

# SPC YOUNG RIDERS

In this issue, we feature 14 year old Maya Matheson who has been riding for the past 8 years (she was just six years old when she started!). Maya shared with our editorial team the joy of horse riding and her future aspirations in this competitive sport.

**M**aya who is currently competing at Elementary level and jumping around 80cm, joined Singapore Polo Club and the SPC Riding Academy nearly 4 years ago. "The coaches, horses and staff are all so amazing and are what brings the place to life" she says.

To her, the Academy is not just a place that she trains at, but a place where she has tons of fun every single time she visits. Currently, she rides 5 times a week both flat and jumping. "It started off as a struggle to manage my time because of other sports and commitments but I found ways around it such as having consecutive lessons. I have been able to fit 2 lessons in a row (one flat, one jumping) so that I can leave a few days free for other commitments and not have to miss out on any riding lessons" shares Maya. Most of the days she is seen heading for riding lessons straight from school with no break in between, but she doesn't mind the hectic hours as she's focused on preparing for her upcoming riding competitions.



Maya used to own a horse called Lambada who she started riding at the end of 2018 however around a year later at the beginning of 2020, she went lame and is now currently retired in Malaysia. Lambada will not be able to get back to the level she was at before but Maya hopes that she can help out with people who are not able to ride. For just over a year now she has been leasing a great horse from the Academy called Guinness. "I have learnt so much from riding him and even though he can sometimes be a little bit of a challenge, we always figure it out. I'm so lucky to have such a great bond with him and I can't wait to keep riding him" says Maya.

Her biggest idol in terms of riding is Jonelle Price, an Olympic Equestrian Rider who is from and competes for New Zealand. In 2012, she received a bronze medal in the Olympics with her team and won the Badminton in 2018. It is a dream of Maya's to compete in the Olympics for the New Zealand Equestrian team and Jonelle Price is such an inspiration to her because she has had downfalls too but that didn't stop her from wanting to achieve something. Even though these downfalls could physically affect her riding ability or her horses', her grit and determination made sure that those never got in the way because it doesn't matter how long it took, but eventually reaching your destination.



Maya personally tries to compete every opportunity she gets. She was very lucky to be able to compete in the National Dressage Championships in 2018 and 2019 but sadly they were not on last year because of the Covid-19 circuit breaker. Maya exclaims, "I have competed in so many training shows and interclub competitions that I have lost count! Some advice that I would give to people who want to start competing is that when you finish a competition, don't just accept the results and wait until next time, you should take the feedback and start working on it slowly. It doesn't matter if you only spend that time working on one thing whether it is for dressage or jumping, it's still making an improvement and that's how I have grown as a rider."

Before the global pandemic, Maya used to go on holidays with her family 4 times a year. A lot of the time these would be horse riding related. Her most recent travel was to Colorado! Her family stayed in really cool cabins overnight and during the day, they went on long treks and rides multiple times a day as well as participate in other fun activities. She has been to this particular ranch a number of times and fingers crossed that she will be going back soon along with her family.

In the future, she hopes to compete in Equestrian and maybe even as a riding coach. "Horse riding is my life and I aspire to do anything related to that!" says Maya. ■

