

**SPEECH BY PRINCIPAL TAN TECK HOCK AT SINGAPORE SPORTS SCHOOL'S 2015 AWARDS NIGHT AT SINGAPORE SPORTS SCHOOL'S AUDITORIUM ON FRIDAY, 30 JANUARY 2015, AT 6.30 PM**

Introduction

- Guest of Honour, Singapore Sports School Board Chairman, Ms Yeoh Chee Yan
- Singapore Sports School Board Members
- Colleagues from MCCY and MOE
- Members of the Sporting Parent Network
- Valued Partners
- Student-Athletes and Parents
- Alumni... Welcome home
- Good evening, everyone, and welcome to the Singapore Sports School's 2015 Awards Night

Sports Achievements

1. Tonight, we recall the significant achievements and milestones of our student-athletes and alumni over the past year.

2. Since we welcomed our first batch of student-athletes in 2004, we have produced 4 Olympians. In the last 3 weeks, a new World Champion and a double Asian Champion were crowned, so now, we have 8 World Champions and 5 Asian Champions.
3. After 3 major Games last year, we have a total of 28 Youth Olympic Games competitors, 29 Commonwealth Games competitors and 68 Asian Games competitors.
4. Our new World Champion is 17-year-old alumnus Sheik Farhan. He took part in his first Pencak Silat World Championships and won the Class J Final.
5. At the same competition, Hamillatu Arash and Haziq Zainal Abidin, together with several alumni, won a total of 3 silver medals and 2 bronze medals.
6. Barely 2 weeks later, bowling alumnus New Hui Fen and 2 teammates won the Women's Trios gold medal at the Asian Bowling Championships. Hui Fen went on to win the Women's Masters Stepladder Grand Finals on 26 January to become a double Asian Champion.

7. I would also like to highlight bowler Jazreel Tan's outstanding achievements at the Incheon 2014 Asian Games. She was Singapore's Goodwill Ambassador, and after winning 1 gold, 2 silvers and 1 bronze, became the most be-medalled athlete in Team Singapore.
8. Both Jazreel and Hui Fen did not become sports champions overnight. They came to the Sports School with a common goal to represent Singapore at the highest level, and started as student-athletes at the National Schools Games – a take-off point for all young aspiring athletes.
9. The Sports School has done well in the 2014 National Schools Games. Our student-athletes won 17 championship titles and 9 runners-up placing for our best performance at the National Schools Games in 10 years.
10. Since 2004, the Sports School has produced 304 national representatives. Last year, 32 joined the rank of competitors in the open division in the international arena, among them, a rather sizeable number of 27 student-athletes.

11. Amita Berthier is one of them and a promising fencer. In 2013, she won the Challenge Wratistavia Girls Under 13 Foil gold medal and followed it up with the H2020 East Inter-Zone Foil Minime Girls Under 15 gold medal – all when she was just 12 years old. And in 2014, Amita was a silver medallist in the Women’s Cadet Foil at the Southeast Asian Federation Championships in Kuala Lumpur.
  
12. Amanda Tan and Jacqueline Young are 2 stand-out golfers. At 14 years old, Amanda was the youngest-ever golfer to represent Team Singapore at the Southeast Asian Games. That was in 2013. Last year, she competed at the World Amateur Team Championship. Amanda and Jacqueline competed at the International Children’s Games last December and finished 3rd and 2nd, respectively.
  
13. Still on the International Children’s Games, swimmer Hoong En Qi was our best performer having won 2 individual golds and 1 silver, and 1 team gold. The Boys 4 x 100m Freestyle Relay team also won the gold medal.

14. Football alumnus Adam Swandi, who graduated in 2012, is our first footballer to base overseas. He was signed up by FC Metz in France. At 17 years old, he won his first international cap for Singapore. Adam returned from a 2-year stint with FC Metz last year, and he has shared that there, no one is guaranteed a place on the team throughout the season. Everyone has to fight for a place in every upcoming game. It's a good lesson and I'm sure Adam will be working hard to earn his place in the squad to represent Singapore at the upcoming Sea Games – on home soil.
15. And it was reported in today's Straits Times, that alumnus Safuwan Baharuddin's debut for Melbourne City may come as early as Sunday.
16. Adam and another 17 alumni are in the provisional list of Sea Games athletes. I'm sure there will be many alumni in the final team. What fun it would be for us to be at the National Stadium and cheering Team Singapore!

#### MSCA Recipients – Martina Lindsay and Ethan Poh

17. Student-athlete Martina Lindsay has already met the qualifying mark for the Sea Games training squad. It will be the first Sea

Games for this 15-year-old girl if she makes the highly competitive cut in April. Like Adam, Martina represented Singapore in the open division for the first time in 2013. In June 2014, she won the World Cup gold medal. Then, she went on to win the silver medal at the Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games.

18. There are very few of us in this hall who know that the Nanjing YOG was not the first YOG for Martina. She also participated in the Singapore 2010 YOG, when she was 11 years old.
19. We know Martina as a shooter but actually, shooting is not the first sport that she took up. She was a competitive swimmer, a synchronised swimmer and she practised Taekwondo. Because of her many sports achievements, she was Sportsgirl of the Year when she was in Primary 3, 4, 5 and 6 at Innova Primary School, one of our Partner Schools. So, it was not surprising that Martina was chosen to run a lap during the Singapore 2010 YOG Torch Relay.
20. Martina and her younger brother, Marat, who was then 7 years old, were also part of the national Taekwondo team that gave a demonstration during the official opening of the YOG Taekwondo

event. Tonight, Martina is in Germany but her younger brother, Marat Lleyton, is present. (Mention JJ by turning to the photo)

21. Marat is in Primary 6 this year and I hear that he wants to study at the Sports School next year. Continue to train and work hard, young man, and like the rest, earn your place at the Sports School.
22. Martina – multi-talented, multi-faceted – had dreams of becoming a sports champion at a young age and she and her parents knew that the only secondary school she should attend to achieve her dreams is Singapore Sports School.
23. It was the same for table tennis player Ethan Poh whose dream is to compete at the Olympic Games.
24. Among his many achievements in 2014 are a gold medal in Under 15 Boys Team event, and a bronze medal in Under 15 Boys Doubles event, at the Southeast Asian Junior Championships. In May, he was No. 12 in the Under 15 World Ranking list, the highest rank that any local youth paddler has reached. Later in

the year, at the Southeast Asian Championships, he won a silver medal in the Men's Team event and a bronze medal in Men's Doubles event, partnering alumnus Darren Loy.

25. There are many young athletes like Martina and Ethan who have dreams of coming to the Sports School and eventually competing at the Olympic Games.

### Chasing Dreams

26. Sprinter Calvin Kang from the pioneer batch has achieved his dream of becoming an Olympian. In fact, by the time he was 21 years old, Calvin had represented Singapore at the Sea Games, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games and Beijing 2008 Olympic Games.
27. Last year, Calvin took a year off school to train full time to help the Men's 4 x 100m Relay team break the National Record. The team came very close to the mark, but the record remains unbroken.

28. Calvin has resumed his studies at Nanyang Technological University. He's still eyeing that National Record. I hope the team's hard work will pay off at the Sea Games in June.
  
29. Another alumnus eyeing glory at the Sea Games is Shanti Pereira. After finishing 4th in the 200m Final and 4th in the 100m Final at the 2013 Sea Games, Shanti is strongly tipped for a medal this time round. There are many more Sports School student-athletes and alumni chasing their dream at the 2013 Sea Games, and we wish them the best.
  
30. All serious athletes will tell you that they lead very tough lives, and especially if they are still students, because they have to juggle their time between sports and studies. The skeptics will tell you that it is impossible to be excellent in both.
  
31. Well, if they are at the Singapore Sports School, why not?

### Excelling in Both Sports and Studies

32. Of the 96 graduates from the 2014 cohort, 17 are on the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), 38 on

the RP-SSP Diploma in Sports Science and Leisure Management (DSLML), and 41 on the GCE “O” Level pathway.

33. From the GCE “O” Level pathway, I would like to make special mention of netballer Ayshath Zaseela who, last year, went from the National Under 17 team to the National 21 team and yet, keeping up with her studies to score 5 Distinctions and an L1R5 aggregate of 12 points.
34. Our first batch of 21 student-athletes from the RP-SSP DSLML graduated in May 2014, and they made their alma mater very proud, excelling in both sports and studies.
35. National table tennis player Isabelle Li graduated with a Grade Point Average of 3.98 out of a maximum 4.0, topping her course of study as well as her cohort. Bowler Brandon Lee and sprinter Habibah Ahmad also did well. Brandon scored a GPA of 3.94 and Habibah, a GPA of 3.88. All 3 have secured prestigious scholarships for their university studies.
36. Netballer Kimberly Lim was from the same RP-SSP DSLML cohort. Her outstanding performance on court during the Asian Netball

Championships last September contributed to Singapore becoming Asian Champion and qualifying for the Netball World Cup in Sydney this year.

37. Isabelle and Clarence Chew won the table tennis Women's and Men's Team gold medals, and badminton players Liang Xiao Yu and Terry Hee, together, won the Mixed Doubles bronze medal at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. All of them are from the RP-SSP DSLM programme.
38. The 1st cohort of IBDP student-athletes will be taking their examinations this year. Despite the high academic demands of the IBDP, student-athlete Bernard Ong competed at the Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games. Our IBDP student-athletes are not only successful in their sports, I am confident they will also turn in an excellent set of pioneer IBDP results next year.

### Champions for Others

39. Our student-athletes live by the phrase, "Learned Champions With Character". At the Sports School, we not only groom our student-athletes in the areas of studies and sports, we are also

mindful that they must grow up with commendable character and good habits.

40. Tonight, we will present the Edusave Character Award to 12 student-athletes who have been exemplary in conduct, as well as shown qualities of leadership.
41. Character development is nurtured through a strong Values-In-Action programme, backed by the School's commitment to community service.
42. Our "heartware" programme is called, "Champions Way". It is not just the name of a road but a programme that grooms "Sports Champions, Champions for Sports and Champions for Others".
43. Club Rainbow (Singapore) has been the Sports School's adopted charity for the past 3 years, and we are committed to continue our support for this non-profit organisation. To support sports in a more targeted way in the wider community, we have decided

to include the Singapore Disability Sports Council as another of our beneficiaries this year.

44. In celebration of SG50 and as part of our Values-In-Action and Corporate Social Responsibility programme, the Sports School has created a set of 4 t-shirts for fund-raising purposes. The proceeds from sale of these t-shirts will go to Club Rainbow (Singapore) and Singapore Disability Sports Council.
45. I would like to thank the t-shirt sponsors: Prospec Surfaces, BHCC Construction Pte Ltd, and TYR for their generosity.
46. We have set up sales booths at the Swimming Complex where we will be taking our dinner later – 1 t-shirt for \$30, and a set of 4 designs for \$100. I encourage you to purchase these red t-shirts – wear them during the Lunar New Year for good luck, wear them for the Sea Games, National Day and throughout the year to celebrate our Golden Jubilee.

#### Campus Physical Improvements

47. In the past year, we have made continual physical improvements to our campus facilities: The outdoor and indoor tracks have

been re-surfaced. At Boarding, some of our student-athletes are already in the upgraded rooms, and there are now more toilets and showers, and more wireless access points. We have converted the staff room within the dining hall into *The Scrum* and it would also be used for SST. We are also renovating our staff rooms, and transforming our library into a sports library.

48. More important than these physical improvements, we have improved on student-athlete food satisfaction, and from the most recent survey, we are pleased to note that there is an increase of 20 per cent in the level of satisfaction.

#### SSP Review

49. Last year, we celebrated our 10th Anniversary, and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong was the guest-of-honour at our Awards Night. In his address, Mr Lee said we had done well in our first 10 years but need to continually review our work to stay relevant in the changing sporting landscape. He called for the formation of a strategic review of the Sports School and challenged us to become the National Sports Academy of Excellence within the next 10 years.

50. Much has been done in the past year under the leadership and guidance of Ms Yeoh Chee Yan and Sport Singapore Chairman, Mr Richard Seow, the 2 co-chairman of the Singapore Sports School Strategic Review Committee. It is a matter of weeks when the recommendations will be announced.
51. We look forward to the recommendations of the Review Committee and playing a larger national role to raise sports excellence in Singapore to new heights.
52. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Review Committee members, Board members, colleagues from MCCY, MOE, SNOC, SportSG, SSI, and NSAs, partners and sponsors, SPN members and parents, alumni and student-athletes, for your support over the last year.
53. More importantly, I want to thank the prime movers – the Sports School staff for your dedication and hard work.
54. *Together, we will rise to the challenge, the Sports School as One.*
55. Thank you and I wish you in advance 新春快乐，万事如意！