

PROFILE

(Ms) Yip Pin Xiu

16 years old, Bendemeer Secondary School (Muscular Dystrophy)
Swimmer



Sporting Achievements:

2004:

3rd National Junior Swimming Championship 2004 – 6 gold medals (25m Fly, 50m & 100m Free, 50m & 100m Breast, 50m Back)

25th National Swimming Championship 2004 – 5 silver and 1 gold medal (50m & 100m Free, 50m & 100m Breast, 50m & 100m Back)

2005:

1st Asia Paralympics Swimming Championship 2005 – 2 gold medals

The Young Talent Award (Sports) by AWWA TeachMe Services

Colours Award by Singapore South Zone Schools' Sports Council

CCA Award for Outstanding Performance in Swimming by Bendemeer Secondary School

Sportsgirl of the Year by Singapore Disability Sports Council

25th National Swimming Championships – 1 gold medal

World Wheelchair and Amputee Games (Brazil) – 1 bronze (150m Medley) and 2 gold medals (50m & 200m Free).

2006:

SPH Foundation National Junior Swimming Championship 2006 – 3 gold medals (50m & 100m Free, 50m Breast)

Sportsgirl of the Year by Singapore Disability Sports Council

Colours Award by Singapore South Zone Schools' Sports Council

CCA Award for Outstanding Performance in Swimming by Bendemeer Secondary School

36th National Colours Award by Singapore Schools' Sports Council

Disability Sports England (DSE) Long Course Swimming Championship – 4 gold medals (50, 100m & 200m Free, 150m Medley)

9th FESPIC Games 2006 (equivalent of Asian Games) – 1 personal best

2006 IPC World Swimming Championship – Participation in 6 events.

2007:

British International Disability Swimming Championships 2007 – 4 gold medals (50m, 100m & 200m Free, 50m Back).

21st International German Championships 2007 – 3 gold medals (50m, 100m Back, 150 Medley Junior), 1 silver (50m Breast), 1 bronze (150m Medley Open)

Japan Paralympic Swimming Championships 2007 – 3 gold medals (50m, 100m, 200m Free) and 3 personal bests

IWAS World Wheelchair and Amputee Games 2007 – 4 gold medals (50m & 100m Free, 50m Back, 150m Medley)

Colours Award by Singapore South Zone Schools' Sports Council

CCA Award for Outstanding Performance in Swimming by Bendemeer Secondary School

37th National Colours Award by Singapore Schools' Sports Council

2008

1 Gold Medal in 150m Individual Medley at the **4th ASEAN Para Games 2008**, Set a new record at the **4th ASEAN Para Games** for the 150m Individual Medley.

Sports Girl of the Year at the Sports Superstar awards 2007 organized by the Singapore Disability Sports Council

2 Gold Medals at the **US Paralympics Swimming Trials**

a) 50m Backstroke (S3): **New World Record** (01:00:80)

b) 50m Freestyle (S3): New Personal Best (01:02:10)

22nd International German Swimming Championships

a) 100m Freestyle (S3): New FESPIC Games Record (02:09:18)

b) 100m Backstroke (S3) **New World Record** (02:08:09)

Academic Achievements:

2005:

Edusave Awards for Achievement, Good Leadership & Service (EAGLES) by Ministry of Education

2006:

Edusave Awards for Achievement, Good Leadership & Service (EAGLES) by Ministry of Education

2007:

Edusave Awards for Achievement, Good Leadership & Service (EAGLES) by Ministry of Education

TV/Radio:

2006

Against All Odds – one episode feature in local docu-drama about people with disabilities who overcome challenges to achieve something in their lives

Athlete's Profile

Once, 5-year-old Pin Xiu saw her brothers having an enjoyable swim. The young girl got inspired. Maybe she could swim too? Pin Xiu asked her mother to join her brothers in the water, and it turned out to be such fun that her life changed forever.

Pin Xiu has a condition called 'muscular dystrophy', which is a syndrome that slowly breaks down her muscles as she grows older. Because of her condition, young Pin Xiu had to rely on walking aids such as braces, and later, wheelchairs to help her get around.

After her first swim, Pin Xiu could not forget the freedom she experienced in the water. It was different in the water as opposed to on the land, where she found many difficulties and obstructions. The water was a place where she could be free, and enjoy it as much as any other person. She could go wherever she wanted to. This made Pin Xiu look very much forward to her next swimming trip. Seeing her enthusiasm, Pin Xiu's parents then decided to let Pin Xiu learn swimming at Geylang Bahru Swimming Complex.

When she was 12 years old, she took part in her first competition – the National Junior Swimming Championship, organized by the Singapore Disability Sports Council (SDSC) for juniors with disability. She met Khristine Quek there, who was training in a swimming programme hosted by SDSC. Besides Khristine, the programme then had several other disabled youths as well, like Theresa Goh, who was slowly becoming a swimming sensation.

The following year, Pin Xiu began to win medals. Her first international competition was the World Wheelchair and Amputee Games held in Rio De Janeiro, Brazil. Although she had been nervous during the competition, Pin Xiu brought back 2 gold and 1 bronze medals. It was an unforgettable moment for Pin Xiu. "I felt very happy that I could actually do something for the country, and do it proud," said Pin Xiu. Since then, Pin Xiu has achieved a number of accolades in sports and swimming, including the National Colours Award in 2006 for her excellent performance during one of the international competitions she participated.

Pin Xiu's condition is still deteriorating, and so is her eyesight, which has been affected by a nerve condition brought about by the syndrome. However, she continues to stay positive, and her love for swimming has, not once, subsided. "If I never took up sports, I would have missed out on the friends and the exposure to people and places," said Pin Xiu. "Most members of our swimming team are very good friends. We often go for breakfast together on Saturday and Sunday after training. We also have BBQ occasionally. These friends are really, really fun to be with. You share your troubles with them and they help you."

As she slowly works her way to become a professional swimmer, Pin Xiu is also becoming a seasoned mentor to the younger athletes like Khristine. When they attend international competitions together, Pin Xiu would be the big 'sister' teaching Khristine how to prepare herself for the events.

Pin Xiu has participated in several events to raise the awareness of the abilities of disabled athletes, such as the 47th and 48th Interschool Swimming Meets, and the Montfort Secondary School Track and Field Meet 2007. She feels that more disabled youths should take up sports. "Sports have definitely changed me. It has made me more out-going and motivated me to work hard to achieve what I want. Also, it's enjoyable and helps us to keep fit."

Besides encouraging others to pick up sports as a healthy way of life, Pin Xiu also has other targets for the next few years. She hopes to improve her timings and to represent Singapore in more major competitions, winning more medals. This is perhaps not a far-off dream for Pin Xiu. Since the date of interview, Pin Xiu's timings have already superseded that of the Athens 2004's Paralympic champion in her category (S3).

The girl wonder has been in explosive form recently, breaking 2 world records in a space of a mere two months. At the US Paralympics Swimming Trials held in Minneapolis, USA, Pin Xiu set a new record in the 50m Backstroke in the S3 category. Just a month later, she continued her rich vein of form by swimming to yet another world record in the 100m Backstroke (S3) at the 22nd International German Swimming Championships.