



# POC Online

The official weekly online newsletter of the Philippine Olympic Committee

Excellence • Respect • Friendship

December 5, 2009 Vol. 1 No. 22

## Message to Team RP

### “Unite and win”

**U**NITY. This was the battle cry given by International Olympic Committee (IOC) representative to the Philippines Frank Elizalde to the Filipino athletes bound for the 25th Southeast Asian Games in Laos.

“Unite and win. This may not be the most ideal message to give, but under the prevailing circumstances, I think this is an essential slogan,” said Elizalde during the send-off event hosted by the Philippine Olympic Committee (POC) for the 386-man RP delegation.

Two chartered flights will bring the Filipino contingent to Laos on December 6, three days before the Games formally begin, although competition in water polo will already be underway prior to the opening ceremony. The RP water polo team has Thailand for its opening day opponent.

“This is a very tricky draw result. We have to fight the tough teams up front. It’s dangerous, but we will fight like hell,” said Philippine Amateur Swimming Association (PASA) president and POC deputy secretary-general Mark Joseph.

POC president Jose ‘Peping’ Cojuangco also announced that last minute pledges made by sponsors were definitely a big boost to the morale of the athletes.

“We received cash donations and other items, including vitamins that our athletes can consume for one whole month. Coming at a time that donors have just extended so much assistance to the victims of two killer typhoons, these things that were given to us must be blessings from above,” said the POC chief.



25<sup>th</sup> SEA GAMES, LAOS  
**VIENTIANE 2009**

## SEAG forecast

As proof of his confidence in the members of Team Philippines bound for the Laos Southeast Asian Games, Chef De Mission Mario Tanchanco boldly predicted a three-way fight for the overall title between the Philippines, Vietnam, and perennial power Thailand.

“It’s a fight among Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines. The others have chances but for the plum it’s a fight among these three nations,” said Tanchangco, who is also president of the country’s sepak takraw association, prior to leaving for Laos for the December 9-18 meet.

He refused, however, to make any prediction on the number of gold medals the Philippines will win.

“It’s hard to predict the number of medals. But we have a very strong chance here because the bulk of our athletes are at least silver medalists of the 2007 SEA Games in Thailand,” said Tanchangco.

The Philippines will send 251 athletes to Laos.

Tanchangco said that of the 28 events offering 353 gold medals, the Filipinos will compete in only 24 events. Still, the Chef de Mission is confident that the Philippines can match or surpass the 42 gold medals it won two years ago.

After nailing the overall championship in Manila in 2005, the RP athletes finished sixth in Thailand in 2007. Tanchangco said the country could have done better if not for close, questionable decisions in the subjective sports.

Thailand emerged overall champion with 182 gold medals followed by Malaysia with 68, Vietnam with 64, Indonesia with 56 and Singapore with 43.

## Albania is RP flag bearer

A woman holds the distinction of being the country's official flag bearer during the opening ceremony of the 25th Southeast Asian Games in Laos.

Boxing champion Annie Albania was chosen from a short, elite list of athletes tasked to carry the country's colors during the traditional march of nations in the opener of the biennial meet on December 9.

Albania was considered for the honor over multi-titled swimmer Miguel Molina and billiards Hall of Famer Efren `Bata' Reyes.

"Nakakagulat po na ako ang napili para maging flag bearer ng Team Philippines, pero isang malaking karangalan po ito para sa akin," said the soft-spoken boxer from Banga, South Cotabato.

Her selection came in the heels of her gold medal showing in the 3rd Asian Indoor Games last month in Vietnam. Albania's gold was the lone for the country in the 10-day meet, where the Filipinos also won four silvers and five bronzes.

The former University of the East stalwart was also the only one to win a gold for the RP boxing team that competed in the 24th edition of the SEA Games in Nakhonratchasima, Thailand two years ago.

In all, Albania is seeking to win her third gold in the SEA Games after similarly emerging triumphant when the country hosted the meet in 2005.