

DR KUA HARN WEI

Profile & Accomplishments

There are natural athletes and there are accidental athletes. Dr Kua Harn Wei believes that he belongs to the latter. A near-drowning accident and a humiliating lecture by a Naval Diver Officer when he took the Naval Diving Unit officer cadet selection test at Officer Cadet School in 1990 gave him the epiphany that he should learn how to swim. And he did. After two years of relentless self-coaching at a neighborhood pool – in which he learnt by observing how others swim and starting with 25m of non-stop swim – he completed his first swim-run event at East Coast. He went on to win the NUS Triathlon (closed division) a year later and chalked up a string of regional race finishes in Malaysia and China. In 1997 and 1998, he was selected to represent Singapore in the Asian Triathlon Championships. 1997 was a special year for Harn Wei. It was the year he gave the Ironman distance his first shot. The Hawaii Ironman gave him valuable insight into the proper methods of training and set the foundation for the 5 more Ironman races that followed. He achieved his personal best of 10hr 49min in an Ironman-distance

time-trial in 2003 – the year he stepped out of his comfort zone and challenged himself to the Double Ironman. He completed the World Championship in 8th position overall and became the first person in Southeast Asia to accomplish such a feat. Two years later, Harn Wei upped the ante and committed himself to the Quintuple Ironman World Championship. Serious saddle sore and abrasions made the race very tough for him but he managed to finish in 9th position and set a new Asian Record. This result earned him a 5th position in the world ranking for 2005. In 2006, Harn Wei tested his mettle again by completing the Deca Iron World Challenge – a race that challenged participants to completing 1 Ironman per day for 10 consecutive days. He came in 7th overall, won his age-group and came in first in the final Ironman (with a time of 13hr16min). With this finish, he became the first Asian in the world to have completed a race of this grueling format. Although Harn Wei has received many honors for his accomplishment, which include being selected as the Record Breaker of the Year (2006) by the

Singapore Book of Record 2007 Edition and the Singapore Youth Award in Sports & Adventure in 2006, it is the self actualization journey throughout these years of triathlon that means the most to him. He attributes all he knows today to the people he meets and learns from – coaches he worked with and his many triathlete friends here in Singapore. TriZEN is a significant milestone in his life. It started off as a brainchild of his and a few close friends, all of whom believe that the most valuable athletic experience one can ever gain is when one achieves the delicate balance between taking from and giving back to the sport.

Working as an Assistant Professor at NUS, he is deeply concerned for the environment. His research and teaching aim to contribute to the current understanding of climate change and renewable energy; he also leads a few project groups in these areas. It is therefore not surprising that he broached the idea of a ZERO-Carbon Family Aquathon to TriZEN Sports Pte Ltd. He believes that by garnering the support of families and harvesting the dedication typical of sportsmen and women, the importance of

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protecting our environment can be more strongly brought across to the community.

Harn Wei is also very passionate about community outreach. As a motivational speaker who frequently speaks to schools, institutions and corporations about work-life balance and proper sport training, he believes that TriZEN should reach out to the less fortunate and spread the goodness of triathlon far and wide.

This belief underpins his idea to train a group of physically challenged athletes for the Singapore 70.3 in 2007.