



# POC Online

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## RP Dragon Boat team prepares for Asian Games

FROM the world championship, the multi-titled Philippine dragon boat team is bringing its act to the Asian Games.

Members of the men and women's squads that won two gold medals in the World Dragon Boat championships in Prague, Czechoslovakia last year will be the same cast that will be competing in this year's Asiad in Guangzhou, China.

After all, "why fix it when it ain't broke," stressed national coach Nestor Ilagan, also the technical director of the Philippine Dragon Boat Federation.

"The teams have been training since we returned from Prague and starting next month, they will be doubling their build up program in the run for the coming Asian Games," said Ilagan.

The Filipino paddlers have consistently been delivering for the country in various international meets since the 2005 Southeast Asian Games in Manila, when they won a total of six gold medals.

But it was in last year's 9th edition of the world championship that the 25 men and 25 women team really shone, ruling the 200-m premier open category and the premier mixed 200-m events.

In the premier open category, the Filipinos even registered a new world record of 40.22 seconds as they toppled the previous mark of 41.91 seconds they set in Sydney, Australia two years ago when they beat perennial rival China. In the mixed open, the Filipinos won at the expense of world powers China and Germany.

The dragon boat teams are vying in six events in Guangzhou, namely the 25-meter, 500-meter and 1,000-meter races.

## **Philippine Rowing Association to bring back Lithuanian coach for Asiad preparations**

THE Philippine rowing team is bringing back the man credited for its success in the past.

Philippine Rowing Association president Benjie Ramos bared that Lithuanian coach Rolandas Kazlauskas is set to return to the country and train the Filipino rowers for this year's Asian Games in Guangzhou, China.

The 40-year old Kazlauskas helped the Filipino rowers win two gold medals in the 2007 Southeast Asian Games in Thailand, while also preparing them for the qualifiers of the Beijing Olympics.

Ramos said the Lithuanian coach now based in Switzerland is set to arrive in the country this April.

This will be Kazlauskas' third stint with the national team. He first coached the Filipino rowers from 1998 to 2001. After serving time with the Hong Kong and South Korean squads, he returned to the country in 2007.

"He's a good motivator and coach. We wanted him to focus mainly on training specific athletes for our Asian Games bid," Ramos said.

The rowing association is selecting at least five athletes whom Kazlauskas will be training for the next six months leading up to the November 12-27 Asiad.

Ramos said the five potential Asian Games medalists are veterans Benjie Tolentino, Joe Rodriguez, Alvin Amposta, Nestor Cordova and rookie Roque Abala.

Only three of them, however, will eventually be included in the Asiad-bound Team Philippines.

Although there will be a total of 14 events in the quadrennial meet, Ramos said the RP team is only going to field in entries in the lightweight singles sculls and the lightweight doubles, where he pointed out, the Filipinos have the best chances of winning.

"Benjie, Joe and Nestor are competing for the lightweight singles slot, while Alvin and Roque are most suited for doubles. This will still be evaluated when we finalize our lineup in July," said RP rowing team mentor Ed Maerina.