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MEDIA RELEASE

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STTA ESTABLISHES A YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ENDOWMENT FUND FOR YOUTH PADDLERS

In continuing its efforts to look after the well-being and future of Singapore's national youth table tennis players, the Singapore Table Tennis Association (STTA) today announced that it is establishing a Youth Development Endowment Fund for its National Youth Table Tennis players.

The key objectives of the endowment fund are to support the outstanding youth players financially during their stint with the national team; to finance their tertiary education during or after their stint with the national team or any post-career opportunities and to reward the youth paddlers for their continued commitment and dedication to the sport of table tennis in Singapore.

We understand how critical it is to provide our youth paddlers the support and resources they need to compete and succeed in table tennis. Furthermore, this fund will create many opportunities for our athletes beyond their sporting careers.

The first four athletes who have been selected to be part of this endowment fund are Zena Sim, Pang Xuejie, Isabelle Li & Clarence Chew.

The four outstanding youth paddlers have displayed remarkable potential, commitment and outstanding service. A sum of \$5,000 per year per athlete will be deposited into their individual endowment fund accounts upon completion of their secondary school education. This initiative starts immediately.

Said STTA President Er Lee Bee Wah: "We are constantly looking after the interest of our national paddlers. The youth paddlers are crucial to the development and future of table tennis in Singapore and the STTA recognizes the efforts and sacrifices they place into the sport. We hope to provide many opportunities to our paddlers and with this new initiative; we have created a long term stability plan for our youth paddlers."

The fund will be accumulated every year and for every year the youths are in the national team, a sum of \$5,000 will be deposited into the endowment fund. The fund can be drawn to be used for tertiary education or any post-career opportunities. The yearly amount of \$5,000 will continue to be deposited into their endowment fund during their stint in the national team. The youth paddlers have to serve in the National Team for a minimum of 3 years to receive the endowment fund.

National youth paddler Isabelle Li, one of the four athletes who will have an endowment fund set up in her name, said that she was delighted that the STTA has taken the initiative to start an endowment fund for the national youth paddlers. She said: "I would like to sincerely thank STTA for setting up this youth development endowment fund for us. I believe this endowment fund will benefit us greatly and many future aspiring pros like me. Playing table tennis has become a passion of mine and has benefited me in many ways. With this new initiative, it will allow me to play table tennis professionally and have a peace of mind on my university studies."

In addition to setting up the endowment fund, the STTA will be signing a Memorandum Of Understanding (MOU) with NTU. This MOU is the first for both NTU and STTA and will help create great opportunities for our youth paddlers.

This MOU aims to provide pathways for talented athletes to pursue a university degree in Singapore and have a peace of mind while competing internationally.

ANNEX A:

THE STTA YOUTH DEVELOPMENT ENDOWMENT FUND AWARDEES

Zena Sim

She was an early achiever. Zena was the champion for the U15 singles at the Asian Junior championships in 2005. In 2007, she was the U-18 doubles champion at the 13th SEA Junior Table Tennis Championships. In 2008, Zena bagged the U-18 singles gold at the 14th SEA junior Table Tennis Championships.

Recently at the Sea Games Laos, Zena Sim scored debutante wins against Laos, the Philippines and Vietnam, and she played an important part of sealing the semi-final berth. Zena was so composed and outstanding throughout her play that The Straits Times (Article dated on 9 December 2010) hailed her as “Zena the Warrior”

Pang Xuejie

Pang Xuejie was awarded the STTA Most Improved Player of the Year. Xuejie world’s ranking has improved from his previous ranking of 716 (Feb 2009) to his current ranking of 494 (May 2010). His recent accomplishments include:

- SEA Games – Men’s Team Gold and bronze in Men’s Doubles
- Chinese Taipei Invitational- U18 Men’s singles champion
- South East Asian Junior Championships 2010 – Gold in Boy’s Singles U18 & Boy’s Doubles U18

At the recent World Table Tennis Championships, Xuejie proved to be the star beating strong opponent North Korea with a 3-2 win

Isabelle Li

Our promising young player is an aspiring pro. Isabelle Li’s relentless pursuit for excellence in sports made her the recipient of the STTA Most Promising Young Player 2009. In 2009, Isabelle won the bronze for the mixed team event at the Asian Youth Games and she became the top junior girls’ qualifier at the ITTF World Junior Circuit Finals and ITTF Cadet Challenge. The Table Tennis Illustrated, Autumn Issue featured Isabelle Li as the cover girl.

Her recent achievements include taking all 3 titles in the cadet girl’s singles, junior girl’s singles & junior girl’s team at the ITTF Junior Circuit at Ecuador, Argentina & Chile

At the recent 16th South East Asian Table Tennis Junior Championships, she won 3 golds in the Girl’s Singles U18, Girl’s Team U18 and Mixed Doubles events U18 & 1 silver medal in the Girl’s Doubles Event U18.

Isabelle will represent Singapore in the upcoming Youth Olympics Games.

Clarence Chew

At the inaugural Asian Youth Games held in Singapore, Clarence and Isabelle won the bronze medal in the Mixed Team event.

Clarence was the winner of the Cadet Boy's Singles at the Argentina Junior & Cadet Open 2009 and Ecuador Junior and Cadet Open 2009. He also won the crown at Junior Boy's Singles and Junior Boy's Team events at the Ecuador Junior and Cadet Open.

Clarence won the Gold at the Cadet Boy's Team event and Cadet Boy's Doubles event at the ITTF Malta Junior & Cadet Open 2010 and ITTF Egypt Junior & Cadet Open 2010 respectively.

Clarence performed well in the recent 16th South East Asian Table Tennis Junior Championships; he scored a total of 4 medals; 2 golds in the boy's Doubles U15 & Mixed Doubles events U18 and 2 bronzes in the Boy's Team U18 and Boy's Singles events U15.

