



Left and below: Yip Pin Xiu finishing more than 20 seconds ahead of silver medalist Aly van Wyck-Smart of Canada in the women's 100m backstroke S2 at the World Para Swimming Championships in London on Wednesday. It was her second world title after her 50m freestyle S3 triumph at the 2010 world meet in Eindhoven. PHOTOS: SPORTS NEWS AGENCY

# WORLD CHAMPION YIP IN FINE FETTLE



## Para-swimmer looks forward to second race after winning second world title in nine years

Sazali Abdul Aziz

National para swimmer Yip Pin Xiu claimed gold in the women's 100m backstroke S2 at the World Para Swimming Championships in London on Wednesday - her first world title since 2010.

And the 27-year-old, who has three Paralympic gold medals and owns two world records, will be gunning to add more to her burgeoning collection when she races in the 50m backstroke S2 today.

"It feels really good to be a world champion, and I'm really happy," said the jubilant swimmer, who is also a Nominated Member of Parliament.

"I've been swimming for 15 years now but every victory is special to

me, and recognition for all the hard training I do.

"The journey is important to me and I'm happy to be at this point now."

Yip's gold was her first at the world meet since her 50m freestyle S3 triumph at the 2010 edition in Eindhoven, where she also won a silver in the 50m backstroke S3.

At the following edition in 2013, in Montreal, she finished second in the 50m backstroke S3.

Mark Chay, who only started coaching her in late July, told The Straits Times that Yip "definitely has another world-class swim" in her for this meet.

The former national swimmer and Olympian said yesterday: "Pin Xiu is looking good, better than she has been in months.

"A gold would be nice, but the focus is her approach and how she swims the race.

"We will analyse and build on that towards her Tokyo 2020 campaign."

Yip, who holds the world record in the 50m and 100m backstroke S2, parted ways with her coach of eight months, Han Jun, after deciding that the Chinese national was not the right fit as she aims to shine at the Tokyo Paralympics next year.

She won three golds and a silver at the Beijing 2008 and Rio 2016 Games.

The switch to Chay appears to have worked a treat for Yip, who clocked 2min 18.61sec yesterday, more than 20 seconds ahead of silver medalist Aly van Wyck-Smart of Canada (2:39.27). Angela Prociada of Italy (2:42.71) took the bronze.

Chay said he had been hopeful of a good performance from his charge as she had clocked good

times during a training camp in Mallorca before the championships.

He also credited the biomechanics and strength and conditioning teams at the Singapore Sports Institute for doing a "fantastic job" in helping Yip get into peak condition. While she is looking forward to the Tokyo Games, Yip's focus is on her second event at the London Aquatics Centre today.

She said: "It's really nice to be here, the people are really friendly and they're also happy to be here.

"I'm looking forward to Friday, though it will depend on what energy I have left."

Due to her muscular dystrophy, which leads to progressive weakening of the muscles, Yip was re-classified from an S3 swimmer to S2 in 2015.

The lower the number in the classification, the more severe the impairment.

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