

Press Release

Rivals find Garcha's streak too hot to handle in skeet final at Khelo India Youth Games

Pune, January 16: Gurnihal Singh Garcha, the ISSF World Championship junior bronze medallist, claimed the Khelo India Youth Games Under-21 skeet gold medal by raising his performance in the second half of the final to levels that left the others gasping in awe. He closed in on the crown with a display that combined precision and calm.

Having missed four birds in the first 30 shots, Garcha was trailing Rajasthan's Anantjeet Singh Naruka by a point. The puffs of wind and his rivals eager to make a run for gold did not seem to matter to him.

The 19-year-old, son of a Ludhiana farmer who has installed a skeet range in his farm, moved into a zone and shot the next 30 points down relentlessly to romp home as the winner.

The 20-year-old Naruka caught the eye with a good display in the first half, which he ended with 14 shots in-a-row. But after stretching that to 19 successive shots, he missed two in quick succession and lost his rhythm. Abhay Singh Sekhon (Punjab) took the bronze medal after having been tied for the top spot after the first 20 shots.

At the 50m range, Tamil Nadu's G. Varshaa made a telling statement, first with a resolute show with her rifle to win the girls Under-21 3-position gold in the Khelo India Youth Games shooting competition. Then, with a calm countenance, she expressed the desire to be one of the two junior shooters to make the transition to the senior ranks soon.

"The win here may mean a lot more to my parents, but I am keen to work towards ensuring that I take one of the two transition slots available," Varshaa said, after scoring 447.1 points. She laid down the gauntlet after trailing by 2.8 points on completing the kneeling and prone series behind Haryana's Shirin Godara. She came into her own in the standing series and raced away to gold.

The Coimbatore-based girl drew on her knowledge gained during psychology studies in graduation to keep her mind focused on her goal: to shoot the best she could with each shot.

"I know I can get a better score and that is the reason I won't say I am satisfied at winning today," Varshaa said when asked if her win despite training as frequently as others was satisfactory.

On the other hand, Shirin Godara perhaps brought herself under pressure by realising that she had first conceded ground to the Tamil Nadu girl and then narrowed it down to be in with a chance to take a crack at the gold medal. She admitted to tightening up and making mistakes in the final few shots to have to take the silver medal.

Haryana's Priya Raghav and Anmol Jain were handsome winners of the mixed team 10m air pistol final from Telangana's 13-year-old prodigy Esha Singh and Aga Mohammed Zainulabedin. And, Darshana Rathore (Rajasthan) won the girls' under-21 skeet final comfortably to claim the final gold in the shooting competitions at KIYG 2019.

The results (finals):

Boys under-21 Skeet: 1. Gurnihal Singh Garcha (Punjab) 56; 2. Anantjeet Singh Naruka (Rajasthan) 52 3. Abhay Singh Sekhon (Punjab) 41.

Girls under-21 Skeet: 1. Darshana Rathore (Rajasthan) 49; 2. Simranpreet Kaur (Punjab) 44; 3. Pooja Vishwakarma (Madhya Pradesh) 37.

Girls under-17 50m Rifle 3-positions: 1. G Varshaa (Tamil Nadu) 447.1 points; 2. Shirin Godara (Haryana) 443.3; 3. Ayushi Podder (West Bengal) 432.8.

Mixed team 10m Air Pistol: 1. Haryana (Priya Raghav and Anmol Jain) 464.9 points; 2. Telangana (Esha Singh and Aga Mohammed Zainulabedin) 461.8; 3. Punjab (Arjun Singh Cheema and Pardeep Kaur Sidhu) 394.7.