



Quah siblings skip 2026 Asian Games for postgraduate studies

Description

Singapore swimmers Quah Ting Wen, Quah Zheng Wen and Quah Jing Wen will skip the Sept 19 to Oct 4 Asian Games to put competitive swimming on hold for postgraduate studies.

The Straits Times reported the decision on Thursday (Aug 27). All three had met Asian Games A qualifying marks, but none will race in Aichi-Nagoya. It is the first time since 2006 that no Quah sibling will feature at the Asiad.



Source: Quah Ting Wen / The Straits Times

Between them, the trio have collected 152 regional medals across about 20 years, spanning SEA Games, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games campaigns as well as Olympic appearances.

Ms Quah Ting Wen, 34, became the most decorated SEA Games athlete after the 2025 Bangkok Games, where she won three golds, a silver and a bronze to take her regional medal tally to 65 and

pass Joscelin Yeo. She met the Asian Games A cuts in the 50m freestyle and 50m butterfly.

She has pursued a master's degree in guidance and counselling at James Cook University, Singapore, since September 2025, and has coached at the Overseas Family School since January. She was recently named the first active national athlete to receive the Lee Kuan Yew Scholarship for postgraduate study.

"I decided in the middle of the year to sit these Games out as I wanted to use this year to focus on school," said Ms Quah Ting Wen.

MEDICAL SCHOOL AND THE POOL

Mr Quah Zheng Wen, 29, a three-time Olympian, met A cuts in the men's 50m, 100m and 200m backstroke and the 100m butterfly. He enrolled at Duke-NUS Medical School at the start of August.

He gave up a place at the National University of Singapore's Yong Loo Lin School of Medicine in 2015 to train and study in the United States, graduating from the University of California, Berkeley in 2021 with a degree in molecular cell biology. At the December 2025 SEA Games he won four golds, three silvers and two bronzes.

"To a certain degree, I wish I could have gone to the Asian Games because they happen once every four years," said Mr Quah Zheng Wen. "Even though I've had a very long career, I've only managed to go for two Asian Games, which is fewer than the number of Olympics I've been to."

He said he was satisfied with what he had done and wished the Singapore contingent well. He also said weekday time with family and his girlfriend was newly available after years of waking near 4.45am for training.



Source: *The Straits Times* / SEA Games Cambodia 2023

Ms Quah Jing Wen, 25, qualified for the Asian Games 100m butterfly and began postgraduate medicine at the University of Sydney at the start of 2026. She and Ms Quah Ting Wen share a 2018 Asian Games relay bronze.

“It was a pretty hard decision to make, to step out of the Asian Games this year, because swimming has been my life for a really long time and it’s my passion,” said Ms Quah Jing Wen. After talks with Singapore Aquatics, she dropped plans to juggle both and chose to “prioritise this next step in my life, just for this year”.

WHAT SINGAPORE AQUATICS SAID

National swim coach Gary Tan said 19 of the 29 Singapore swimmers headed to the Games will be making their debuts. The programme is also adjusting after breaststroke specialist Letitia Sim retired in May.

“These Games will be a key milestone as Singapore swimming continues its journey of renewal,” said Mr Tan. “We’re now in the stage of fine-tuning race plans and techniques. The Asian Games is a good opportunity for us to put all of this together and gauge where we currently stand among Asia’s best.”

He said medals are not the only measure of success, and that the bigger focus remains building a pool of swimmers for major meets beyond 2026. Co-head coaches Eugene Chia and Gustavo Schirru will lead the team in Japan.

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Source: *The Straits Times* / SEA Games Cambodia 2023

Mr Quah Zheng Wen has not ruled out a later return, including for a home SEA Games in 2029, depending on his medical-school load in Years 2 and 3. He said he hoped juniors would eventually be strong enough to beat a 32-year-old still in school. The sisters have likewise left open a competitive comeback.

Separately, Singapore Aquatics said applications for the Joseph Schooling Award open on Sept 1. Two athletes a year will each receive S\$10,000 over two years under the federation scheme. Details are published on the Singapore Aquatics website.

For earlier Team Singapore swimming coverage, see [Gan Ching Hwee's Commonwealth Games breakthrough](#) and the [Aichi-Nagoya Asian Games preview](#). More files sit in the [Sports archive](#).

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