

# Making History for Hong Kong: Conversations with DGS Olympians (Part 2)

DOGA is proud to have eight alumnae who represented Hong Kong at the Tokyo Olympics and one alumna at the Tokyo Paralympics. The stories of the first four athletes we met with were published in the Kaleidoscope issue no. 26 (January 2022). We will now share with you the journeys of two other athletes – Cheung Ngan Yi and Justine Ng. Hope you will continue to find inspiration from them!

## Cheung Ngan Yi

Attracted by the variability in the sport and the ample court space to run around in, young Cheung Ngan Yi chose to focus on badminton among other sports. Her training at the Hong Kong Sports Institute started at Primary 3 and rose in intensity during Ngan Yi's secondary school years.

Ngan Yi was faced with a major dilemma on her future at the end of S5 – should she continue with her studies, which would seemingly offer a stabler future, or should she become a full-time athlete, enduring more hardships along the way and potentially more uncertainties after her athletic career? These hardships were not only the physical demands of training, but also the mental anguish originating from the dullness of repeating the same training content day after day. What tipped the scale was the affirmation of Ngan Yi's potential from her coach, who had just retired from the sport herself and remains Ngan Yi's coach until today. Ngan Yi decided to withdraw her place from DGS the day before S6 started.

Fortunately, turning full-time was a decision Ngan Yi would never regret. Participating in the Olympics was indeed a truly rare opportunity, but Ngan Yi's athletic career also enabled her to grow and mature in ways she did not expect. While striving hard for excellence in badminton, she discovered her "deficiencies"

as an athlete: wilful, self-centred, and emotional, the last being an athlete's nemesis. Fortunately, after abundant reflection, and with steadfast determination, Ngan Yi conquered these deficiencies and reformed herself to come out on top of the "mental game" in badminton.

There were two points in her career where she almost quit badminton. Three years after turning full-time, Ngan Yi hit a wall and became disillusioned. Upon painstaking contemplation and discussions with her coach, she realized she still had some way to go before reaching her full potential. Fortified with this knowledge and more positivity and patience, Ngan

Yi embarked with a deep sense of rebirth to approach her career from a new angle. Then leading up to the 2016 Olympics, when Ngan Yi was steadily ahead to qualify, a few "unlucky" draws to face top-ranked opponents in the last few rounds meant that her teammate overtook her and qualified instead. This adversity crushed Ngan Yi – it seemed that even luck was not on her side. However, after assiduous reflection, she concluded that between luck and better skills, she should focus on the latter as it could give her better control over success. Armed with this fresh thinking, Ngan Yi carried on. As a result, Hong Kong has its top women's singles badminton player today.

The pandemic and postponement of the Tokyo Olympics greatly unsettled many athletes, but Ngan Yi saw them as a double-edged sword, as her chronic Achilles tendon injury was at its worst in summer 2020. Her injury gained some reprieve the following year and allowed her to focus her energy on training for the games. When she finally got to the Tokyo Olympics, Ngan Yi found it challenging to follow her original intentions to relax, as immersed in the environment, she esteemed the competition greatly and wanted to give her best.

With students excelling in every discipline, the DGS environment spurred Ngan Yi with the motivation to keep trying and improve when facing a goal. Benefitting from this attitude and her continuous reflections, Ngan Yi advises DGS girls that persistence is essential. In her



Cheung Ngan Yi (Class of 2010) at Tokyo 2020 Olympics



Ngan Yi (middle) with classmates on her last day at DGS



Taipei Open 2019

### General Committee 2022-2023

President:  
Ms Yvonne Chan

Hon Vice President:  
Mrs Stella Lau, SBS, JP  
Mrs Annie Lee

Vice President:  
Mrs Grace Lee Lam  
Ms Gladys Lo

Treasurer:  
Ms Winnie Kong

Company Secretary:  
Ms Cindy Hui

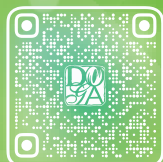
Administrative  
Secretary:  
Ms Connie Lung

Members:  
Mrs Shirley Cheng Chan  
Ms Vicki Chan  
Ms Irene Cheong  
Ms Elfreda Chow  
Ms Andrea Lai  
Ms Christy Lam  
Ms Charis Lee  
Ms Vanessa Leung  
Ms Janice Li  
Ms Greta Ng  
Ms Diana Ting  
Ms Helen Wong

DOGA Tel: 2771 5881

DOGA Email:  
doga.info@gmail.com

Follow us on Instagram



@doga.org.hk

career, the difficulties she confronted in achieving a goal far exceeded what she had imagined. She persevered through them and did not let them sink her. In addition, having experienced the perils of negativity, she realized that positive thinking is key. Not only does it give her the energy to carry on, it also diverts her focus from troubles.

With chronic injuries affecting her training and competitions in recent years, Ngan Yi feels more uncertain about her future. So, after reaching this significant Olympics milestone, Ngan Yi thinks that it is time to adjust her mind and body to release some apprehension, to not set any goals, to just go with the flow for once, with the hope that she can return to the right mode some time. As of this point, it is uncertain whether Ngan Yi will participate in the Asian Games 2022, which has been postponed to 2023, not to mention the 2024 Olympics. In the meantime, Ngan Yi has shifted her focus to exploring her interest since childhood – she is studying psychology part-time online at a university in the UK.

## Justine Ng

"The Mini Bazaar brings back happy memories from my days at DGS," Justine Ng (Class of 2006) reminisced. "It taught me how to work with people and to learn the value of preparation." Justine's years of preparation in fencing eventually led her to win a silver medal in the women's epee team event at the Rio Paralympic Games in 2016. She also competed in the Tokyo Paralympic Games in 2021, which makes her part of a small elite group of two-time Hong Kong Olympians and Paralympians.

Justine was diagnosed with cerebral palsy at a very young age, but her condition is mild. She spent her junior years at DGJS and out of curiosity, she joined a beginner's fencing course when she started senior school at DGS. As her interest deepened, she entered joint school competitions. She later trained with a private coach and, following that, at the Hong Kong Sports Institute. In her transition from abled to disabled fencing, she noted that disabled categories have different requirements from abled ones, even if the physical differences in athletes may not always be apparent to observers.



Justine Ng (Class of 2006)



Justine and her mom at the Mini Bazaar

As Justine accumulated training and competition experiences, it became clearer to her that her path would be in the disabled category. Starting from S3, she decided to train solely at the Hong Kong Sports Institute, attending school in the morning and training in the evening.

After S5, Justine switched to another school. Justine wanted to take advantage of every opportunity and traveled to different places every month for international fencing competitions, including Italy, mainland China, and Malaysia. While it was challenging to juggle academics and a full competition and training schedule, the opportunities were valuable as they gave her great exposure and increased her self-confidence. Justine had previously felt that she was not as good as the "normal" students. But as she gained more exposure, she came to appreciate that she is very privileged and has fewer struggles than other teammates with more serious disabilities. She also came to see that people have different strengths and it is not always necessary to compare who is better.

When asked about key learnings from her time at DGS, Justine said without hesitation that the solid English foundation and communication abilities she acquired at DGS are essential skills that are applicable throughout her fencing career and beyond. For instance, she was able to act as a translator for teammates during international competitions, communicating with the judges and others.

Justine found her Tokyo Paralympics experience in 2021 very different from other competitions. Because of the Covid-19 pandemic, she had not been able to compete outside Hong Kong since February 2020. The lack of overseas training and competitions gave many athletes a lot of pressure. Fencers require training partners, and Covid-19 made it very hard to keep up unless athletes were engaged in long-term training overseas. Thankfully, Hong Kong athletes performed very well at the Olympics, which helped to boost the Paralympic team's confidence, in spite of the hurdles during their preparation.

Comparing her experiences at the two Olympics, Justine shared that Tokyo had much better food compared to Rio, and the volunteers in Tokyo were helpful and friendly. She particularly appreciated how they helped with equipment like wheelchairs and cheered for both the athletes who won and those who lost. The sense of support and respect was significant. She also pointed out that the Tokyo Olympics marked the first Games where the Olympic and Paralympic logos were combined, symbolizing equality while also reducing the setup time between the two Games.

Justine believes that the development of Paralympic sports in Hong Kong has a bright future, with better coaching resources and more Paralympic fencers committing to serious training. Justine has aspirations to both be a fencing coach and, more broadly, as an advocate of physical exercise and sports nutrition.



Epee competition at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics

Her wisdom for DGS girls is to strike a balance between academics and sports. For elite athletes, that balance is particularly difficult, and Justine feels fortunate to have been guided by an inspiring and wise coach. She views academic credentials as very important in carrying one through life. Justine studied accounting and finance in university and is currently an auditor. She has found the stability enabled by her academic credentials reassuring, and allows her to pursue her other interests such as sports coaching.

"Fencing came under the spotlight because of Cheung Ka Long's achievement at the Tokyo Olympics. Back in Rio, I did not receive much attention even after I won a medal, but I am happy to get the attention now. People finally realize how challenging fencing is!"

## DOGA Activities

### Stretching & Myofascial Release Zoom Workshop

A zoom workshop "Health Regimen from Stretching & Myofascial Release" was held on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2022 for 30 alumnae. Ms. Josephine Wong was invited to share advice and theory on << 保健伸展及肌筋膜放鬆 >>, and to introduce methods to alleviate muscle tension and joint pain. Ms. Wong is a personal stretching trainer, a Tai Chi Coach as well as a Yoga instructor. She demonstrated how to use simple equipment at home, including yoga mat, yoga block, towel, and tennis ball, for stretching and toning to release the pressure points related to stiff neck, back, and thigh muscles.



### Mid-Autumn Crochet Workshop

In September 2022, the Art Club hosted its first in-person event in two years – the Mid-Autumn Crochet Workshop. It was indeed a valuable experience to be able to meet face-to-face. In this fun and festive workshop, participants learned how to make a miniature Mid-Autumn rabbit doll. Although the task was not easy, the instructor, Winnie Sze (Class of 2004), taught each participant very patiently.



### Kee Wah Summer Baking Workshop

In August 2022, DOGA members gathered at the Kee Wah Studio to learn how to make loveable 吉士小雞包 (Custard Chicken Buns) and 肉鬆獅子包 (Pork Floss Lion Buns). The studio was filled with smiles and delight as the participants shared in the fun of Chinese pastry baking, turning freshly baked buns into baby lions and chicks.



### Dr. CJ Symons Scholarship 2022

DOGA is happy to announce that Felice Chan has been awarded the Dr. CJ Symons Scholarship for 2022. The scholarship, which amounts to HK\$160,000, will go towards her study at the University of Chicago where she intends to major in Economics. Congratulations and we wish Felice every success in her future endeavours.

