ATHLETICS

Michelle’s in final without even trying

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BEFORE she even makes her first leap, Michelle Sng has already qualified for the final of the women's high jump.

She will go straight into today's final at the Khalifa Stadium because the number of entries - 13 - is smaller than expected.

Said her coach Chan See Huay: “It was unexpected. We were expecting a bigger field of at least 20 entries.

“So this is a bonus. She can now save her energy to jump in the final instead of having to jump on two days.”

The 19-year-old is Singapore's sole representative in athletics.

The other competitors include defending champion Tatiana Efimenco of Kyrgyzstan and world junior champion Svetlana Radzivil of Uzbekistan.

Michelle declined to be interviewed yesterday.

The Singapore Management University undergraduate arrived in Doha a week ago and has been focusing on her preparations since.

Of her 12 rivals, nine have better personal bests than Michelle.

The Singaporean's best leap is the national record of 1.80 metres.

She is not expected to end Singapore athletics' 32-year Asian Games drought.

Said Chan: “There is no target set for her. She is already in the final.

“The hope is that she can record another personal best.”

If she achieves that, it will be the third time she has broken the national mark this year.

After more than two years of trying, she finally broke Yu Long Nyu's 13-year-old record of 1.74m in May.

Then, she managed 1.79m at an international junior meet in Beirut.

Two months later, she followed it up with a 1.80m effort at the Asian Junior Championships.

Yesterday, there was no last-minute jumping for Michelle. She just did some light warm-up ahead of the big day today.