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**MEDIA RELEASE**

## **STTA Annual Awards Night, 9th Edition: Celebrating Table Tennis Achievements of 2018**

The Singapore Table Tennis Association (STTA) celebrated the sporting excellence of outstanding athletes and coaches who have made contributions to Singapore table tennis at the STTA Annual Awards Night tonight at Jubilee Restaurant @ SAFRA Toa Payoh. Mr Chee Hong Tat, Senior Minister of State, Ministry of Trade and Industry & Ministry of Education was the Guest of Honour.

This year, 7 STTA Awards were conferred to athletes and coaches with standout performances:

- Special Awards (2 awards)
- The Most Improved Zone Training Centre Award 2018
- Outstanding Zone Training Centre Award 2018
- STTA Hopes Player of the Year 2018
- STTA Youth Player of the Year 2018
- STTA Player of the Year 2018

(Refer to Appendix A for details on the STTA Awards and award recipients)

Ellen Lee Geck Hoon, JP, PBM, President, STTA said, “The STTA awards are to recognize the contributions and achievements of our athletes and coaches. The most improved zone training centre and outstanding zone training centre awards are to recognize our coaches for their efforts in grooming our young talents in their early years. We hope that the awards will spur our coaches to achieve even greater heights”

She added, “our athletes also made incredible achievements in 2018 and the awards are to celebrate and honor our athletes who have made significant contributions for Singapore table tennis.

In recent years, we have athletes as young as 12 years old making their mark in the international circuit. The STTA Hopes Player Award is to recognize one of our younger athletes at aged 12 years old and below for their sporting achievements. The STTA Youth Player of the Year award is to reward the top performing youth player for his high standards of performance displayed during regional and international competitions. The STTA Player of the Year Award is to recognize the best performing national player in 2018.

Beyond the medal achievements, I am glad that Team Singapore paddlers have also inspired us with their Singapore spirit. Our award recipients serve as an inspiration and role model to other young aspiring athletes and a source of national pride for all Singaporeans. My heartiest congratulations to our award recipients for their outstanding performances!”

The STTA also gave out two special awards to Gao Ning and Coach Liu Jiayi in recognition of their contribution to STTA.

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### **Appendix A –STTA Awards and Award Winners**

#### **Special Award: Gao Ning**

The Special award to Gao Ning is in recognition of his sporting contribution to Singapore.

Gao Ning has played a significant role in the development of Singapore table tennis throughout his sporting career.

Gao Ning is considered as Singapore's best male player and is a three-time Olympian, and a multiple winner on the ITTF World Tours, Commonwealth Games and South-east Asia Games. He has brought much sporting glory for Singapore.

Gao Ning has retired from the sport after the Asian Games in 2018 and is currently the Head Coach of the National men's team.

#### **Special Award: Li Jiayi**

Coach Liu Jiayi has been coaching the national team since 2014 and will officially retire in March 2019.

Coach Liu was first involved as the assistant coach of the women's team in 2004, but from 2015 he was promoted to the head coach and he has worked with national players such as Gao Ning, Yu Mengyu, Lin Ye, Zhou Yihan, Clarence Chew and Ethan Poh.

Coach Liu has led the Singapore national team to several wins at the SEA Games, Commonwealth Games and Asian Games and the STTA will would like acknowledge his outstanding efforts.

#### **The Most Improved Zone Training Centre Award 2018 & Outstanding Zone Training Centre Award 2018**

The Zone Training Centres plays an important role in laying a solid foundation for young athletes. Our zone training centre coaches are trusted to make a positive impact on our young athletes and to shape the youth of tomorrow through their hard work and guidance.

The Most Improved Zone Training Centre of the Year: Pasir Ris Zone Training Centre: Coach Liu Yuan Yuan

The Outstanding Zone Training Centre Award 2018: Bishan Zone Training Centre: Zhou Wenying & Coach Lu Meng & Toa Payoh Zone Training Centre: Zhao Peng and Sun Panlei

We hope that the awards will spur our coaches to achieve even greater heights.

### **STTA Hopes Player of the Year 2018**

The STTA Hopes Player of the Year Award is the nation's highest accolade for young paddlers aged 12 years old and below.

This award honors exceptional young paddlers because of their achievements and distinctions to the nation.

At 12 years old, Izaak Quek debut at the 2018 South East Asian (SEA) Junior & Cadet Table Tennis Championships. He finished the tournament with 1 Gold and 2 Bronzes.

Quek also won the Hopes Singles event at the 2018 Regional (SEA) Hopes Week and 2018 ITTF Asia Hopes Week, Bangkok Thailand.

After his wins at the Regional and Asia Hopes tournament, he was invited to participate in the ITTF World Hopes Week and Challenge. He ended his outing at the ITTF World Hopes Week and Challenge as the runner-up.

The STTA is proud to honour Quek with the STTA Hopes Player of the Year for his contributions.

### **STTA Youth Player of the Year 2018**

The STTA Youth Player of the Year 2018 recognizes the excellence and achievements of an outstanding youth player.

Koen Pang is the youngest Singaporean to qualify and compete at the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games. Pang together with Ethan Poh managed to defy all expectations and made it to the top four in the men's doubles event on their Commonwealth Games debut.

Pang qualified for the Youth Olympics Games 2018 in Argentina in October 2018 and he finished Top 8 in the singles event.

His accolade of achievements include winning 4 gold medals in the junior categories (singles, doubles, mixed doubles and team) at the 24<sup>th</sup> SEA Junior & Cadet Table Tennis Championships, Naga City, Philippines in 2018.

At the 2018 SEA Table Tennis Championships, Bali Indonesia, Koen also scored 3 golds and 1 silver medal.

Koen has put his studies on hold to train full time and he has been promoted to the National Team with effect from 1 January 2019.

### **STTA Player of the Year**

It is the most prestigious award given to recognize and honour our national paddlers that have made table tennis their passion, career and life.

Yu Mengyu finished with 2 doubles gold medals at the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Yu finished the 2018 Asian Games outing with 1 Bronze. Yu's bronze is Singapore's first and only table tennis medal of the 18th Asian Games.

It is such a great comeback for Yu as she has suffered back injuries in the earlier part of the year.

The STTA is proud to honour Yu with the STTA Player of the Year for her achievements.

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