

# He scores *As and goals*

Rising football talent Elliot Ng juggles the physicality of the pitch and the stress of the classroom with equal panache. TAN XING QI reports

**H**is grandmother needs to stow away all the vases whenever he comes visiting. Since picking up football at the tender age of 3½, Elliot Ng has broken more vases than the average kid.

A decade later, the 13-year-old from St Joseph's Institution has broken into the National Football Academy Under-14 team.

He is no stranger to the national jersey, having represented Singapore in the Asean Primary School Sport Olympiad in Primary 6 and was part of a preliminary National Under-14 football squad.

Last December, he captained The Junior Soccer School and League (JSSL) Arsenal to victory at the Royal Selangor International 7s in Kuala Lumpur.

The midfielder has been playing for the team even before he turned four.

With such impressive credentials, his school's football coach, former national football player Kadir Yahaya, made him skipper of the school's Division C team.

"Elliot is a very good midfielder. For his age, he's got a good vision for passing.

"He can also balance both his studies and football, which is impressive. He is a role model for his teammates on and off the field," he said.

Other than encouraging teammates and orchestrating play on the pitch, Elliot also helps them in their studies in the library before training sessions. He is the de facto "tutor" as he ac-

most of his subjects.

Ask him how he manages the balancing act and he will probably give you a shrug.

Indeed, the Secondary 2 teenager's cool demeanour and focus on the field is replicated in his studies.

He enjoys mathematics for being a "logical subject" as it does not take up too much of his time.

"Once you understand the concept, it's easy to do and it doesn't require much studying," he said. His mother, Ms Sheryl Wong, general manager of Puma Sports Singapore, said: "He's very focused. When he studies,



The future for Elliot Ng, who has represented Singapore in the under-13 level, looks promising as he has been accepted into the National Football Academy.  
ST PHOTO DESMOND WEE

he studies. He hardly watches any TV."

It is clear that football has been Elliot's passion for a long time.

His trophies decorate the shelves in his home and his medal collection is burgeoning.

A huge bag of footballs, accumulated from his yearly Christmas and birthday gifts, nestles in one corner, while Elliot plays his favourite game: Fifa 13.

During the photoshoot, he could not resist a kickabout with his father, Mr Edward Ng, a private tutor, even if it was for a few minutes.

"Since he was a little boy, he can remember all the football facts, such as who was the top scorer or best player of a football tournament. It has been his passion since he was younger."

Mr Ng added: "He does kick the ball in the house. But if he kicks too hard, we will scold him, in case he breaks anything."

Wearing the national jersey is the ultimate goal for Elliot.

"My goal right now is to represent Singapore in the senior team. Even Fandi Ahmad and V. Sundramoorthy played their way up. So, from my point of view, playing for the Lions is possible."

As he blabbered on about all things football, seemingly the only thing on his mind, he was taken aback by the next question.

Having broken so many things in his life, will he be breaking hearts next?

He looked up, surprised by the temerity of this reporter for asking a non-football question.

But he quickly regained his composure at a speed at which his football coach would have been proud.

"I'm in a boy's school. So I don't get to meet girls that much," he said.

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## INTERACT!

Do you think Elliot will one day play for the Singapore Lions? What are some of the obstacles he could face?

Write him a letter of encouragement and send it to [stin@sph.com.sg](mailto:stin@sph.com.sg). If your letter is published, you will win an exclusive IN prize.