

Citation Alice Tai – November 2022

Alice Tai is a record-breaking Paralympic swimmer, who won gold at the 2022 Commonwealth Games just six months after learning to walk again following an amputation of her right leg.

Alice was born and raised in Dorset, where she began swimming at the age of eight with the Seagulls Swimming Club in Christchurch. Having undergone a series of operations as a child to help her to walk, Alice recalls the freedom and peace that she found from being in the water.

Her natural talents were quickly spotted and by the age of 15, Alice had been selected for the England para-swim team and was competing in her first international competition. She went on to win gold medals at the 2016 Rio Paralympics, 2018 European Para Swimming Championships and 2019 World Para Swimming Championships. Looking back on the early part of her career, Alice recalls the sheer excitement of competing and succeeding in a sport she had previously known little about. Although she also admits that these high points led to times of disillusionment and burnout as the sport also took a physical toll on her body.

In January this year, Alice underwent an operation to remove the lower part of her right leg as a means of improving her mobility and reducing pain. After such a significant physical change, Alice's achievements at the Commonwealth Games in July are even more remarkable; as she describes still working with her coach to adjust her style of starting, turning in the pool and maintaining balance through her strokes.

Alice credits her positive approach to life to her parents, who she says helped her focus on what she could do rather than what she couldn't, and encouraged her to find her own way of accomplishing difficult tasks. In recognition of her success in the pool, and her role as an ambassador for the sport, in 2016 Alice was made an MBE for services to swimming.

Pro Chancellor. I have the honour to present Alice Tai and I ask you to confer upon her the degree of Doctor of Arts, honoris causa.

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