

**Speech Delivered by Aldrich Koh
Captain of Aquathlon Team 2008**

Good evening

Provost of NUS & Deputy President (Academic Affairs), Professor Tan Eng Chye,
Distinguished Guests,
Fellow Athletes,
Ladies & Gentlemen

[PAUSE] [Look at everyone on stage]
Well done team, we've finally done it!!!

On behalf of the entire team, I'd first like to thank our sports officer, Carson, and NUS for this amazing opportunity and acknowledgement of the team's hard work through the years. Your recognition has made all our sacrifices worth it!

No words can express the pride and joy I have now, to be able to deliver this acceptance speech on behalf of the past 3 IVP teams and the many batches of seniors before us. To our past captains: Nicholas, Sunny, Wei Keong, Jie Xiao, Siki and beyond, this award is for you and your teams. Our seniors were the ones who have laid strong foundations for us and have passed down the tradition of being more than just an IVP team. They have shown us that NUS Aquathlon is a family.

The Old Man by the Pool once reminded us of our humble beginnings, "If you only knew how NUS Biathlon was like in the past," he said. Indeed, our team has come very far from the start. I was once told that the team didn't care much about winning in the past. The lessons were all in the journey and not the destination, all in the training and not the finish line. It didn't matter whether we had won medals or not, all that mattered were the friendships and bonds that we had built throughout the season. Perhaps what sums this up was what Jie Xiao, one of our respected ex-captains, once said, "Go out there and race your best. If we win, good. If not, let's just have a good lunch".

But then, through the years, the clouds cleared and the Sun[ny] come out, from the team emerged members who were Mokingly fast. NUS Aquathlon slowly gained prominence and has managed to establish itself as a force to be reckoned with in the local endurance multi-sport community. With 2 individual NUS President Sports Awardees, 3 Sportsmen plus 1 Sportswoman of the Year awards, 3 Sports Team of the Year awards and now the coveted NUS President Sports Team Award... [PAUSE] We are on a roll.

However, herein lie the practical difficulties of balancing our traditional ideals of a family that cherishes relationships with that of the mission of an IVP team – to perform at the highest level at every instant.

I think our team is not alone in this dilemma and that many other teams here share the same concerns. How does a team promote elite competitiveness, without sacrificing relationships? Or incorporate a sense of family, without compromising on training rigor and discipline? I strongly believe that an intricate balance has to be found, and it is up to each batch to achieve that equilibrium. No two batches are the same, but awareness of these issues is the first step towards change and improvement.

The challenge now for the new exco and their team is to find this family-team balance, build upon our rich heritage and continue to do NUS proud.

To our beloved Coach David, thank you so much for going the extra mile to be so much more than an instructor to us. You have been a mentor to many of us and we just can't thank you enough for all the advice you have given us. We certainly look forward to your ludicrously incredulous swimming sets in the coming season!

And to the good Old Man by the Pool... what would we ever do without you?

I'd like end by quoting The Ridge, the NUS magazine which wrote an article on our team in April, "In the end, what makes this team so special is not their continuous achievement in the sporting arena, but their warmth, their passion, their enthusiasm, their dedication and their friendship with each other."

I hope the team will continue to live up to those expectations. With that, I wish the juniors the very best in the coming season.

Thank you.