Zhi Hao in 2007 despite having hit similar distances in training.

"I think I could have pushed myself further to get the record but setting a new season best is enough for now," he said.

The second record of the day was set in the C Division boys' long jump when RI's Garrett Chua leapt a distance of 6.44m to surpass the 15-year-old record set by alumnus Syafiq Poh Shahabidin by four cen-

timetres.

Finishing ahead of HCI's Ethan Kong (6.00m) and Singapore Sports School's Jase Low (5.60m), the 14-year-old was delighted to have exceeded his own expectations.

The 1.77m Secondary 2 student said that it was his favourite event through the years and was disappointed he could not take part when the NSG was not held due to the pandemic.

On breaking the record, Garrett said: "I had to keep my nerves under control and concentrate really hard. When I broke the record, I couldn't believe it. It felt surreal."

This is his second win this year after clinching the C Division boys' 100m hurdles earlier this month in 13.94sec, ahead of HCI's Rafael Chong (15.08sec) and ACS(I)'s Sean Yoo (15.16sec).

jeremiaho@sph.com.sg