

For Immediate Release

27 March 2023

15 Team Singapore Para Swimmers to Make a Splash on Home Turf at Citi Para Swimming World Series Singapore 2023

- Toyota commits to \$200,000 sponsorship as main sponsor of the 2023 and 2024 Singapore legs, in support of local para athletes and sport inclusivity
- Over 150 international para swimmers to compete at the only Asian stop
- 2023 edition goes beyond the competition with a festive village for spectators, featuring free snacks, games, and photo opportunities with Merli, the Merlion



Above: TeamSG para swimmers for Singapore 2023 edition (Photo credit: Singapore Disability Sports Council - Andy Chua)

After a four-year hiatus, the Citi Para Swimming World Series is returning to Singapore, with 15 Team Singapore para swimmers set to compete on home ground at the OCBC Aquatic Centre from April 29th to May 1st, 2023. Local fans can look forward to cheering on their favourite para swimmers, including the likes of Paralympians Yip Pin Xiu, Toh Wei Soong and Sophie Soon, as well as ASEAN Para Games medalists Colin Soon, Wong Zhi Wei and Danielle Moi.

Debutants like Jareth Wong and Robby Yeo will also be making up Team Singapore. The initiative is aimed at ensuring that the event is more than a celebration of top-level competition, but also a catalyst for the development of the next generation of para swimmers in Singapore.

“Para swimming is an important and growing sport in Singapore, and we are proud to have the opportunity to host this prestigious event in our country, to showcase its

thrills to Singaporeans. Our para swimmers have been training hard, and we are confident that they will put on their best performances, particularly with the support of our home crowd," says Ms Kelly Fan, Executive Director, SDSC.

Over 150 para swimmers from all over the world will also be joining the competition, adding to the excitement of the event. 6-time-Ironman-winner-turned-Paralympian Susan Schnarndorf (Brazil), Paralympic medalists Alexandra Stamatopoulou (Greece), Tang Wai Lok (Hong Kong), and Cameron Leslie (New Zealand), as well as one of most successful para swimmers of all time - Teresa Perales (Spain), are just some of the names that have signed up for the races in Singapore. Spectators can look forward to seeing these incredible athletes push themselves to the limit and showcase the very best of para swimming.

Hong Kong's Tang shares, "I can take the opportunity to observe new swimmers from various countries and understand the strength of swimmers after the epidemic by participating in the competition in Singapore. I hope to strive for the result that can meet the Minimum Qualification Standard and qualify for the 2024 Paralympics in the competition."

For Schnarndorf, the Singapore leg would be one where she intends to prepare for the World Championships later this year. "I intend to use it as training for the key competitions to come and get my spot on the Brazilian team for the French Paralympic Games next year."

Toyota has committed to supporting the Singapore legs as the main local organising committee sponsor for 2023 and 2024, with a contribution of \$200,000 over the two years.

"At Toyota, we aim to enrich lives around the world with the most responsible ways of moving people, creating a more inclusive and sustainable society for all to challenge the impossible and experience the freedom of movement," shares Mr Jaja Ishibashi, General Manager, Toyota Marketing Services Department.

"We strongly believe that as long as we are free to move, anything is possible. In the 2019 edition, the athletes at the games have displayed this and inspired us greatly, which is why Toyota remains committed to supporting the Singapore editions for 2023 and 2024. When our communities and customers feel the thrill and joy of movement, we are one step closer to achieving "Mobility for All"."

The Singapore leg - which is the only Asian stop - marks the fifth out of nine in the 2023 Series. Team Singapore para swimmers have participated in 2 legs thus far, and collected 3 gold and 5 bronze medals.

The Singapore leg also marks an opportunity for Singaporeans to rally behind local athletes as they take on the world's best. Moreover, with the addition of a festive village, pass holders can enjoy free snacks, goodies and games like archery and mini-bowling, as well as photo opportunities with Merli, the Merlion. With ticket

prices starting from \$10 for a day pass and \$25 for a three-day season pass, the event offers an affordable and unforgettable experience for the whole family.

Free entry is available for persons with disabilities to ensure that everyone can experience the excitement of the competition. The SDSC hopes that through its efforts, more Singaporeans will come and be a part of this momentous occasion, show their support for Team Singapore, and witness the triumph of the human spirit.

Day and season passes are available on SISTIC, the official ticketing partner for the event. Mediacorp, the official broadcast partner, will also be livestreaming the heats and finals on MeWatch and its YouTube channel.

Dr Teo-Koh Sock Miang, President, SDSC, said, "Nothing beats the rare experience of witnessing world-class para swimming on home ground and bringing your red and whites to cheer on our local para swimmers. As the national sports body for para sports in Singapore, SDSC aims to rally Singaporeans behind para athletes around the world and locally. We believe that para sports can inspire and unite people, and we hope to see Singaporeans come out in full force to support these individuals, who work hard to defy their limits."

Team Singapore swimmer, Yip Pin Xiu, shares, "The upcoming Singapore leg will be my third time racing on home ground and I'm excited for it because all my friends, family, and supporters know that I compete but them being able to see me actually do it is different. The World Series is a unique racing format and really fun with the point system. Everybody just races against each other, so there's a little bit more pressure but I'm looking forward to it and to do my best. It'll be part of my lead up for the World Championships in August where I hope to retain my titles. What I want to do is to continue strategising our race plans, try to get our taper done well so that we will be ready for Manchester when the time comes."

Annex A – TeamSG Para Swimmers Profiles

Annex B – About Classification

Annex C – About Multi-Class Point System

###

For media enquiries and interviews, please direct to:

Nur Zakiaana Suliman
Singapore Disability Sports Council
M: +65 8613 7097

Email: corpcomm@sdsc.org.sg

About Singapore Disability Sports Council (SDSC)

Singapore Disability Sports Council (SDSC) is the only organisation in Singapore that caters to sports for persons across all kinds of disabilities. It aims to help persons



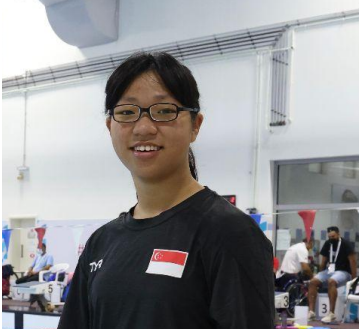

with disability lead full and independent lives through sports. Besides providing sporting opportunities for them to realise their potential, SDSC trains talents to represent Singapore and pursue excellence at regional and international competitions.

More information at www.sdsc.org.sg

Annex A – TeamSG Para Swimmers Profiles

Team Singapore Swimmers

| Name | Profile |
|--|---|
| <p data-bbox="97 297 411 331">Benson Tan Eng Kiong</p>  | <p data-bbox="496 297 1497 409">Benson Tan, who was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder at the age of five, is an accomplished swimmer who has won 11 ASEAN Para Games medals, seven of them gold.</p> <p data-bbox="496 454 1497 566">Benson started taking part in sports at the age of 10. This was part of his mother’s push to encourage him to pick up sports. Since then, Benson has been able to focus and improve his social skills.</p> <p data-bbox="496 611 1497 685">When he turned 18, Benson turned competitive and has since represented the nation at regional and international competitions.</p> |
| <p data-bbox="97 685 399 719">Colin Soon Jin Guang</p>  | <p data-bbox="496 685 1497 819">Since Colin was 3 years old, he was attracted to water and the pool. For his own safety, his mother decided he should participate in swimming classes to brush up on his proficiency skills. Since then, Colin has never looked back.</p> <p data-bbox="496 864 1497 999">The feeling of being in water, and being able to represent his country in his favourite activity is what keeps Colin going. He wants to make himself and Singapore proud by winning more races and achieving personal best timings.</p> <p data-bbox="496 1043 1497 1200">Colin represented Singapore in the Dubai 2017 Asian Youth Para Games (AYPG) and won two bronze medals. He also represented Singapore at the Singapore 2019 World Para Swimming World Series. He took 4 gold medals in 4 events at the Bahrain 2021 AYPG, and hopes to be a Paralympian like his sister, Sophie Soon.</p> <p data-bbox="496 1245 1497 1361">Through swimming, Colin hopes to promote inclusiveness and advocate for persons with disabilities, particularly for young people with visual impairment. Outside of sports, he enjoys composing music digitally on his computer.</p> |
| <p data-bbox="97 1361 430 1395">Chan Wei Siang, Darren</p>  | <p data-bbox="496 1361 1497 1473">Darren Chan, who has intellectual impairment, enrolled in Rainbow Centre Yishun Park in 2009. It was through the school that the jovial kid got to try out many sporting activities like inline skating, track & field and swimming.</p> <p data-bbox="496 1518 1497 1653">Darren’s teacher noticed that he was swift in the water and decided to support Darren’s pursuits in swimming. Through his participation in the National Para Swimming Championships, Darren was scouted to join the national development team in 2018.</p> <p data-bbox="496 1697 1497 1749">Debutant Darren Chan was no less impressive with a bronze finish in his first swim, the Men’s 50m Fly S14 event.</p> |
| <p data-bbox="97 1749 327 1783">Fu Ai-Lin, Nicole</p> | <p data-bbox="496 1749 1497 1883">At the tender age of 2, Nicole Fu started swimming weekly with her grandfather. Her love of water holds no bounds. At age 9 and through the recommendation of her school (Grace Orchard School), she entered her first swimming competition.</p> <p data-bbox="496 1928 1497 2024">At the 2019 Inter School competition, she came in 4th in the Women’s 25m Freestyle. A year later, she was noticed by the Singapore Disability Sports Council during the National Inclusive Championships. In 2017,</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
|  | <p>Nicole qualified for her first international competitions - the ASEAN Para Games and Asian Youth Para Games.</p> |
| <p>Han Liang Chou</p>  | <p>26-year-old Han Liang Chou has been swimming since the age of 12. It was through his school that he joined Swimming as a co-curricular activity (CCA). When he was 15, Liang Chou was selected to represent the nation at the 2011 ASEAN Para Games and won a bronze. Driven by this achievement, he continued to push hard and qualified to attend the 2018 Commonwealth Games.</p> |
| <p>Janelle Tong Jing Xuan</p>  | <p>Swimming was recommended to Janelle by her physiotherapist because sports is a form of therapy to improve her functional abilities. Janelle got started in sports when she was 3 years old.</p> <p>She finds it difficult to move on land as coordinating her movements and gauging the height of stairs is challenging for her. However, water is a different medium, and is so much easier to move in as compared to land. Furthermore, the sport is thrilling because she always wants to challenge herself to swim faster than she did in previous competitions.</p> <p>Janelle represented Singapore at the Bahrain 2021 Asian Youth Para Games. She wants to continue challenging herself and pushing her limits to see how far she can go. Her long-term sports goal is to qualify for the 2028 Paralympic Games. Outside of sport, she enjoys doing art, reading, and baking.</p> |
| <p>Jareth Wong Ming Em</p>  | <p>Jareth Wong got into an accident when he was in secondary school. This accident would cause his hip to be damaged from avascular necrosis. Due to this, he would require the assistance of a crutch so that he can move around.</p> <p>He began to swim competitively when he entered university at SIM in 2017. It was only recently that he started to compete as a para-swimmer. Prior to becoming a para-swimmer, during his university days, he served as the club president of his school's swim club and would often represent them.</p> <p>Currently Jareth aims to push himself to his limits and see how far he can reach with consistent training.</p> |
| <p>Jazlene Tan Shihui</p> | <p>Jazlene Tan picked up swimming to learn water safety when she was 10. Soon after, she developed an interest in competitive swimming and started participating in the annual National Para Swimming Championships. Now 17 years old, Jazlene has demonstrated continuous progress in her swimming results over the years of competition.</p> |



Lim Kong Boon



Lim Kong Boon was diagnosed with intellectual impairment at an early age. He started competing in the National Para Swimming Championships when he was 17 years old.

In 2017, Kong Boon qualified for the Asian Youth Para Games 2017 and clinched 7th place. He is now a role model for his younger peers at Pathlight School.

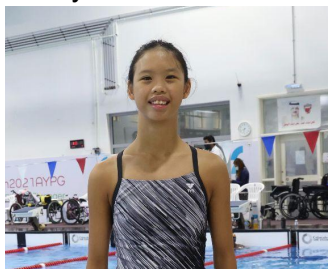
Moi Yan Ting Danielle



One thing Danielle always does when she is at overseas training or competitions is to call her family daily, as they form her core pillar of strength.

She would like to eventually do a swimming photo feature that can encourage and inspire others. Despite her young age, Danielle has won numerous medals in several competitions since 2014.

Robby Yeo Zhi Yah



Robby started swimming as therapy, and being able to swim and train alongside her friends keeps her going. The 15-year-old who was born with Williams Syndrome looks up to Paralympic bronze medallist Theresa Goh because she swims Robby's favourite stroke, the breaststroke.

Sophie Soon Jin Wen



Sophie Soon was diagnosed with cone-rod dystrophy as a child, a condition which causes deteriorating vision and may eventually lead to blindness. However, this did not stop her from pursuing her interests in sports and music. As a Grade 8 violinist, Sophie performed with The Sam Willows at the 2014 President's Star Charity Show, but took a break from music to focus on swimming.

Sophie won 3 gold medals in the 2015 SPH National Para-Swimming Championship. She made her debut in the international arena at the 2015 ASEAN Para Games, and made her Paralympic debut at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, finishing 4th in the Women's 100m Breaststroke SB12. She won her first world championships title at the Madeira 2022 World Para Swimming Championships, earning silver and a new personal best of 1:25.89 in the Women's 100m Breaststroke SB12.

Toh Wei Soong



At the tender age of two, Wei Soong was diagnosed with the rare condition of transverse myelitis – a condition caused by the inflammation of the spinal cord. The disease affects the muscle nerves of his lower limbs. Wei Soong was first exposed to swimming at the age of six, as a form of therapy. However, he soon fell in love with the experience of being in water, where he faced little restriction and could do things that he could not on land. Wei Soong also enjoyed the discipline and confidence that trainings and victories brought him.

Wei Soong participated in his first swimming competition when he was nine years old. He went on to participate in various competitions over the years, and his exemplary performance at the 2012 National Para Swimming Championships caught the attention of many. When he turned 15 the following year, he was scouted by the Singapore Disability Sports Council (SDSC) for international competitions. Three months later, Wei Soong participated in his first international competition, the IDM Berlin Open 2013, held in Germany. Despite being nervous as a debutant, Wei Soong rose to the occasion and brought back two gold medals for Singapore.

Since then, Wei Soong has gone on to many more international competitions, and would debut at his first Paralympic Games in Tokyo. Wei Soong currently studies at the National University of Singapore.

Wong Zhi Wei



Zhi Wei, who has visual impairment, is currently a student at the National University of Singapore.

In 2015, he joined competitive swimming at the young age of 13 and managed to join the national para-swimmers in 2017 to participate in the World Para Swimming Series in Berlin.

In 2017, he took part in the ASEAN Para Games hosted in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, where he achieved silver in Men's 100m freestyle S13 event and bronze in Men's 50m freestyle S13 event.

In the same year, he represented Singapore in the 3rd Asian Youth Para Games in Dubai where he clinched three gold medals in the Men's S13 100m freestyle, 100m butterfly, and 400m freestyle, and two silvers in the Men's S13 100m backstroke and 100m breaststroke, becoming the most bemedaled athlete at the games representing Singapore at the age of 15.

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>He is currently chasing his dream of becoming a Paralympian and hopes to qualify for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.</p> |
| <p>Yip Pin Xiu</p>  | <p>Paralympian and 5-time gold medallist, Yip Pin Xiu, is a true trailblazer, breaking boundaries as a para-athlete and as a voice for the community. Born with Charcot-Marie-Tooth disease, a degenerative nerve condition, she never allowed that to set limits for herself. The first time Majulah Singapura played at an Olympic arena was when she brought home Singapore's first-ever Paralympics gold medal at the age of 16.</p> <p>Pin Xiu was the youngest Nominated Member of Parliament (NMP) in Singapore. She advocated for inclusion, better sporting culture in Singapore and proposed for a national code to be developed to address sexual harassment in universities. She is currently part of the Safe Sport Commission in Singapore that seeks to foster an environment where sports are free from harassment and abuse, sits on WADA athlete committee where they aim to protect the integrity of clean sport as the leading voice for athletes globally. She is part of the National Youth Council board, aimed at helping our youth to be future ready and the Singapore Disability Sports Council's executive committee to continue pushing for the growth of para sports in Singapore.</p> |

Annex B: Para Swimming Classifications

S1 to S10 - Physical Impairment

S11 to S13 - Visual Impairment

S14 - Intellectual Impairment

The lower number indicates a greater degree of impairment.

Please check <https://www.paralympic.org/swimming/classification> for in-depth information on para swimming classifications.

Annex C: About the Multi-Class Point System (MCPS)

In multi-class para swimming events, para swimmers compete against one another, with each swimmer's result being compared to the world record for their specific disability. The performance closest to the relevant record wins.

The winner of a multi-class event is not always the swimmer who touches the wall before others, but the one who posts the time closest to the World Record for their impairment classification category.