



IN HER TROPHY CABINET

PARALYMPIC GAMES

- Three golds:
• 50m backstroke S3 (2008)
• 50m & 100m backstroke S2 (both 2016)
One silver
• 50m freestyle S3 (2008)

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

- Three golds
• 50m freestyle S3 (2010)
• 50m & 100m backstroke S2 (both 2019)
• One silver
• 50m backstroke S3 (2010)

There was plenty to celebrate for Yip Pin Xiu after her two-gold haul at the World Para Swimming Championships in London. She treated herself to a congratulatory burger after her win on Friday but said she will train even harder ahead of next year's Paralympic Games. PHOTO: SPORTSNEWSAGENCY

BURGERS FOR YIP, BEFORE BEEFING UP

Confidence boosted by two world titles, she is targeting more golds at 2020 Paralympics

Nicole Chia

Tucking into dinner at burger chain Shake Shack in London on Friday night, Yip Pin Xiu was in the mood to celebrate. After all, the 27-year-old had just ended her campaign at the World Para Swimming Championships with a second gold in the women's 50m backstroke S2.

Her victories at the London Aquatics Centre also saw an end to four months of frustration, after dis-

appointing results at the World Para Swimming World Series meets in Melbourne and Singapore in February and May respectively.

After parting ways with her coach of eight months, Han Jun, in July, Yip linked up with former national swimmer Mark Chay shortly after.

The partnership reaped rewards as Yip won the 100m backstroke S2 on Wednesday night – her first world title since winning the 50m freestyle S3 gold at the 2010 edition in Eindhoven, the Netherlands.

RENEWED MOTIVATION

In the past one month, we've really been working hard on trying to get my speed and endurance back and reignite this fire for me to chase the best.



YIP PIN XIU seeks further improvement ahead of next year's Paralympics in Tokyo.

She picked up her second gold two days later after clocking 1min 4.43sec in the 50m backstroke S2 final to finish ahead of Angela Prochida (1:13.98) of Italy and Canadian Alyvan Wyck-Smith (1:17.76).

Yip was in a chirpy mood as she spoke to The Sunday Times yesterday: "This year has been pretty tough with the changes and to be able to hit 1:04 is an improvement and I'm pretty happy."

"I haven't really been hitting the times I wanted for this year. It was a bit frustrating. We only managed to get the groove back and pick up speed a couple of months ago."

Revealing her goals for the London meet were to clock season-best

times, Yip added: "Leading up to the races I wasn't looking at who my competitors were and what positions I could have got because I decided to focus on my timings as that was the only thing I could control."

"Mark really helped in that aspect ... in the past one month or so we've really been working hard on trying to get my speed and endurance back and reignite this fire for me to chase the best again."

She had been working with Chay, a two-time Olympian, on her aerobic capacity for the 100m and improving on body position and power for the 50m.

"Mark introduced more speed-work into training. Training also be-

came a lot more structured and there were goals, which were important to have so that we could work towards it," she added.

"Even though it was a very short time, I felt (I was) in better racing condition than I had the rest of the year and mentally I felt ready."

Chay said: "Being the disciplined and professional athlete that she is, she really trusted the programme and adjusted to my coaching style, and we saw it come together at the training camp (in Mallorca) before the world championships."

As Yip prepares to retain her 50m and 100m backstroke S2 titles at her fourth Paralympics outing in Tokyo next year, she said the performances in London are a sign she is on the right track.

She has three Paralympic golds from the 2008 and 2016 Games and owns two world records (the 50m and 100m backstroke S2). She wants to go even faster in the 100m back, noting she has to work on coming back quicker in the second 50m and "not losing air halfway".

"The (50m backstroke) race felt good, this felt faster than a 1:04 but I'm still happy with it," she said.

"It can take four to six weeks when you're making certain adaptations, but it's been barely two months with Mark, so I think there's much more that we can do."

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