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Headline: Yip relishes role as leader of athletes

YIP RELISHES ROLE AS LEADER OF ATHLETES

Paralympian to be Singapore's youngest chef de mission at the Asian Youth Para Games

John Pravin

For most of her sporting career, paralympic champion Yip Pin Xiu has been accustomed to being in the thick of the action, racing against the clock and her rivals in the water.

But the national para swimmer has welcomed her new role as chief

cheerleader at December's Asian Youth Para Games (AYPG) in Dubai where she will be chef de mission for the Singapore contingent.

The 25-year-old, whose appointment makes her the Republic's youngest CDM at a major Games, was delighted to be given the responsibility. She told The Straits Times yesterday: "I am really excited to be taking on a leadership

that doesn't just entail me to be an athlete. It allows me to use my experiences from previous Games to lead a young team and inspire them to reach greater heights.

"I have benefited from what sports has done for me and I would love to give back to the community. I hope that athletes will feel free to approach me as well."

Yip has been the Republic's face of para sports for many years. She was the first local athlete to win gold at the 2008 Beijing Paralympic Games, emerging victorious in the 50m backstroke in the S3 category.

Last year at the Rio Games, she broke the world record en route to winning gold in the 100m backstroke S2 event, and added another title in the 200m back S2 event.

Yip was named the 2015 ST Athlete of the Year and was also awarded the Meritorious Service Medal.

She also has a scholarship in her name at the Singapore Management University, where Yip is a social sciences undergraduate.

Besides her appointment for the Dec 10-14 Games, the Singapore National Paralympic Council (SNPC)

also named Yip as an athlete mentor for this September's Asean Para Games (APG) in Kuala Lumpur.

SNPC chairman and Singapore Disability Sports Council president Kevin Wong said: "She is a good inspiration and role model, especially to our youths. She has been to many Games and will be able to share insights with the team."

"The good thing is that she wants to give back. We will be getting her to go down to training and talk to the athletes to find out their challenges."

"She will then be able to share possible solutions that she has previously adopted to overcome those challenges."

Yip won a gold and two silver medals at the 2015 APG on home soil and said her athlete mentor role does not mean she is retiring.

She said: "It just means that I will be an athlete with more responsibilities. I will still be competing at the APG this year."

"I still like to win medals."

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GIVING BACK

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YIP PIN XIU, national para swimmer, on becoming Singapore's chef de mission at December's Asian Youth Para Games.

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