

OPENING REMARKS BY MR EDWIN TONG, MINISTER FOR CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND YOUTH & SECOND MINISTER FOR LAW, FOR THE 2021 COACHSG CONFERENCE AT SPORTSG AUDITORIUM ON 26 OCT 2021 (TUESDAY), 8.30AM

Mr Kon Yin Tong, Chairman, Sport Singapore,

Ms Chan Yen San, Chair of the Safe Sport Commission,

Your Excellency, Ms Judit Pach, Ambassador-Designate of Hungary to Singapore,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentleman,

1. A very good morning to all of you. I am delighted to join you today, in person, for the fifth edition of the CoachSG Conference.
2. Every year, the CoachSG Conference brings together the sporting fraternity, in particular our coaches, leaders from National Sports Associations and top experts from around the world
 - a. to share thought leadership, promote valued discussion,
 - b. and build relationships and networks for continued partnership and learning.
3. This year, we hope to refresh the conversation with new perspectives.

- a. CoachSG has lined up an exciting and wide-ranging series of talks on reimagining our coaching practices given the challenges and opportunities we have encountered over this season.
 - b. You will learn about new advancements in sport science and technology as well as innovative coaching pedagogies.
4. This year, we have also brought back in-person elements so that there are opportunities for physical interaction and networking, while also leveraging digital assets for greater flexibility.
- a. I'm sure all of you will have a fruitful and enjoyable time of learning, sharing and reconnecting with your community.
 - b. I'm also certain that the Conference will support the advancement of our coaching industry into the next bound.

Value of our coaches in inspiring generations through sport

5. Our coaches play an indispensable role in nurturing the development of our children, youths and athletes through sport.
- a. Each and every single one of you are individual touchpoints and multipliers of your respective sports.
6. You have the power to spark new passions,

- a. inculcate values of fairness, perseverance and teamwork in those under your care,
 - b. and groom and mould our rising stars to be champions and role models for our young.
 - c. Your efforts strengthen our communities, drive the development of our sports sector and put Singapore on the world map when our top athletes go on to make their mark.
7. Take for example Mark Chay, the coach of our 5-time Paralympian gold medallist, Yip Pin Xiu.
8. This year, Pin Xiu clinched 2 gold medals. Her accomplishment was made all the more possible with Mark's hard work and dedication.
- a. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Mark was with Pin Xiu every step of the way in the lead up to the Paralympics, despite his busy work schedule.
 - b. The duo worked closely with the Singapore Sport Institute and Singapore Disability Sports Council to design a land-based training program and plan for a smooth transition post Circuit Breaker.
 - c. Although Mark was unable to physically be at the Games with Pin Xiu, they stayed connected through daily calls where he provided her with support and coaching advice.

- d. Pin Xiu went on to perform with flying colours at the Paralympics, a testament to the curated training regime that Mark had prepared, as well as his encouragement and support throughout the process. Pin Xiu is now an inspiration for many young Singaporeans, for her perseverance, excellence and service to the community.
 - e. As a Nominated Member of Parliament, Mark has drawn on his experience as a coach and former athlete to advocate for sport.
 - f. He has, and continues to make, a difference in the lives of individual athletes and to the broader sporting sector.
 - g. Thank you Mark for your contributions.
9. Just like Mark, each of you, our coaches, have personal inspiring stories of how you have touched and transformed the lives of many, through sport.
- a. You are the hands and hearts of our sector. Your dedication in growing our next generation of sportsmen and women and in uplifting sport is valued and appreciated.

Developing coaches of tomorrow

10. The Government recognises the importance of developing and professionalising our coaching industry so that our children can

develop early positive experiences in sport, and play in a safe and conducive environment.

- a. Parents too can feel reassured that their children are well-taken care of,
 - b. and their interests in sport are developed to their fullest potential.
11. The COVID-19 pandemic has also underscored the need for coaches to upskill and adapt to new sport formats and emerging trends such as rapid digitalisation in order to stay relevant and minimise disruptions to one's livelihood.
12. In addition, we are also witnessing a wider shift in the sporting landscape towards greater reliance on science and technology to enhance an athlete's sporting performance.
- a. Coaches of tomorrow need to stay ahead of this curve and understand the new advances so that they can design modern day training regimes that optimise the sporting potential of our athletes.
13. CoachSG has embarked on several efforts to help the coaching industry as a whole adapt to these changes and address existing challenges in the sector.
- a. For example, CoachSG developed the SportSG-Education and Development portal, the SportSG-ED portal, as a platform for

coaches, athletes and sport administrators to learn anytime, anywhere, on the go and on any device.

- i. Apart from delivering sport-related learning content, the portal doubles up as a digital community of learning,
 - ii. making it easy for the 5,000 over sport professionals to exchange ideas and knowledge on the platform.
- b. To support the shift to online coaching, CoachSG has also been working closely with National Sports Associations and Academies and Clubs to develop online coaching resources for their coaches.
 - i. This allows them to continue to coach their athletes virtually and sustain their livelihoods.
- c. SportSG has also furthered its work on promoting a safe sporting environment for everyone.
 - i. This year, SportSG ran a 6-month long Safe Sport Unified Code consultation with experts, leaders in the Olympic and Paralympic movement as well as the broader sporting community.
 - ii. The stakeholder focus group discussions saw the participation of about 200 participants across more than 60 organisations and nearly 60 sports.

- iii. The work on this front is still ongoing and the outcome of this consultation will be announced in due course.
14. I'm happy to hear that all these efforts have collectively contributed to raising the number, standards and professionalism of our coaches.
- a. Today, there are more than 6,200 coaches registered under the National Registry of Coaches (or NROC), tripling since 2017.
 - b. This is an encouraging trend, and I strongly urge all those who are not yet registered to come on board so that you too can benefit from the training, employment and grant opportunities that the NROC membership offers.
 - c. These will provide you with the resources and opportunities to further your development and career in the coaching profession,
 - d. and will ultimately drive greater quality assurance for the sports sector as a whole.

Becoming a world-class centre for coaching and leadership development

15. Singapore may be a small red dot, but we have an aspiration and ambition to become a world-class centre for coaching and leadership development.
- a. We have been working steadily towards this goal.

16. Over the last few years, CoachSG has been invited to present at various international conferences and symposiums such as those organised by the International Olympic Committee, the International Council for Coaching Excellence, and the Asian Sport Institutes Association.
 - a. These opportunities allow us to showcase and share good practices from our coach education and development programme with practitioners from around the world.
 - b. These invitations also reflect the rise in global recognition and prominence of CoachSG's work in the areas of coaching, character and leadership development.

17. I am extremely pleased to announce this morning that Singapore has been awarded the hosting rights to the International Council of Coaching Excellence (ICCE) Global Coach Conference in 2023.
 - a. The Global Coach Conference or GCC is the most prestigious coaching conference in the world.
 - b. Held once every two years, it is a platform for coaches, coach educators, sport scientists, technical directors and sport administrators from around the world to come together to learn from the best, build on shared knowledge, and push the boundaries of coaching and coach development.

- c. Singapore will be the first city in Southeast Asia, and the third city in Asia after Beijing and Tokyo, to host the GCC.
- d. This is indeed a great honour and privilege, and a significant milestone for CoachSG - an organisation that is only five years young.
- e. I sincerely thank ICCE for selecting Singapore as the host city for the 2023 edition of the GCC.
- f. This is a rare and much-cherished opportunity, and Singapore will once again put our best foot forward and demonstrate our value and contributions to the sports and coaching sector.

Conclusion

- 18. All of you play a vital role in the development of our athletes and our community, in sports, and beyond sports.
 - a. I hope that this year's CoachSG Conference will allow you to hone your coaching abilities, pick up new knowledge and inspire you try something different in the way you coach.
- 19. Thank you for having me, and I wish you a fruitful three days of learning and engagement with one another!
