

## The FINA Scholarship Programme at Thanyapura

FINA Communications Department

Thanyapura Health & Sports Resort currently trains athletes from around South East Asia under the FINA scholarship programme, and has been a fully certified FINA training centre since 2015.

FINA has been providing scholarships for athletes and young athletes since 2014. With a 'focus on the athlete', the FINA training programme at Thanyapura is run under the guidance of experienced Head Coach Miguel Lopez.

FINA is dedicated to offering the Aquatics disciplines at all levels throughout the world regardless of age, gender or race, and promoting international relations through a shared love for sport.

Head Coach Miguel Lopez has been working with a number of FINA scholarship athletes since Thanyapura became a certified training ground in 2015. Miguel is originally from the Spanish Canary Islands and has more than 20 years experience as an elite swimming coach. He has worked with sixteen Olympic swimmers and three Paralympics champions, spanning six different Olympics and Paralympics games to date, and his swimmers have broken over ten world records and two hundred national records under his guidance.

When asked him about his swimmers, Miguel says:

"We've all become very close. I feel about them as I think I would feel about my children. Which means I treat them like people I care enough that I won't tell them what they want to hear. But what I think it's the best for them, which sometimes they don't like but they end up appreciating,".

"The program has helped develop a training culture in their countries, as well as a very healthy rivalry among them as they bond and compete at the same time."

**CHERANTHA DE SILVA**



Cherantha de Silva is a 20-year old swimmer from Colombo, Sri Lanka, and has been swimming since the age of 4. He is seen as the country's top swimmer and was offered a FINA scholarship to train in Thailand in 2015. He competed in six competitions in 2016 alone, winning 4 silver and 3 bronze medals. His goal is to be the first Sri Lankan swimmer ever to qualify for the Olympics - which he hopes to do in 2020 in Tokyo.

**ANTHONY LALANOMENA**



Anthony Lalanomena is a 19-year old swimmer from Antananarivo, Madagascar. He trains at Thanyapura as part of the FINA scholarship programme. He has competed in a number of international competitions, including the 2014 Summer Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing, China. His goal is to represent his country and become an elite swimmer.

**NOAH VILISON-HEATHER**



Noah is a young talented swimmer from the Cook Islands. He is 17 years old and competed at the Commonwealth Youth Games in 2017. His aspirations include taking part in the 2018 World Short Course Championships, qualifying for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, and obtaining a swimming scholarship in the USA. Noah feels privileged to have the opportunity to improve as a swimmer and a person under this FINA scholarship.

**MI-SONG PAK**



Mi-Song is a passionate 27-year old swimmer from North Korea. In 2016 she competed in the 25m FINA Championships in Canada and in 2017 competed in the FINA Championships in Hungary. Her aspirations include taking part in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games. Mi-Song is also very happy to be training under this FINA scholarship.

**AYMAN KLZIE**



Ayman Klzie is a talented 23-year old swimmer from Aleppo, Syria, and started swimming at the age of 7. He received a FINA scholarship in 2015, which brought him to Thailand, and was also offered the job of a Swim Coach at Thanyapura. He has accumulated over 100 medals and broken a number of national records so far during his career, but his main goal is to see Syria safe and return home to train with his family. Latest News about him

**AMMARA PINTO**



Ammara Pinto is a 20-year old swimmer from Blantyre, Malawi, and trains at Thanyapura as part of the FINA scholarship programme. She has competed in a number of international competitions, including the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. Her goal is to inspire more young Malawian swimmers and to promote the sport in her home country.

**IRANKUNDA ISIHAKA**



Irakunda is a 21-year old swimmer from Rwanda, and competed in the 2014 Zambia Youth Africa Games. His goals are to complete in the 2018 World Short Course Championships, represent his country in the 2020 Tokyo Olympic Games, and obtain a swimming scholarship in Europe. He feels honoured to be taking part in the FINA scholarship programme here at Thanyapura.

**SAJAN PRAKASH**



Sajan Prakash, 23, is from Kerala, India. Sajan started swimming at the age of six. He inherited the spirit of competition from his mother, a professional athletics competitor and main supporter of his success. Winning state and national competitions motivated him to pursue swimming at the professional level while he trained in Bangalore with the national coach. He broke three national records during his career.

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