PETALING JAYA — The key to success is time management, prioritising and hard work. These three ingredients are the elements which has worked wonders for Nicol David, who celebrates her ninth year as world No. 1 in women's squash.

“When I was in school, it was a constant juggle between studies and squash. I had no time to procrastinate because I didn’t have the luxury to do so.

“Squash was pivotal in my time management because it taught me to be disciplined. You should also have good time management if you wish to have the ideal balance in life,” the 31-year-old told UCSI University students yesterday.

The Asian Games gold medallist, who received the Top 10 Most Inspiring Leaders and Personalities Award — that honours exemplary individuals who have inspired young Malaysians — was delighted to be among the recipients.

“I'm privileged to be recognised as a top sports personality and I hope I can inspire these students to be future leaders through this award. Personally, to be world No. 1 for nine years is an unbelievable journey. “At the start of each year, I always write down my aspirations. It helps you to focus and stay on the right track,” said Nicol, who won her eighth world crown last month.

The Penangite also lauded the launch of the 1Malaysia IPT Squash Programme designed to improve the level of the sport at tertiary level.

“We have lost a few talented players to education. With this opportunity, they still have a chance to savour squash without having to give up on studies. This programme also gives students chance to learn the game and develop new skills.”