



POC Online

26th SEA Games Special Issue



November 16, 2011

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Day 6: More Medals for RP

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Palembang—The Philippine delegation was in tenterhooks late afternoon of Wednesday hoping to strike in various playing fields and boost Nestor Cordova's rowing gold medal in the 26th Southeast Asian Games in three provinces of Indonesia.

Cordova, a Petty Officer of the Philippine Navy, ruled the M1X event with plenty to spare justifying the national team coach's three-month old decision to field him instead of Benjie Tolentino, the three-time SEAG winner.

With 15 gold medals, 27 silver and 32 bronze on the fifth day of competitions in 44 sports, the Filipinos remained at sixth overall. Indonesia (86-64-69) leads and is far from reach of anyone. Vietnam (55-54-59) dislodged Thailand (51-40-59) to take second place. Singapore (26-31-45) is currently at fourth with Malaysia (26-23-43) breathing down its neck.

Laos (5-3-19), Cambodia (3-9-11), Myanmar (1-12-16), Brunei Darussalam (0-1-6) and Timor Leste (0-0-1) complete the cast.

"We are still in the fight for the second group of three, we just need some quick breaks in the combat disciplines and ball games," observed Philippine Olympic Committee President Jose Cojuangco Jr, now in Jakarta closely monitoring the progress of the campaign.

Cojuangco bewailed the tough luck that limited the Philippines to silver medals in men and women archery compound events, 60 kgs of freestyle wrestling, mixed pair and rapid blindfold of chess, men's marathon, one cushion carom in billiards and the men's doubles of bowling.

"We needed those events badly," he added.

Jennifer Chan and Earl Benjamin Yap both surged to the final round after the morning eliminations but fizzled out against Myanmar and Indonesian opponents, while the touted Bong Mana-Ay could not handle a Vietnamese foe in the 60 kg freestyle event.

Mana-ay's teammate, Jerry Angana injured a knee that prevented him from playing for bronze in the 55 kgs category and Paolo de los Santos could only book bronze in the 50 kgs class.

Eric Panique pushed himself to the limits (2:28.26) but could not get past Indonesia's Yahusa (2:27.45) in the morning marathon and neither could compatriot and bronze medal winner Eduardo Buenavista (2:29.09). In the distaff side Jhoan Banayag was only good for sixth.

Vietnam held on for gold in chess mixed pairs dashing the final round hopes of Oliver Barbosa and Catherine Perena even as blindfold six-round leader John Paul Gomez bites his nails regretting a golden opportunity that slipped through his hands and Darwin Laylo is comforted by the bronze medal.

Francisco de la Cruz shot and missed for the gold medal of carom billiards against Ma Minh Cam of Vietnam, 70-100 after 22 innings and was the second Filipino victim of the Vietnamese after hurdling legendary Efren "Bata" Reyes, bronze winner, in the semi-final.

RP's lady fencing team of Joanna Franquelli, Lenita Otadoy Reyes, Michelle Bruzola and Llyn Nicanor contributed a bronze to the cause in team sabre event and so did Maria Samantha Bermudez in the wakeboard event of the just started water ski sport.

Late Wednesday, singles champ Frederick Ong partnered with Biboy Rivera for the silver in men's doubles of bowling although Apple and Lara Posadas finished in their side of the event at the Jaya Ancol Bowling Center here.

The Philippines' top duo – Liza del Rosario and Liza Clutario – placed ninth at 2336, while the third bet, Ling Ling De Guzman and Alexis Sy, finished tenth at 2207.

Far from done, in their mission to better fifth place the last time around in Laos, other Filipino athletes wheeled into position for more gold medals as Iris Ranola and Rubilen Amit advanced to the semi final of 9-ball billiards with the men and women teams of softball taking their own medal positions in the page system semi-final. Baseball had a rest day.

In other results, divers Jaime Asok and Nino Carog did not finish in the medal circle of 10m platform event, shooters Emerito Concepcion was 7th and Jayson Valez was fifth in 50m three positions of shooting, and Anna Clarice Patrimonio advanced to the second round of women singles of tennis while Mary Jane Capadocia did not. The tennis doubles team of Patrimonio and Denise Dy won over Myanmar to move to the second round.

In Jakarta, the RP basketball men's team swept group A following a 103-69 thrashing of Thailand while the women's team crushed Myanmar 57-39 for their second win in the five-team division.

Alice Kate Aparri handily beat Mieovady Hongfa of Laos, 11-0, in the light-fly (48kg) to reach the quarterfinals, but teammate Analisa Cruz bowed to Thailand's Sopida Satumrum, 12-25, in their flyweight (49kg) QF match.

Bantam Junel Cantancio lost to Petchkoom Worapoj of Thailand, 6-12 and lightweight Charly Suarez defeated Cambodia's Phal Sophat, 20-5 also to reach the quarters.

In cycling, Filipina rider Marites Bitbit was fifth in the massed start event logging in two hours, 57 minutes and .05 seconds, 10 minutes and 39 seconds behind gold medallist and hometown bet Yanti Fuciyanti, who clocked a winning time of 2:46.26.

In beach volleyball, Arnel Amadeo and Henry Pecana beat a Cambodian pair, 21-16, 21-16, but Aiza Maizo and Jovelyn Gonzaga absorbed a 16-21, 9-21 beating from a Vietnamese duo.

The bridge mixed pair had some early successes with victories over Thailand (16-14) and Indonesia (25-3).

The water polo team improved its record to 2-1 after a 14-5 shellacking of Malaysia while in sports climbing Jaime Pahati and Hubberth Guerrero failed to make the medals circle in the boulders and lead events.

Early swimming results saw Jasmine Alkhaidi just barely missing out on the 100m freestyle bronze, taken by Singapore's Amanda Lim with a clocking of 56.73seconds, with a 56.92. Charles Walker and Kendrick Uy came in fifth and sixth in the men's side.

In other water ski events Mark Griffin was last among six in wakeboard, and Carla de la Torre was third place in her heat and did not make the medal round.

Petanque shooter Violeta de la Cruz was second to last in the elimination round.