

## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

14 May 2024

### Record number of medals to be vied for at the Citi Para Swimming World Series 2024 Singapore



Credit: Singapore Disability Sports Council - Andy Chua

[https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UXZv9Yt4qLB\\_S5zJXCZ2XH4dogd2otzn/view?usp=sharing](https://drive.google.com/file/d/1UXZv9Yt4qLB_S5zJXCZ2XH4dogd2otzn/view?usp=sharing)

- Third edition held in Singapore would feature Singapore's first youth finals, where youth aged 18 and below would be able to compete separately for additional medals, as a boost for the development of youth para swimmers.
- It also features the global debut for the "Swim Together" workshop, a coaching curriculum introduced by World Para Swimming to improve the base of para swimming proficient coaches worldwide.
- Toyota maintains its strong support as main organising committee sponsor for the Singapore edition, for the second consecutive year.

The Citi Para Swimming World Series returns to Singapore this year with over 120 high performing and developmental para swimmers from around the globe set to participate in the OCBC Aquatic Centre from 17 to 19 May.

Organised by the Singapore Disability Sports Council (SDSC), this is the third time Singapore is hosting this prestigious competition in the para swimming calendar.

Singapore has remained the only Asian leg of the World Series throughout the three editions, which travels to 9 countries in 2024.

The 2024 edition in Singapore will include the global debut of the “Swim Together” workshop, which introduces a coaching curriculum designed by World Para Swimming (WPS) to equip more swim instructors with the skills to teach swimming to persons with disabilities and learn key water safety skills. Five Singaporean instructors have been trained as the first to deliver this curriculum.

Head of World Para Swimming, Mr Craig Nicholson, said: “World Para Swimming is really pleased to host the first Swim Together training in Singapore. There is a real focus to develop the sport in Singapore at all levels from grassroots to performance, so there’s no better place to launch the programme.”

“I hope the training will provide the participants with the skills and information to be able to take the Swim Together programme into their day to day swimming teaching and coaching, helping them to inspire others and make para swimming more accessible in Singapore.”

About 15 local swim coaches are participating in this first workshop. The SDSC hopes to work with these swim coaches and their clubs to broaden the entry points for individuals with disabilities to pick up swimming skills.

Executive Director of Singapore Disability Sports Council, Ms Kelly Fan, said: “Over the past 50 years, we have developed a successful model for para swimming performance in Singapore, but we cannot become complacent if we want more individuals with disabilities to achieve excellence like Pin Xiu. Performance strategies alone are not enough; our success roadmap is continuously updated and spans the entire journey from learn-to-swim programs to high performance. We have expanded from a single central training squad to multiple development centres where our para swimmers can thrive. We are now seeking more partners to expand our learn-to-swim entry points. This would be crucial for us to support individuals with different abilities to succeed in various ways.”

To support youth development, SDSC will also be introducing youth finals for the first time in the Singapore edition. Youth para swimmers aged 18 and below would be able to qualify and compete separately for additional youth medals, on top of the open finals. Team Singapore youth para swimmer, 15-year-old Robby Yeo, who would be competing in her second World Series, would be looking to qualify for the youth finals.

While youth and coach development initiatives are being introduced to enhance the impact of the World Series, high performance remains the core focus of the event. The Citi Para Swimming World Series Singapore 2024 is one of the last chances for swimmers to clock qualifying times for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games. Spectators can look forward to witnessing top para athletes in action, including Japan’s Takayuki Suzuki and Keiichi Kimura, Hong Kong’s Chan Yui-lam, and Spain’s Teresa Perales.

Two-time Paralympic gold medalist, Takayuki Suzuki, said: "It is a remarkable opportunity, especially for Asian swimmers, to experience international competitions and check how their training is progressing towards the Paris Paralympic Games with fewer time differences."

"I have a target time for each event in which I swim this time and I'll try to reach it. The results of this competition will push me to train hard for the Paris Paralympic Games in the next few months," he added.

13 Team Singapore para swimmers are set to compete on home ground. Local fans can cheer on Paralympians Yip Pin Xiu, Toh Wei Soong and Sophie Soon, as well as ASEAN Para Games medalists Colin Soon, Wong Zhi Wei, Danielle Moi, Darren Chan and Benson Tan. Nicholas Hee, who is a Special Olympics World Games gold medallist, will also join Team Singapore in his international debut at the World Series.

Having just won 2 golds at the Madeira 2024 Para Swimming European Open Championships for Women's 50m and 100m Backstroke S2 events, Yip Pin Xiu returns strong to compete in Singapore. "I'm really excited to be competing in the World Series in Singapore. We did it last year as well, and the atmosphere was really good and exciting with the home crowd cheering," shared Yip. Yip broke the 200m Free S2 world record in her first event at the Singapore World Series last year.

SDSC's Para Swimming Performance Director and Lead Coach Mick Massey said: "Competing at our own World Series event is hugely important for our local athletes because it's the one meet in the year where we don't have to travel. We can stay in our time zone and this is the best type of preparation for any meet, really. It is also the only one meet in the year where we can bring all of the swimmers together, from development right through to high performance, on the international stage. This is the meet where the swimmers' parents can attend and I'm sure that will make everyone want to do very well."

Toyota Motor Asia continues to be the main sponsor of the Singapore leg for the second consecutive year, and for the third time since 2019.

Mr Preston Tan, Vice President of Toyota Motor Asia, shared, "This sponsorship not only empowers para swimmers but also raises awareness and inspires positive change, in line with Toyota's global vision of "Mobility For All". It provides a global platform for emerging para swimmers to shine, and challenge stereotypes surrounding physical, visual, and intellectual impairments. By showcasing values such as humility, hard work, and perseverance, these athletes embody the spirit of Toyota's commitment."

"At Toyota, we're passionate and committed about shaping a future of mobility that's inclusive and sustainable. Our goal is to cultivate a society where everyone can challenge the impossible and unlock their full potential for mobility," Mr Tan added.

Toyota Asia Singapore employees are also volunteering in a series of fringe activities held in conjunction with the World Series in Singapore to boost public awareness of para sports. This includes hosting members of the public and schools

behind-the-scenes of the World Series to get up close and personal with international para swimmers and learn how different equipment and techniques can be used in para swimming.

Members of the public can also participate in the festive village, where they can share their views on para sports in an interactive art installation, contribute to an art jamming installation, and try out various para sports such as para cycling, archery and lawn bowls.

In conjunction with the celebratory atmosphere of the World Series, SDSC has launched its own mascot, Finley. Inspired by the Merlion, Finley embodies bravery, perseverance, and determination, aligning with the spirit of para athletes.

President of SDSC, Dr Teo-Koh, said: "Hosting the World Series in Singapore provides a world-class platform for more of our para swimmers to enhance their skills as they compete against top international athletes. It also offers a valuable opportunity for our local community to experience the "wow" moments when they watch so many athletes with different abilities excel in ways that surpass their imaginations. We hope that more Singaporeans with disabilities will be inspired to realise their potential in sports."

Ms Fan added, "While we often read about our para swimmers' accomplishments in the papers, how often do we witness their efforts firsthand and offer our support before the medals are won? The presence of us rallying behind Pin Xiu and our para swimmers as they navigate this final stretch towards the Paralympic Games and their aspirations transforms their races from mere competitions into moments of empowerment, for us and for them."

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.

**Annex A – TeamSG Para Swimmers Profiles**  
**Annex B – About Classification**  
**Annex C – About Multi-Class Point System**

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**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 disabilities 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](http://www.sdsc.org.sg)

**Link to photos:**



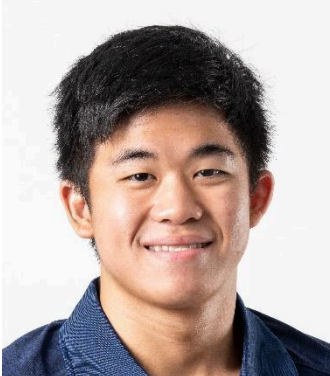
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**Link to results:**

[https://www.titanium-sportservice.de/en/sport-events/calendar/resultlists-v2?va\\_id=329&date=2024-05-17](https://www.titanium-sportservice.de/en/sport-events/calendar/resultlists-v2?va_id=329&date=2024-05-17)

**Annex A – TeamSG Para Swimmers Profiles**  
**TEAMSG PARA SWIMMER PROFILES**

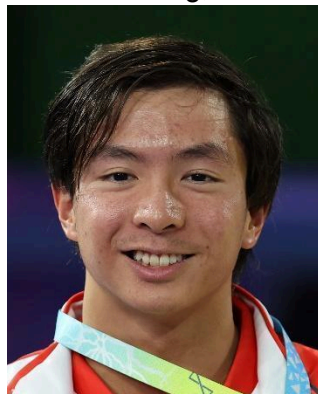
Name	Profile
<p>Benson Tan Eng Kiong, 32</p> 	<p>Benson Tan, who was diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder at the age of five, is an accomplished swimmer who has won 11 ASEAN Para Games medals, seven of them gold.</p> <p>Benson started taking part in sports at the age of 10. This was 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>When he turned 18, Benson turned competitive and has since represented the nation at regional and international competitions.</p>
<p>Colin Soon Jin Guang, 19</p> 	<p>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>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>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>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>Chan Wei Siang, Darren, 21</p> 	<p>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 &amp; field and swimming.</p> <p>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>Darren represented Singapore at the Bahrain 2021 Asian Youth Para Games and won two bronze medals in the Men’ s 12-18 200m Freestyle S14 and Men’s 17-18 200m Individual Medley SM14. In</p>

	<p>his free time, Darren can be found drawing, watching webtoon, exercising, and watching YouTube videos on swimming competitions.</p>
<p>Han Liang Chou, 27</p> 	<p>27-year-old Han Liang Chou started swimming at the young age of 5 years old and joined the national team in 2011 when he was 15. In primary and secondary school, he also used to represent his school for competitions. When he was 15, Liang Chou was selected to represent the nation at the 2011 ASEAN Para Games and won a bronze medal. In the 2015 SEA Games in Singapore, Liangchou did Singapore proud with eight medals (2 gold, 1 silver, 5 bronze) out of his nine events. Driven by this achievement, he continued to push hard and qualified to attend the 2018 Commonwealth Games. He is always excited and honoured to represent the country in competitions and despite having to juggle between training and work, his passion for the sport is what keeps him going.</p>
<p>Jareth Wong Ming Em, 25</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, 21</p> 	<p>Jazlene, who has an intellectual disability, started swimming at 11 years old and enjoys competitive swimming. She believes in hard work, determination and never gives up easily in her journey towards achieving her goals. When Jazlene was young, she loved being in the water, but was often sick so she only learned to swim at the age of 10. She won her first gold medal in the 100m Breaststroke at the Singapore Press Holding (SPH) Para Swimming Competition in 2016 at the age of 14. Since then, she has participated in many swimming competitions and the most recent was the Virtus Oceania Asia Games in Australia in November 2022, along with the Citi Para Swimming World Series in both Singapore and Berlin in May 2023, where she broke her personal best in every event. She is delighted to be selected to represent Singapore at the Asian Para Games 2023 in Hangzhou where she will strive to achieve another personal best and national record in her event. Jazlene's hobby, apart from swimming, is listening to music and enjoying food.</p>

<p>Moi Yan Ting Danielle, 24</p> 	<p>Danielle Moi, who has an intellectual disability, is a seasoned swimmer, winning a gold and silver at the 9th ASEAN Para Games in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in 2017. Danielle then went on to win 2 silvers and 1 bronze at the Dubai 2017 Asian Youth Para Games (AYPG). Danielle loves swimming and is determined to train hard and swim faster. Danielle was a recipient of the Haw Par Para Sports Bursary in 2020, receiving a boost to her Paralympic dreams. Danielle hopes to qualify for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.</p> <p>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.</p>
<p>Robby Yeo Zhi Yah, 17</p> 	<p>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.</p>
<p>Sophie Soon Jin Wen, 26</p> 	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>



Toh Wei Soong, 25



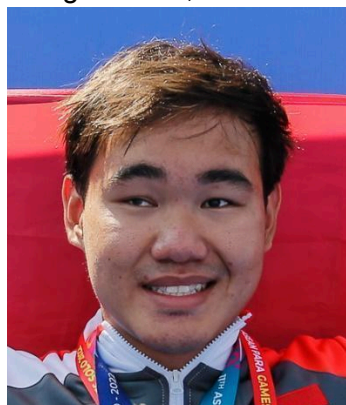
At the tender age of two, Wei Soong was diagnosed with the rare condition of transverse myelitis – a condition caused by the inflammation of the spinal cord. The disease affects the muscle nerves of his lower limbs. Wei Soong was first exposed to swimming at the age of six, as a form of therapy. However, 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 training 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. In 2018, Wei Soong qualified for the Commonwealth Games and was the first para-athlete to win a Bronze medal. He debuted at his first Paralympic Games in Tokyo 2020. At the 2022 Commonwealth Games held in Birmingham, England, Toh won a silver medal for Singapore in the Men's S7 50 metre freestyle, becoming the most decorated Singapore swimmer at the Commonwealth Games with one silver and one bronze medal.

Wei Soong will be completing his studies and graduating by July 2024.

Wong Zhi Wei, 21





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.

He is currently chasing his dream of becoming a Paralympian and hopes to qualify for the Paris 2024 Paralympic Games.

<p>Yip Pin Xiu, 32</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>
<p>Nicholas Hee, 20</p> 	<p>Nicholas Hee, age 20 and living with intellectual impairment, began his competitive swimming journey at 10, proudly representing his school in various tournaments. His exceptional talent shone brightly at the Special Olympics World Games 2023, where he clinched victory in the men's 50m Freestyle event. Continuing his active participation, Nicholas also excelled at the local SDSC meet and the National Para Swimming Championships in 2024, securing a Gold medal in the 100m Freestyle and a Bronze in the 200m Freestyle. His ultimate aspiration is to proudly represent Singapore at the Paralympics, with the World Series 2024 serving as his initial milestone towards achieving this dream.</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.