

SJI end 17-year title wait

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SJI's Jeremiah Yeo doing his school proud by finishing second in the B Boys' Byte Class to help his team beat RI and ACS(I) for the title. -- PHOTO COURTESY OF SINGAPORESAILING

LONG-SUFFERING St Joseph's Institution finally broke a 17-year barren spell in sailing when they won the Schools National B Boys' title yesterday.

Since 1992, the competition has been dominated by Anglo-Chinese School (Independent) and Raffles Institution, while the SJI sailors would often find themselves playing second fiddle.

But the SJI team of Jeremiah Yeo, Clement Lim and Tan Jen U changed all that at the National Sailing Centre yesterday by finishing best overall in the B Boys' Byte Class.

They finished second, third and sixth respectively for a total of 11 points, five better than second-placed RI (16). ACS(I) were third with 21 points.

Secondary 3 student Jeremiah admitted: 'We didn't expect to finish first as there were many top sailors from the other schools.'

The RI team, for instance, boasted several potential Youth Olympic Games sailors, including Nathan Tang, Chai Xun and Terence Choo.

Favourable conditions were one of the reasons that SJI emerged surprise victors.

Said skipper Clement: 'We're heavy sailors, so the strong winds worked to our advantage.'

RI's Terence said: 'I'm about 10kg lighter than the winners, so the strong winds didn't suit me.'

There was double joy for Victoria Junior College as they swept both A Division titles. The school had been double winners from 2002 to 2007 but lost the

boys' crown to ACS(I) last year.

This year, the determined VJC sailors trained six times a week instead of four in a bid to win both titles.

Yet, while the Victoria girls (69 points) scored a comfortable 10-point win over RI (Junior College), the boys had to battle for theirs. They finally won with 69 points, four more than RI(JC).

The other three titles were also nail-biting affairs. Tanjong Katong Girls' School edged out Raffles Girls' School by a point for the C Girls' title but lost the B crown to RGS by the same margin.

And RI and ACS(I) were tied on 78 points for the C Boys' title before RI won on a countback.