

Speech Delivered by Mok Ying Ren

Good evening,

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

It is a great honour to win the Sportsman of the Year award again this year, and I thank NUS for having faith in me and nominating me for the award again this year. I would also like to thank many of our team mates from the Aquathlon and Cross Country teams and my classmates for their support and faith in me. Specially thanks Dr Kua Harn Wei, and Dr Patrick Tan, who are always more than willing to share their advice.

This year has been a year of change for me. To be honest, I have faced stagnation of my results for the past few years even though I have been training very hard. It was very frustrating and I think many of you seated here tonight have also had such experiences in your sporting careers. This year, after reading more about endurance training, I realized that a lot of training I have been doing was not right. All of a sudden, I saw my errors, and I got to work in revamping my training program based on a few simple principles. It worked like a miracle, and I think my results have shown that if one trains the right way, our performance will definitely reflect that. It also goes to show we must be daring in making changes in our training, and prompt in rectifying errors in our regimes. Training is, after all a dynamic process, and what worked for you in the past, might not work for you today.

Thus, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage every single one of you to become mature, thinking athletes. As university students, we cannot be what we were like in secondary school where we just attended trainings and did whatever the coach said without thinking much about the objectives of that particular training session. With the internet easily accessible to everyone now, it is easy to learn about the basic physiology of training and now when we attend those training sessions, we can maximize our potential by focusing on the important aspects of training. There is so much more to learn from your sport than just “no pain, no gain” – which is a phrase that does not really apply if training is done right. These training principles, if well understood, can be applied to all aspects of life and I have learnt that through the hard way in the past few years. Hence, I hope all of you can not only study hard academically but also study hard about your own sport and discover more about yourselves at the same time.

This year is also a particularly challenging year for me as I am transiting into my 3rd year of medical school and there is so much more emphasis on clinical lessons. Gone are the times when I get to sit in the lecture theatres after my morning training to rest my legs. Now, I have to be on my feet the entire day in the hospitals. Being in a sport which requires much use of my legs, it has been tough. But yet again, by applying the right principles in training, I have still been able to enjoy my training and improve at the same time.

I would also like to highlight to you a fellow athlete who has been an inspiration to many of us including myself. He is our current cross country captain Melvin. He is not a vocal person, as many of you know,

but he leads by his passion for the sport and the love for his team. I do not think it is a coincidence that this year also saw our team having a record number of runners. He played a key role in organizing a run clinic in conjunction with the RUN NUS event this year where he invited Olympian Associate Professor C Kunalan from National Institute of Education to give a talk. He also initiated the Gazelle running club which is meant to bring all recreation runners in NUS together to run. All these truly show his passion and love for the sport. Many of you may not know him, but I feel that we need more people like Melvin who can touch the lives of more athletes and to encourage each and every one of us to fulfill our own potential in our sport. To the captains of the various sports teams in NUS, I would like to thank you for your contributions in making the sporting culture in our university a lively one. We are after all part of a generation where it is increasingly difficult to get students off the computers. Without a strong sporting culture, we would not be here tonight to celebrate the success of TeamNUS.

To end off, let us look forward to the new sporting year and I hope that we can boast even better results as TeamNUS together. Thank you!