

Manila plots end to medal drought

Philippine swimming officials, disappointed at yet a third straight Asian Games medal drought, said they will focus on grass-roots program more to get many swimming talents who are “slipping through the cracks.”

“I am disappointed and really thought we would do better. I guess this was a wakeup call for us,” said Philippine Aquatic Sports Association President Mark Joseph.

Although the Philippine swimmers landed in the finals of the two freestyle relays, the fourth place in the 4x200m freestyle relay was its best performance. A gallant effort by anchor-man Miguel Molina in the 4x200m relay pushed the Filipinos from sixth place.

The relay team’s time of 7:30.76 is a new Philippine record, Joseph added.

“I am going to begin focusing more on our grass-roots program as too many talents are ‘falling through the cracks’ and remain

undiscovered. Educating coach will be our major focus,” Joseph said.

He added that he has yet to talk to the 26-year-old Molina about his plans.

“If he decides this is his last games, then we will honor him fittingly for all he has done for our country and wish him Godspeed. New talents will fill his shoes. Eventually,” Joseph said.

It’s urgent for the Philippines, once a power in Asian swimming, to improve, as the Asian Games is turning out to be as strong as the Olympics in certain events, like the freestyle.

Ryan Arabejo, the only other Filipino aside from Molina to enter the finals, encountered a hot pace set in the 1,500m by the winner, Sun Yang of China.

Arabejo swam 16:11.74, far from his best time of 15:30, in landing seventh, but Joseph said he “swam based on his training” in Florida.

— MANILA STANDARD TODAY

Farm work awaits Indian medalist

From fetching water to winning a silver medal in Guangzhou, long-distance runner Kavita Raut’s life has come a full circle. But the achievement will keep her grounded and life will return to normal once she gets home, her mother Sumitra said on Sunday.

“Kavita has been quick and agile since childhood. She liked fetching water from the well, and getting wood from the forest. It required a lot of stamina and she used to do it easily. She has broken the traditions and set a new example for the youngsters from the village,” Sumitra said.

“She will lead a regular life once

she returns. The first thing she has to do is clean the cowshed. I am very proud of her,” she said.

Kavita hails from Savarpada, a small tribal hamlet in Harsul taluka some 70km away from Nashik. Her father Ramdas hailed Kavita’s achievement. “We watched her performance on TV. It has been more than two years since we have seen her. She is winning laurels for the country and we have not even congratulated her in person. We are dying to meet her,” he said.

— DAILY NEWS & ANALYSIS (INDIA)

Bowlers show no shrinks needed

Until the team of Cherie Tan,



ZHANG CHENGLIANG / CHINA DAILY

Shayna Ng and Geraldine Ng clinched Singapore’s first gold medal in bowling at the 16th Asian Games on Saturday, Singapore’s keglers were under increasing pressure after failing to produce a win in four previous events.

According to Singapore Bowling Federation (SBF) President Jessie Phua, it would have been different had a dedicated sports psychologist from the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) helped the athletes. But the SSC have now said they did offer the SBF a sports psychologist and the national sports association turned them down.

Phua clarified later on Sunday a sports psychologist was offered to the SBF but the candidate was not who they had in mind.

“We weren’t getting the (type

of) sports psychologist that we wanted,” she said.

“We were looking for a sports psychologist who could allay athletes’ fears, help their mental strength, erase bad memories and so on. Unfortunately, it was not the kind of dedicated service and the quality of sports psychologist that we were looking for.”

Phua has discussed the issue with SSC’s sports development chief Bob Gambardella, who has promised to look into it.

— TODAY (SINGAPORE)

Mary Kom ready to rumble, and eat

There are many advertisements on how to reduce weight, but Mary

Kom’s dilemma is that there are not many on how to gain weight quickly. India’s star woman boxer has to gain weight quickly.

“I have to fight in the 48 to 51 kg and I weigh around 46 kg. I have to increase my weight before the weigh-in on the morning of the bout. I have increased my diet but have not been successful in gaining weight. Nevertheless, I will drink two to three liters of water before the weigh-in,” Kom said.

With a frail physique, the mother of two doesn’t gain weight quickly. With this, she starts her campaign at a definite disadvantage. “I have won my world championships in the 46 kg and 48 kg categories. It will be a disadvantage to fight boxers who are heavier than me. They will be taller and will have a longer reach and their punch will have more power,” Kom said.

The five-time world champion is looking to counter her stronger opponents with technique and faster reflexes. And to do that, she is training with the men’s contingent.

“I spar with the male boxers. Suranjay Singh is a regular partner. He is much quicker and has a good technique. Sparring with him sharpens my reflexes and movement,” Kom said.

— DAILY NEWS & ANALYSIS

Puyat’s boxing legacy lines on

Despite an alarming start at the ongoing Guangzhou Games, the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines (ABAP) remains on track to uphold its reputation as one of the most productive national sports associations in terms of medals won.

Old-timers still fondly remember when the nation’s boxing simonpures lorded it over Asia, especially during the time when the ABAP was headed by the late business leader and sportsman Eugenio J Puyat, whose boxers amassed three gold medals in three successive Asian Games.

Known as Tito Gene to his friends and admirers, Puyat highlighted his fruitful career in the ABAP when featherweight Anthony Villanueva won the silver medal during the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games, the Philippines’ first silver at the Olympics since 1924, when the country first took part in the Asiad.

That silver was duplicated 32 years later during the 1996 Atlanta Centennial Games by light flyweight Mansueto “Onyok” Velasco, when ABAP was under Manny Lopez.

— INQUIRER (PHILIPPINES)