

EVEN as she aims to scale new heights in her standout sport, para table tennis player Gloria Gracia Wong Sze – a national champion and world number 16 – is not letting tertiary education out of her sight.

“Education is essential because it gives me more options for my life after graduating, ensuring I am not limited to table tennis,” said the Kuching-born lass, who recently completed her first year in the Diploma in Sports and Exercise Science at Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT).

Gloria’s foray into table tennis began at the age of 10, when she was influenced by her parents and siblings who “all played table tennis”.

“When I moved to Kuala Lumpur in 2015 to pursue my table tennis career, I was committed to not putting my education on hold,” the 21-year-old shared, adding that seeing her peers who were able to successfully juggle their studies and sports inspired her to follow in their footsteps.

Acting on a senior player’s recommendation of his alma mater, Gloria sought out TAR UMT’s courses when it came time to pursue her higher education.

“I was excited to discover that the university has a course in sports science, and I was able to apply for a full scholarship offered to athletes. This works out perfectly for me because the scholarship allows me to focus on both my studies and my sport without worrying about anything else,” she said in a Dec 10 press release.

Gloria’s decision to undertake

Double glory for Gloria

National para table tennis champion scores on and off the court

the diploma course at the university has yielded positive results.

This year alone, she won a gold medal at the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) World Para Future Lignano in Italy, one gold and one silver at the ITTF World Para Future Costa Brava in Spain, and one gold and one bronze at the ITTF World Para Challenger Astana in Kazakhstan.

She credited her studies at TAR UMT for giving her an additional competitive edge.

“What I am studying in my diploma has given me a deeper understanding of my performance, helped me cultivate a positive mindset, and taught me

how to manage myself as an athlete. Some of the topics I learnt, such as sports psychology and biomechanics, allow me to analyse and fine-tune my game, which makes a real difference when I step onto the court,” she said.

The university’s sports facilities have also aided Gloria, enabling her to refine her skills through practice sessions in the indoor sports complex, as well as add variety to her strength and endurance training through the use of the gymnasium, running track and swimming pool.

“The facilities located on campus make it so much easier for

me to manage my time between training and studies, as I do not need to constantly travel to train with the national team,” she said. Beyond the facilities, Gloria also treasures the sense of belonging she experiences on campus.

“My lecturers are very understanding of my commitments, and are accommodating and flexible with my coursework deadlines. Plus, my classmates are always ready to lend a hand when I miss lessons by sharing notes and helping me revise, so I am never behind in my studies,” she said.

Looking forward, Gloria

On target: Gloria aims to excel in both studies and table tennis.



remains focused on excelling in both her studies and table tennis. She plans to pursue her bachelor’s degree after her diploma programme ends in October next year.

One of her immediate targets is to surpass her silver-medal finish at the 2023 Asean Para Games by clinching gold at the 2025 edition, which will be held in Thailand in January 2026.

“I have set my sights on graduating from TAR UMT with flying colours and continuing to win more medals on the international stage. Beyond that, my ultimate dream is to represent Malaysia at the Paralympics,” she said.