

FROM ONE ERA TO THE NEXT

Passing the SEA Games torch to his son was like passing the baton to the next generation, says Fandi Ahmad

When Fandi Ahmad was introduced as the final torchbearer during the finale of the Opening Ceremony, the spectators in the National Stadium went wild.

"Fandi! Fandi! Fandi!" chanted the 40,000-strong crowd. "I was so touched," he recalls. "I jumped with joy as I ran. I cried too, as I felt really emotional."



Fandi, 53, completed the final lap of the torch relay with his 17-year-old son, Irfan Fandi. Father and son also lit the SEA Games cauldron together.

"It was the greatest honour for me, even greater than winning or scoring in a cup final," Fandi says. "It was a special moment where I, as an individual, brought our nation together. It was the best moment of my life."

Singapore's favourite football son, Fandi made over 100 appearances and scored 55 goals for his country from 1979 to 1997. He helped the national football team score three silvers and three bronzes in nine SEA Games.

When he was handing the torch to Irfan, Fandi says, it felt like he was passing the baton to the next generation. "I hope my sons will represent our country in football like I did," he adds.

Irfan, who made his SEA Games debut as a striker in Singapore's Under-23 football squad, says: "I will always remember this SEA Games. I made history with my dad."

