

**CORPORATE SUPPORT:**  
 National bowler Jasmine Yeong-Nathan (far right) talking to her colleagues from KPMG. Thanks to firms like the accounting giant, Yeong-Nathan is able to enjoy flexible work arrangements.  
 PHOTO: ST



# FIRM BACKING FOR ATHLETES

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## Two new schemes will help them juggle work and studies while pursuing sporting excellence

**She was on top of the world in 2008.**

Just 20 at the time, Jasmine Yeong-Nathan became the first Singaporean to win the AMF World Cup.

Her triumph was acknowledged in 2009 when she was crowned the country's Sports Woman of the Year.

Amid the fanfare and adulation, Yeong-Nathan was concerned.

The national bowler had heard how many of Singapore's top sportsmen and women worried over their future, once their athletic powers waned.

She was lucky. Accounting giant KPMG took her on a part-time contract in 2009.

Today, Yeong-Nathan, who is preparing for next year's Asian Games, is a full-time associate in management consulting at KPMG, after graduating from the Nanyang Technological University earlier this year.

And athletes like Yeong-Nathan can rest easier from now on, after the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) launched the Sports Excellence Education Scheme and the Sports Excellence Career Scheme yesterday.

Seven companies and six institutions of higher learning have agreed to be part of the schemes, which will provide national athletes with more flexible working and educational arrangements.

(See report at right).

Minister of State for Trade and Industry Teo Ser Luck launched the initiatives yesterday at the Float @ Marina Bay.

He insisted it was not simply a case of national service, when he said: "Companies, you are not doing charity."

### MEMBER

"When they (national athletes) join your company, you train them to be a functional member of your company. It is not just about allowing them time to train and bring glory to Singapore and finally they are not trained in any skill or function."

"You are supporting the athlete and

the athlete is supporting you back as a good employee."

KPMG's Yeong-Nathan recalled how uncertainty first hit her about four years ago.

Said the 25-year-old: "I was extremely clueless - I am going to bowl but what am I going to do after that?"

"I've seen so many of my seniors in bowling being unsure of where they were going after bowling."

StarHub is another company participating in the career scheme.

Senior vice-president for human resource, Chan Hoi San, said: "We are very supportive of local athletes and we want to do our part in promoting local



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- StarHub's senior VP for human resource Chan Hoi San

sporting activities and local athletes.

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### STAMP

SSC chief executive officer Lim Teck Yin revealed that they are looking at creating a stamp that companies in the career scheme can use in their business and promotional collateral, such as name cards, to signify their support for the scheme.

Yeong-Nathan, who just submitted her Asian Games 2014 training plan to KPMG, said: "The rest of Team Singapore athletes - it's time for us to look beyond our sports."

"This (career) scheme is quite awesome."