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Headline: Para-swimmer Yip smashes world record, but says she can go even faster

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SINGAPORE – She may have broken a world record spectacularly at the IPC Swimming European Open Championships in Funchal, Portugal, yesterday morning. But Singapore's para-swimmer Yip Pin Xiu believes she can go even faster at the coming Paralympics.

With just four months to go to the Rio de Janeiro Games, Yip sent a message to her rivals when she obliterated the world record in the 100m backstroke, S2 event by more than six seconds.

The 24-year-old — who became Singapore's first and only Paralympics gold medallist when she won the 50m backstroke S3 event at the 2008 Games — took 2min 9.79secs to smash the previous world mark of 2:16.31 set by Ukraine's Ganna Lelisavetska in 2014.

Iryna Sotska of Ukraine finished second (2:16.63), while Norway's Ingrid Thunem was third (2:25.71).

Yip, who deferred her studies to train full-time ahead of September's Paralympics, had expected to shatter the world mark.

"I was eyeing the world record because I missed out by just 0.4s about a month ago at the Russian Nationals," said the Singapore Management University final-year undergraduate, who suffers from muscular dystrophy.

"But I didn't expect to break the record by that much of a margin. I am really happy and relieved, because the results are an affirmation that I am on the right path towards Rio, and that all the hard work means something."

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While the Singapore National Paralympic Council does not give out cash awards for gold-medal feats at IPC continental meets (it gives out cash awards for the Paralympics, Asian and Asean Para Games), Yip looks likely to be well-rewarded come Rio in September, given her current form.

However, the swimmer, who had set a new world mark in the 50m backstroke, S2 class at last December's ASEAN Para Games, thinks she can go even faster.

"I don't want to say that I am in good form yet though," she told TODAY. "There is always room for improvement and that is what I am looking for: To shave the many, many inches from various parts of my races to be in great shape for Rio. I can get even faster in the last 50m of the race."

Yip and team-mate Theresa Goh also set new Asian records yesterday in the 100m freestyle S2 (2:15.68) and the 100m breaststroke SB4 (1:59.90) events respectively.

Yip competed in the S3 class due to the insufficient number of competitors in the S2 category and came in fifth, while Goh took bronze with her effort — her best time in nine years.

According to the duo's coach Mick Massey, the Singaporean swimmers' performances were the result of meticulous preparation.

"We are emulating everything that we'll be doing in Rio here at the European Championships," said the former coach of the British Paralympic swim team.

"The best athletes around the world need a supporting team, so we brought a core team along — myself, a team manager, physiologist, physiotherapist and bio-mechanist — to support the swimmers.

"These results are what we have been training for, and it is a huge sign



Very proud of our Team Singapore swimmers Yip Pin Xiu and Theresa Goh ... Both are showing great progress in their preparations for the Rio Paralympics this September. Let's cheer them on in their quest to fly our flag high!

Ms Grace Fu
MINISTER FOR CULTURE,
COMMUNITY AND
YOUTH



Pin Xiu ... and Theresa ... have time and time again demonstrated their prowess and courage in breaking new ground and exemplifying the never-say-die attitude. What an inspiring duo!

Mr Tan Chuan-Jin
MINISTER FOR
SOCIAL AND FAMILY
DEVELOPMENT



From left: Singapore national para-swimmer Theresa Goh, head coach Mick Massey and Yip Pin Xiu at the IPC Swimming European Open Championships in Portugal. PHOTO: MICK MASSEY/FACEBOOK

from Yip and Goh that they are both medal hopefuls in the 2016 Paralympics. I'm looking at three medals

from the both of them.

"If they're gold, then that would be great for Singapore."