

Nicholas Ang (Class 4A)
My Best NYPS Chess Memory

It was the ASEAN and Youth TEAM Chess Championships held between 1 and 6 December 2007 in Kuala Lumpur. At that time, I was in Primary 2. The bus took us on a long journey to Kuala Lumpur. Liu Mutian, a chess mate, and I shared a room at the hotel.

When we woke up in the morning, we found that Michelle Ho, our team captain, was nowhere in sight! She was sleeping late. During breakfast, it was decided that I had to take up the first board and was made the captain of the team.

It was difficult for me to play Black on the top board. Moreover, we were playing against a strong team and I was taking on one of the best Malaysian players for 2006. I was surprised by a trick in the opening but bounced back and tried to put up a good fight. Following an hour-long battle, I eventually emerged as the winner!

Beating one of Malaysia's best junior players was an achievement. My team did brilliantly too. We won 4-0 in the match. A second round was scheduled in the afternoon. Our captain by then was ready to play.

The second round finally began and, while I won my game swiftly, our captain lost her game on the top board. The score was 1-1. My team mates did great to push the balance in our favour: final score, Nanyang won 3-1. I was happy to be among the few people who had a 100% winning ratio of 2 out of 2. Full score! That certainly makes one feel good, doesn't it?

We felt even better the next day. I led the team and again, we won. The score was 4-0 with me winning with Black pieces on the top board. The distasteful food could do only too little to diminish our joy. Only a serious loss could dampen our spirits and this came right in the next round: we lost 1-3. Although I won my game on my board, we all felt sad about this sudden turn of events. While I held the scoring ratio of 4 out of 4, this loss certainly was upsetting. More bad news followed. For the next round, we were held to a 2-2 draw. There was no better time for needing an energizing comeback. It happened right in the next round when we won 4-0 and with 3 more rounds to go, we were in the fourth position.

The seventh round proved crucial. We had to try our best to secure our chances to be champions. After an exciting game, we eventually won 3-1. We were in the third position with two more rounds to go before Masterskill - the sponsor of the event - would present prizes to the winners. During the eighth round, all my team members were on high alert: a loss would have shattered our dreams to bounce back to the leading position. Deeply motivated, we started to work as a team towards achieving our goal. It worked. Five minutes into the start of the game, we were leading 3-0. We were in the running for the top place.

Unfortunately, in the last round, things did not turn out as expected. I looked at the boards 60 minutes after the start of the game. We were down 0-3. Our hope to come out top was dashed. I finished third in the overall individual results. Although I had done well, I was also saddened by the fact that as a team, we had failed to win the decisive match.

Nanyang Primary obtained the Silver trophy in the competition against Malaysia's best school chess team. With a little bit of luck and better concentration, we would have finished on top. I am sure my team members and I will do better next time. This was definitely my most memorable chess experience!