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She sealed her third gold medal in a row at Nationals, this time in the Prejuvenile Ladies A Event. Known for her composure on and off the ice, Yi Ching has a simple mantra before she begins to skate. "I just tell myself to do my best." She concedes that the competition is becoming harder as she advances in the levels. "The elements are harder, both the jumps and the landings. Sometimes, you just get so frustrated when you can't land something." When asked if she dreams of going to the Olympics, she says, "No. I just take it one competition at a time."

Another Raffles girl, 11 year-old Alexandria Wong also retained her National title for the third consecutive year. Competing in Juvenile Ladies, Alexandria faced tough competition. "They were all good so I trained even harder," she says. "I just kept telling myself 'I can do it'." One of Singapore's most charismatic skaters, Alexandria wants to cement her double jumps in the coming year. She also wants to take a good run at the double axel.

The competitive highlight of the Nationals was the PreNovice Ladies event. Thirteen year old Saki Jimbo retained her title as PreNovice champion in a nail-biting competition with 14 year-old Sarah Paw, a Singaporean living in Beijing. Sarah and her mother travelled back to Singapore specifically to compete at the Nationals.

The two skaters were evenly matched in competitive ability but had very different styles. Sarah Paw was extremely light on her feet, moving like quicksilver across the ice, and producing some of the most exquisite spins ever seen in Singapore competition. Fast and centred, her spins were distinguished by their difficult positions. In fact, she did a high-level Bielman spin, with equal ease as she alternated legs. During the warmup, Sarah's double rotation jumps were clean and crisp. However, she may have found it difficult to fit her program onto the smaller ice surface in Singapore, after years of training on an Olympic rink in Beijing. She seemed hesitant as she approached some of her jumps during the program, which led to falls and problems with underrotation.

In contrast, Saki Jimbo brought speed, physical bravado and a great connection to her music. Despite some under-rotation on the jumps during warm-ups, Saki laid them down clean during the program. She entered the free program in the lead after a definitive win in the short program. However, as she came off the ice after her second skate, she expressed some doubt as to whether she had done enough. As she tried to catch her breath after her fast-moving, 3-minute plus programme, she said: "Well, I tried my best, but I don't know how it's going to go."

As it turned out, it was enough. Saki was given first place ordinals by all three judges. Whew, she said.