

Mok Ying Ren
Sportsman of the Year 2008

I am very honoured to receive this award. It has been a very fulfilling year for me and I hope it was for every one of you and I hope you guys have achieved your goals and are on your way to better performance this year. Let me just share with you some of my experiences.

It was tough juggling the medical school workload and training for an endurance sport. As the name suggest, endurance training requires many hours on the road especially since the race itself lasts 2hours. As such, I was much a loner together with 3 other SEA Games bound athletes from my year who were all from water polo. I would thus like to thank Nigel, Di Yang and Di Yan for going through this period with me together. I guess the other trick is to manage my time well such that I am always doing something every second and not idling it away.

The period before the sea games was a mentally exciting one. There were times when I thought to myself that I should stop training so much as I have made it into medical school and it is stupid to train so hard and then struggle through the first year which will lay the foundation for the 4 years to come. And then there were days when I ask myself, "Are you crazy? You have a chance to be one of the few people to win a medal at the SEA Games." So it was really a period of trying to sort out my thoughts.

Moreover, I was planning my own training and coaching myself towards the SEA Games. It was challenging in a way that I had to plan my own training, analyse it and on top of that, console and motivate myself. There was no one at the side shouting at you during your intervals and no one tell you what to do the next session. It was an eye-opening experience as I was able to really customise my training to suit my needs. However, it was indeed time consuming.

I get my inspiration from Roger Bannister who was a medical student when he broke the 4min mile record. A mile is 1.6km, 4 rounds around the track. He was the first one to do all 4 rounds in less than 4min, a feat deemed impossible as it was considered a human physiological barrier and if you ran faster than that you would die. I have read his autobiography and let me share with you some inspiring excerpts. For example, he would head to the track during his 1 hour break and without any warm up and cool down, he would do his interval sets and return to class all sweaty. He was also doing his hospital rounds in the morning of the day he broke the record. It shows that amateur sportsmen like each and every one of us should integrate our training into our daily life to maximise our potential.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank my family and friends for their support. Thanks to the NUS Biathlon team, NUS track and field team, NUS Swim team for their encouragement during my training and being understanding to me for not turning up for trainings. Thanks to the Yong Loo Lin School of medicine, I was also able to postpone my continual assessments to a later date. Special thanks to Dr Kua Harn Wei from School of Design and Environment for offering his training tips and flying to Thailand to support us.

I would like to encourage every one of you to think far in your sport. Do not stop short at the IFG, IHG, IVP level and really push yourself to the limit. That's what's sports is all about. Thank You very much.