SO WHAT IF I’M HEAVY? IT’S FUN!

SHE ELECTRIFIES CROWD WITH FIESTINESS & FLAWLESS TECHNIQUE

Standing at 1.6m tall and weighing between 80 to 85kg, Rosehaliana Hartwi (left) is not your typical cheerleader.

But Lilo, as her friends call her, became the unlikely idol at yesterday’s Cheerobics 2007 National Cheerleading Competition at Plaza Singapore.

The feisty 27-year-old wowed the crowd with her spunk and energetic dance moves.

And when her teammates hoisted her on their shoulders and she held a steady pose – head high and arms raised, the crowd roared in appreciation.

Said Lilo, who works as an administration staff and has been cheerleading for almost seven years: “For me, it’s about having fun. “Weight doesn’t matter, it’s all about technique.”

Spectator Eddie Yew, 25, said: “She’s very bold, and I like her courage.

“I think she’s a very symbolic figure for cheerleading to say that anyone with passion should go ahead and join.”

The icing on the cake came when Lilo’s group, the Denver Team A from the Potong Pasir Youth Group, came in second for the open category for group stunts.

This is the sixth year that Cheerobics is being held, but it is the first time that the Cheerleading Association (Singapore) (CAS) is organising it.

It was previously organised by the Nanyang Technological University (NTU) Cultural Activities Club.

The competition is divided into the primary and secondary categories – to be held in June – and the open category.

Yesterday’s two-and-a-half-hour event for the Open category saw some 180 participants aged 13 to 29 take part in two events.

The group stunts event consisted of four to five teammates doing a stunt routine that lasts a maximum of one minute.

The team event consisted of 12 to 25 team members doing stunts, cheers, dance, jumps and gymnastics moves for up to three and a half minutes.

Singapore Management University (SMU) undergraduate Denyse Leong, 20, helped Team Spectrum take home the gold for the group event with her amazing flexibility and over-180 degree vertical split in mid-air.

Meanwhile, Ngee Ann Polytechnic alumni Chen Xiwen, 21, caused gasps of amazement when her teammates from third-placed Magnum Twinkles flipped her so high that her feet grazed the event tent’s fluorescent light 5m above ground.

But the highlight was the all-important team event.

The winner will heading to Tokyo, Japan next month to represent Singapore in the Cheerleading International Open, organised by the International Federation of Cheerleading.

It will be the first time a Singapore contingent is competing in any international competition, said the CAS.

Crowd favourite and former five-time champion Magnum Force Cheerleading Squad from Ngee Ann Polytechnic drew the loudest cheers.

But they took several tumbles and it cost them the winner’s spot.

It was defending champions NTU Aces, from the NTU Nanyang Alumni, who walked away victorious.

TOKYO TRIP & $1,500

Besides the Tokyo trip, they also won $1,500, a trophy and individual medals.

CAS president Mr Damien Ng, who was one of the five judges for the competition, said that the NTU Aces won because of their clean and near-perfect execution of stunts, and their excellent team spirit.

NTU Aces team member and advisor Ian Ang, 26, said he was “relieved” and glad that the team’s hard work has paid off.

The investment associate in the Monetary Authority of Singapore said they have been having seven-hour practise sessions every night for the past two weeks to prepare for the competition.
Newcomers KR Steppers from the National University of Singapore's Kent Ridge Hall, who were formed just two years ago, amazed themselves by coming in 2nd.

They also won two special awards for Best Sunshine and Best Spirit. Team captain Ting Shimin, 21, said: “I’m really proud of our guys. It was our goal since we were formed to take part in Cheerotics, and we just strived to do our best.”

The Blazers from Temasek Polytechnic, and Adstra from Innova Junior College, were tied for 3rd place.

Of course, there was the fair share of wobbles and bad falls.

But every team’s determination to go on despite the mistakes and tumbles showed the spirit that cheerleading is all about.