

CSC's Super Junior aims to be regional go-to meet

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As a budding swimmer, one of Chia T-Jian's first forays into the international swimming scene was the now-defunct Sanya Samaki Cup, a regional inter-club competition which clubs in different countries took turns to host.

"It opened my eyes, to see that there were a lot of other people out there who were better than me, and it made me want to strive harder to be better," said the 38-year-old former national swimmer, who is now the swimming convener for the Chinese Swimming Club (CSC).

His predecessor, Victor Chia, 64,

added: "It used to be the swimming meet that all regional clubs wanted to participate in."

CSC is hoping that its Super Junior Swimming Invitational meet can evolve into a competition of the Sanya Samaki Cup's stature, after the third edition of the two-day meet concluded yesterday at its Amber Road premises.

The Under-13 meet began in 2016 with 430 participants from 18 local and seven overseas clubs and has already increased this year to 568 swimmers from 40 clubs in eight countries such as Vietnam, Thailand, China and Malaysia.

While traditional meets typically utilise eight lanes, this year's CSC

competition required all 10 lanes of its pool to cater for the increased number of participants.

"With the 10-lane system, we have shaved a bit of time off (the schedule) and it tells us that we still have enough room for a few more international clubs to come in," the younger Chia said.

Having more foreign clubs competing regularly would add "legitimacy" to the CSC competition, inching closer to the club's goal of making it a go-to regional meet.

"It will take some time... so far those clubs that have participated in this meet have done so every year and we are adding more clubs to the list," the senior Chia said.

"We hope these clubs will continue to come, to a point where they say, 'Can I host it next year?'"

At the moment though, the CSC meet is slowly gaining a reputation in the region. Former Chinese swimmer Xu Tian Long Zi, the head coach of first-time participants V-Rap Swim Club of China, was impressed with the Super Junior meet.

The 29-year-old said: "We heard about this meet last November when we were at another meet, and this was very good because it provided my swimmers their first real taste of racing overseas and the organisation was good as well."

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