

PORTRAIT OF A RAFFLESIAN

**MAKING WAVES**

RGS Year 4 student Samantha Yom Jingyi is no stranger to the world of sports. Sailing, to be exact. Having been in numerous competitions, both locally and internationally, she has received many awards and was part of the Singapore Sailing Team to deliver the nation's first ever Gold medals in an Olympic event. To top that off, she was presented with the Outstanding Achievement Award with Distinction (Sports) at the school's recent 136th Founder's Day (Samantha is one of only three students to have received the award this year). We find out more about how she manages to keep a balance between school and sailing, and on the support structure that keeps her afloat.

Hectic training schedule

"I usually train four to five times a week. When competitions are nearing, it increases to almost six times a week. I train on weekends and weekdays, which means that I have to make my way to the National Sailing Centre right after school ends. There are times when I have to miss lessons because of overseas competitions, so I end up missing school for two to three weeks at a time."

Wind in her sails

"The school has been very supportive of my sporting aspirations. I consider myself very fortunate to be given the opportunity to pursue both sports and academics. As mentioned, I'm always missing lessons due to overseas competitions and my teachers have been extremely dedicated when it comes to helping me catch up. For example, I had a teacher who sat down with me a month prior to my competitions, just to come up with a plan on what I can do on my part to keep up with lessons. There are also many occasions when teachers have stayed back in school even during the school holidays to teach me the lessons that I missed."

My friends also help me by collecting the homework that had been given out while I was away (and then burst into a sheepish laugh when they hand me the thick stack of homework). I am most grateful to my friend, Wang Yuxing though. I often get very lost in class when I return and since she is my desk mate, I always turn to her for help. To be honest, I do this very often during lessons and every single time, she has never failed to help me, tolerating my endless questions."



Samantha (middle) with schoolmates who went down to support her during the SEA Games. "They were there from 10am to 6pm and even made me a banner!"

Network of support amongst RGS athletes

"I think the best part is that we always offer each other words of encouragement. For example, when we see each other preparing to leave school for CCA or training, we never fail to smile and say something like "jiayou", "have fun" or "good luck". These words of encouragement always make me feel better inside and also make me very grateful to be part of this family of sports students in RGS."



Samantha receives her Outstanding Achievement Award with Distinction (Sports) from Honourable Justice Judith Prakash, Chairperson, RGS Board of Governors, at the school's 136th Founder's Day.

Takeaway from the 28th SEA Games

"I didn't win a medal at the SEA Games, but I did walk away with things far more valuable than a medal. My favourite part was the friendships that I had forged with Team Singapore sailors as well as sailors from overseas. Then again, I would be lying if I said I didn't come back in tears from losing out on the medal. But with encouragement from my team and friends, I learnt to pick myself up. I think this was a really important lesson for me, because many of us are 'over-achievers' and we always expect to emerge victorious every single time. The truth is, we can't. Some day, we will taste defeat and when that happens, we need to take it in our stride."