Daniel Marc Chow, the indefatigable 23-year-old SCC flanker, will be one of the many high profile athletes returning to school from the 24th South East Asian Games in Thailand. The Singapore national rugby team emerged with a credible bronze medal beating rivals Malaysia 12-5, exacting sweet revenge after losing against the same opponents in the group stages (Malaysia won 21-14).

Daniel, who is affably known as ‘Big Daddy’ Chow by his mates, speaks to SMU’s campus newspaper The Blue and Gold, on a variety of matters from the national rugby team’s historic achievement as well as his meteoric rise within the ranks of the national rugby team.

Could you tell us what was going through your mind when the final whistle blew? When the final whistle went, we just felt a great sense of achievement for the hard work and effort put in! Well, we were pretty unfortunate to lose to Malaysia in the group stages. Some tough calls from the referee and critical errors allowed the Malaysians to beat us in the second half. Of course, we wanted to get the gold, however we lost to the quicker Thais in the semi-finals. We had to overcome the mental barrier of facing Malaysia yet again and had to just remain focused on the battle for bronze.

You debuted for the national team in 2005 and have proceeded to be an integral cog in the national team. How much has the team improved since that time? We are actually quite a young team, with many players still studying or in the army. We are currently moving out of the transition stage with a new CEO coming on board. And I feel the team has finally crossed the hurdle for greater things.

What positions do you play? Could you enlighten us about their roles in rugby? Well, I am a flanker for the national team. The flanker has the responsibility to clear up play and to start a new passage, and he is part of the scrum. Whilst for SMU, I am the ‘number eight’. Basically, I am the link man between forwards and back.

Being a human battering ram, and one of the heftiest players, has it got anything to do with your alias ‘Big Daddy’? Ha! You have to ask the team captain about that!

Along with fellow national team player, Desmond Wee, how much do you think the SMU team would miss players from the national squad? How do you think SMU will cope in your absence? The players within our stable are good and are really capable of performing when the time comes. And the current batch of freshmen has been contributing towards the team and I see great potential there.

Out of curiosity, what do you do before each match? Before entering the field I would say a prayer.

What did you gain from the SEA Games? How will you use this experience to improve your game and prepare for future tournaments? As a team, we have learnt to play with more intensity. As Sevens are played over just 15 minutes, it is possible to string many matches within a day. I have learnt to be extremely disciplined in maintaining my fitness levels before and during the tournament.

When would the national team be in action again? What are your goals this time round? The next thing on our calendar would be the Asian Div 1 Championship. We will be playing China, Chinese Taipei and Sri Lanka. Although these teams are strong, I am confident Singapore is able to match these teams. As long as we have good preparation, getting promoted is within our grasp.