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For Immediate Release

Seven Young Local Runners are selected for the MSIG Youth Trail Running Development Program



[Hong Kong, 23 May 2019] MSIG Hong Kong and GreenRace are proud to announce that seven of Hong Kong's brightest youth trail runners have been selected for the MSIG Youth Trail Running Development Program.

The selected runners are: NG Wai Hei, 19; Nicole LEE, 21; Tony YUNG Tsz Chun, 24; WONG Mei Yan, 25; Lodewijk Adriaan VRIENS, 26; Plato LUK, 27; and Leanne SZETO, 28. The four men and three women, all Hong Kong-born under-30s, have qualified based on their rankings after the first two races of the 2019 MSIG Trail Running Series — the 15km MSIG Trail @ Braemar Hill in January, and the 18km MSIG Ultra @ Tai Po in March.

The athletes have embarked on a 12-month training plan from May 2019 to April 2020, a unique program that includes physiotherapy sessions and physiological testing by Joint Dynamics, weekly dietary consultations by Katia Kucher of D.BeFit, training plans by Vlad Ixel of The North Face team, sponsored training gear and race nutrition by Gone Running and T8, and access to GreenRace and Fields Japan trail running events, plus support from RacingThePlanet's 4 Deserts ultramarathon series.



At the culmination of the year-long program, the top two athletes of the MSIG Youth Trail Running Development Program will be sponsored by MSIG for a chance to compete in one of the five UTMB Ultra Trail du Mont Blanc trail races in August 2020.

NG Wai Hei, the youngest of the group, has established himself in Hong Kong trail races in the past couple of years, frequently making the podium. Last year, he represented Hong Kong at the 2018 Skyrunning World Championships in Scotland. For the first two races of the 2019 MSIG Trail Running Series, Ng was the third overall of 15 KM at the MSIG Trail @ Braemar Hill and overall champion of 18 KM at the MSIG Ultra @ Tai Po.

“I am very happy and excited to be part of the MSIG Youth Trail Running Development Program,” said Ng, who studies environmental science at the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education. “I hope to strengthen my fitness and improve my skills. I hope that I can perform much better in trail running after joining the program. Also, I hope to take part in overseas trail running races.”

Among the women, Leanne SZETO is one of the most recognised names. A successful Hong Kong national triathlete turned trail runner, her raw running talent has helped her achieve numerous podiums in local trail races. Szeto was the overall champion at the MSIG Trail @ Braemar Hill and second overall at the MSIG Ultra @ Tai Po. Szeto, a full-time engineer, shared her thoughts on being selected for the program. “It feels like it’s going to be a very long journey, and a very challenging one, firstly because it’s a full year ahead,” she said. “Secondly, it’s something completely new to me, after being a triathlete for 15 years. I have to find a new way to train for a new target”. Leanne still enjoys triathlons more than trail running but hopes this programme changes that and allows her to step out of her comfort zone and achieve new heights with this sport.

A typical month of the training program will see the athletes not only going through an individually-tailored training and nutrition regimen, but also strength conditioning sessions and injury prevention. They will get involved in community events, attend trail running workshops and, where possible, participate in a race each month.

Races already on the cards include the Tigershead GreenRace (Aug 24) and Double Nine GreenRace (Oct 7), and of course the final two races of the 2019 MSIG Trail Running Series, the MSIG Immortals @ Pat Sin Leng (Sep 21) and MSIG Summits @ Mui Wo (Nov 3).

The athletes’ weekly progress will be monitored with intermittent monthly follow-up sessions by Joint Dynamics, Katia Kucher, Vlad Ixel and GreenRace. Further, the athletes will also be encouraged to participate in optional events such as plogging, beach clean-up, and community talks and events.



Martin Cai, Race Director, GreenRace, said, “We are very pleased to support the next generation of trail runners coming out of Hong Kong. We are excited to be a part of these athletes’ journey of growing and developing their skills individually and as a team. The MSIG Youth Trail Running Development Program aims to increase the spotlight on this magnificent fledgling sport and encourage more corporates and educational institutions to support the Hong Kong trail running community.”

For more information on the MSIG Youth Trail Running Development Program, please see <https://msig.tgr.run/youthseries/>.

Photo Captions

Photo 1A & 1B



The MSIG Youth Trail Running Development Program has officially started, seven young local talented trail runners attended the first kick-start meeting to receive details of the 12-month programme.

Photo 2



The athletes will receive an individually-tailored comprehensive training plans, dietary consultations, free training gear, and access to GreenRace and Fields Japan trail running events.

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This press release is released on behalf of TGR International Limited by ActionHouse International Limited.



For event enquiries related to *MSIG Trail Running Series 2019*, please contact **TGR International Limited**:

Martin Cai, Race Director

Tel: +852 9133 5415

Email: team@tgr.run

For media enquiries related to *MSIG Trail Running Series 2019*, please contact **ActionHouse International Limited**:

Anthea Look

Tel: +852 3102 8117/ 9512 5685

Email: alook@actionhouseintl.com

About MSIG Insurance (Hong Kong) Limited

With a network of operations dating as far back as 1855, MSIG Insurance (Hong Kong) Limited (“MSIG”) has been providing general insurance solutions and products to customers in Hong Kong for more than 150 years. MSIG is backed by the solid foundation and rich heritage of Mitsui Sumitomo Insurance Company Limited, an established insurer that has received strong financial ratings from leading rating agencies, including Standard & Poor’s and Moody’s. Today, MSIG is one of the few foreign-based general insurers to have representation in every ASEAN country, a testament to its strength and reach. MSIG also benefits from being a member of the MS&AD Insurance Group – one of the largest general insurance groups in the world. Leveraging their multi-channel distribution, their strong partnerships with intermediaries and an extensive geographical network, MSIG offers a wide range of insurance solutions across personal and commercial lines.

About TGR International Ltd (The GreenRace)

The GreenRace is an event organiser specialising in sustainable and all-inclusive trail running races, with a diverse catalogue of events ranging across the Asia-Pacific region. Many hosted independently and others with partners, the majority of their races take place in Hong Kong and Japan. The driving mission of The GreenRace is to ignite passion in their community of runners, designing trail running events that participants and volunteers of all ages and abilities will love. The GreenRace remains vigilant in honouring its responsibility to the greater community and to the environment by striving for zero waste events. With every trail race created, they focus continually on quality, sustainability and total runner satisfaction for people from all walks of life. The GreenRace has earned the loyalty of the Asian trail running community, and thrives thanks to the vital support of dedicated and like-minded volunteers.



Appendix

MSIG Youth Trail Running Development Program 2019/2020 — Athlete biographies

	<p><u>Leanne SZETO</u> Birthdate: January 24, 1991 Occupation: Full-time engineer Hobbies: Triathlon Trail running background: Started trail running two years ago in 2017, as she was trying to find something new apart from triathlon. Started out in small local trail running races of between 10-20km. Trail running highlights: 2017 TNF50 Hong Kong, 3rd female (her first ever trail running achievement). Personal motto: “It makes it more natural to train like an absolute beast, when that’s the standard inside you.”</p>
	<p><u>NG Wai Hei</u> Birthdate: September 29, 1999 Occupation: Student, Environmental Sciences, Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, Sha Tin campus Hobbies: Hiking Trail running background: Started trail running in secondary school. Before that, his parents often took him hiking, instilling in him a love for the trails. Soon, he was running up to the hills alone after school, more and more frequently. Trail running highlights: Overall Champion of MSIG Ultra @ Tai Po and 3rd Overall of MSIG Trail @ Braemar Hill 15km. Personal motto: “Never give up and be positive.”</p>
	<p><u>Nicole LEE</u> Birthdate: August 29, 1997 Occupation: Year 4 student majoring in Applied Psychology at Tung Wah College Hobbies: Ballet and landscape photography Trail running background: Started trail running in December 2017, with an outdoor adventure race called Team Challenge 36. There she made a new friend who encouraged her to try trail running on its own. Trail running highlights: 2017 Shatin Twin Peaks 26km, Female Junior champion (her first individual trail race); 2018 New Year NE Mountain Race 32km, Female Junior champion Personal motto: “Enjoy the race, learn, and respect every competitor.”</p>



Tony YUNG Tsz Chun

Birthdate: March 19, 1995

Occupation: Salesman at trail running gear shop in Mongkok

Hobbies: Football and cycling

Trail running background: Started trail running 3-4 years ago.

Trail running highlights: 2018 Ultra Maokong 50km; 2018 Mountain Range 50km; 2018 The Beast Trail 50km.

Personal motto: “Keep smiling and keep moving.”



WONG Mei Yan

Birthdate: May 25, 1993

Occupation: Works in disciplinary services

Hobbies: Dragonboating

Trail running background: Started trail running 4-5 years ago. Has a solid road running background — clocked 3hr 03min at the 2019 Hong Kong Marathon and 2hr 57min at the 2019 Seoul International Marathon.

Trail running highlights: 2019 MSIG Ultra @ Tai Po, 3rd overall; 2019 MSIG Trail @ Braemar Hill, 2nd overall; Oxfam Trailwalker 14hr 50min.

Why I run: “To explore the world — road and trail running gives me the opportunity to run all over the world and broaden my horizons.”



Lodewijk Adriaan VRIENS

Birthdate: December 30, 1992

Occupation: Management trainee of Swire Properties

Hobbies: CrossFit 4-5 times a week and surfing at Big Wave Bay

Trail running background: Ran cross-country through most of secondary school, but only started trail running properly while doing his Masters in Beijing. In Beijing, he feels the running community was very tight knit and the great trails north of the Chinese capital made for some very exciting races. Moving back to Hong Kong got him more involved in the sport.

Trail running highlights: Running the HK100 three times

Personal motto: “Just get going, the rest will follow.”



Plato LUK

Birthdate: February 9, 1992

Occupation: Freelance

Hobbies: N.A.

Trail running background: Started trail running more than 5 years ago.

Trail running highlights: 2019 MSIG Ultra @ Tai Po, 3rd overall.

Why I run: "I love the downhill speed and the feeling of my heart exploding over short distances."