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ABAP to hold tryouts for Youth Olympic Games

The Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (ABAP) will be holding a tryout for selected youth fighters to finalize the team that will compete in the Youth Olympic Games qualifying tournament on April 20 to May 2 in Baku, Azerbaijan.

ABAP executive director Ed Picson yesterday said they have already chosen the 12 boxers ages 14 to 18 years old for the selection process wherein they will be pitted against each other in boxing matches.

Picson declined to reveal the names of the athletes except for Geno Cabugnan, Engelbert Moralde and Daryl Basadre, all 18-year-olds lined up for an invitational tournament in Iran on March 3 to 10.

“We haven’t informed some of the boxers yet, but in the coming weeks, they will start arriving from their different provinces for the training and the tryout,” Picson said.

From the 12 athletes, six to seven boxers will be chosen to represent the country in the qualifier for the inaugural Youth Olympic Games set on August 14 to 26 in Singapore.

Picson said they have always been undertaking a strict selection of athletes to maximize the chances of the team in winning medals in as many elite tournaments as possible.

“We always wanted to be in competitive form. The 12 athletes included in the tryout were chosen based on their performance at the National Championships in Puerto Princesa, Palawan last January as well as the continuous recruiting and scouting of our coaches in different provinces,” Picson said.

“This would also strengthen the continuity of our developmental program in the training pool,” he added.

Gold and silver medalists in Azerbaijan will qualify for the Youth Games, but the organizing committee will only allow a maximum participation of three athletes per nation.

Picson said they still aim to stand out in the qualifiers to rate their chances in the Youth Games and keep their competitiveness.

Philippine Fencing Association prepares for Asian Games

VETERANS Wally Mendoza, Emerson Segui and Harlene Orendain have all been named by the Philippine Fencing Association to the team it is sending to the coming Asian Games in Guangzhou, China.

Newly-elected fencing president Victor Africa said the three were selected outright for the national squad owing to their standings as the probable source of medals in their respective events in the Asiad.

Mendoza is a saber player, Segui specializes in foil, while Orendain is an epee expert.

The rest of the team members will be named based on their performances in various fencing tournaments, among them the Asian Juniors and Cadet Championships which the country is hosting next month.

More than 30 countries are set to see action in the March 4-14 meet to be held at the Philsports Arena in Pasig.

Other than being one of the criteria for the selection of national team members, the 10-day tournament will also be used as part of the Filipino fencers' international tune-up for the 16th edition of the Asiad set this November.

"The Philippines was lucky to have been selected as venue of the twin competitions since the best fencers of the Asian region, aged 12-20, are coming over to participate," said Africa.

The country is fielding entries in both cadet and junior categories. The cadet class is open to fencers aged 12-17, while the juniors division is confined to those 17-20.

"We cannot promise results for our fencers except to say that members of both teams in the cadet and junior levels are ready to compete," said Africa.

Austria identified the other tournaments where the Filipino fencers are set to compete, depending on the availability of funds, are the Southeast Asian Championships, the Youth Championships and the World Championships.