



PNGOC 2015 Year In review - Celebrating a year of sporting success

Off the back of a successful campaign to the Glasgow Commonwealth Games in 2014 and with the impending task of hosting a Pacific Games, 2015, the year marking 40 years of Independence for Papua New Guinea, was always going to be one filled with new opportunities and challenges for the Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee - what an amazing year it turned out to be!

The stand out achievement of 2015 was the immensely successful hosting of the XV Pacific Games which were held in Port Moresby from 4 to 18 July this year, the Games returning to the country after 24 years. There was an immense amount of pressure, not only on Team PNG and the Olympic Committee to perform but also on important stakeholders like the Games Organising Committee to deliver the Games. Not only were these Games described by many as, the best Games ever but Team PNG topped the Gold and overall medal tally on home soil, repeating its feats of 1991.

It is fitting that we recognize the contribution of the Prime Minister, Hon. Peter O'Neil and his Government through the Minister for Sports and National Events, Hon. Justin Tkatchenko for all of their support, which was integral to the delivery of the Games and also to the success of Team PNG.

While the Pacific Games took place in Port Moresby, the experience was a uniting factor for the entire Nation. As is tradition with many international and regional multi-sport events, a Games Baton Relay commenced as an invitation to our Pacific neighbors and also to the country to be a part of this special moment in sporting history and 100 days out of the Opening Ceremony of the Games Baton began its journey. It was transported by plane, on boats and canoes, on motor vehicles and push bikes, traversed our hills and mountains, through our valleys, across our widest rivers and even in our bluest oceans. The Baton moved through the hands of thousands of our countrymen and women carrying with it messages of hope and inspiration from the entire Nation before the Relay concluded at the Opening Ceremony on 4 July at Sir John Guise Stadium.

The Opening and the Closing Ceremonies of the Games were spectacular with His Royal Highness Prince Andrew, the Duke of York, opening the Games. Prince Andrew then spent another two days attending the Games, presenting medals and also visited the Games village, making a special stop at the Team PNG camp in the Games villages where he took the opportunity to meet and speak with some of our athletes. The last time Prince Andrew attended the Games was during the 1991 South Pacific Games when PNG last hosted and won the Games.

For Team PNG, the journey towards success at the Pacific Games was one in which the PNGOC and Team PNG ventured into uncharted territory. For the first time, Team PNG appointed a General Team Manager on a full time basis under the leadership of the Chef de Mission, Richard Kassman and formal selection policies for athletes and officials were introduced to ensure the highest caliber of athletes and officials were being chosen for Team PNG.

The hype and anticipation in the lead up to the Games saw great interest from the public as they followed the progress of Team PNG placing a new level of expectation upon our Team to deliver, which they did in spectacular fashion. In summary, Team PNG won a total of 217 medals comprising 88 Gold,



70 Silver and 59 Bronze. Team PNG's nearest rivals were New Caledonia who finished with 59 Gold Medals and a total of 166 medals. We should also note that our female athletes and teams contributed to 55% of Team PNG's Gold medal haul and overall, 52% of the total medal tally, a fantastic promotion for women's sport in Papua New Guinea.

There were many notable achievements along this journey towards success, but amongst these, a few that stand out were Thelma Toua's three Gold Medals in the women's 48kg weightlifting event. These were the first medals for Team PNG at the Games and started off the medal success.

Carrying on our proud tradition of lifters was Linda Pulsan. Linda, who prior to the Games, became the world record holder in her Squat competition, won Gold in the 72kg division of the Powerlifting Competition. She was also bestowed with the great honour of being Team PNG's flagbearer for the Opening Ceremony of the Games. Overall, PNG dominated the Powerlifting competition with the team winning 8 Gold, 2 Silver and 4 Bronze medals.

After winning 7 Gold, 2 Silver and 2 Bronze, Ryan Pini's performances at this year's Games earned him the 2015 Male Athlete of the Year (Oceania) award at the Association of National Olympic Committee's Inaugural Gala Awards night. In addition to this, Ryan's consistent performances over the past decade at the Pacific Games saw him elected by the athletes that participated at the 2015 Pacific Games as their representative on the Pacific Games Council. To be elected by your peers to represent them, is one of the highest accolades that any person can achieve and we are extremely proud of Ryan.

At Sir John Guise Stadium, Toea Wisil confirmed herself as sprint queen of the Pacific by winning Gold in the 100m, 200m, 400m and being a part of the Gold winning 4 by 400m relay team and Silver winning 4 by 100m relay team while Rellie Kaputin, a promising star of the future, won 3 Gold medals in the Long Jump, Triple Jump and High Jump competitions.

Our Golf team was the most successful team at the Games by winning all 4 Gold medals on offer in the Men's single and team events and the Women's single and team events.

Our Touch Football Team, who ranked in the top three at the World Cup earlier in the year, backed up that performance to win Gold in both the men's and women's event and then just missed out on the Gold in the mixed event, finishing with Silver.

The pair of Moha Mea and Richard Kilarupa turned heads in the Men's Beach Volleyball event as they went undefeated to claim the Gold, defeating more fancied teams of Cook Islands, Vanuatu and Fiji.

Our Women's football team behind captain Deslyn Siniu defended their Pacific Games title for the third time running, winning their fourth successive Gold after beating New Caledonia 1-0 in the final and in the process booking an Olympic Play-off spot against New Zealand. Deslyn read the Athletes' Oath at the Opening Ceremony of the Games and has competed in all four Gold medal winning teams for the Women's Football team.



The Women's Va'a team created history on the water by upsetting World Champions Tahiti and winning PNG's first Va'a Gold in the V12 event.

With the team largely comprised of SP Hunters players, our Rugby 9s team dominated the competition and showed the Pacific why PNG is Rugby League crazy with a Gold medal performance in the 9s competition.

PNG's tennis star Abigail Tere-Apisa won 4 Gold medals in the Women's singles, Women's Doubles, Women's Team and Mixed doubles events. She was ably assisted by her sister Marcia, nieces Violet and Patricia and Mark Gibbons.

Our boxing team was another that did extremely well, collectively winning 8 Gold medals, 1 Silver and 2 Bronze. Likewise the Bodybuilding team dominated their competition and took out 5 Gold medals, 4 Silvers and 1 Bronze

Special mention must go to Para-athlete Vero Nime who won a Silver in the seated table tennis and then a Bronze in the ambulant shot put events.

PNG's sporting excellence however, did not end at the Pacific Games and continued with the young Team that went for the Commonwealth Youth Games which took place in September in Apia, Samoa. The most successful of them was boxer, Thadeus Katua who maintained his great form from the Pacific Games to win Papua New Guinea's first ever Gold medal at a Youth Commonwealth Games after defeating his opponent from Ireland in the final. Team PNG also won two Bronze medals in the Tennis competition with Violet Apisa winning herself an individual medal in the Singles competition and then another with playing partner Mathew Stubbings in the Mixed competition.

The PNG Olympic Committee set its Vision in late 2010 to be the best performing nation at the 2015 Pacific Games and the achievements of Team PNG this year are something which the entire nation should share in and be proud of. Throughout this journey, the Government of PNG and the PNG Sports Foundation have been key supporters of Team PNG. The funding made available by the Government via the 'Go 4 Gold' program was instrumental in Team PNG's success and allowed it to support National Federations with training camps and participation in tournaments, both locally and internationally, as well as appointing expert coaches to support their teams. The funding also provided the opportunity for the PNG Olympic Committee to establish its High Performance Division which was set up in 2014.

This success would certainly not have been possible without the support of the National Federations and their administrators. The majority of these administrators which include coaches and managers are volunteers who give up their own personal time for the love of their sport and the desire to see it and its athletes succeed. This passion and dedication is what allows sports to exist in the country and the PNG Olympic Committee and Team PNG are truly grateful.

While all the excitement and adulation surrounding the performance of Team PNG and its athletes at Games took place, the PNG Olympic Committee continued to stage its annual fundraising activities which are integral to the participation of Team PNG at international and regional sporting events like the



Pacific, Commonwealth and Olympic Games. This year, the Trukai Fun Run was held during the Pacific Games with nearly 100 000 Trukai Fun Run shirt being sold. The PNGOC also held its annual Prime Ministers Golf Challenge with 39 teams participating in Port Moresby and 32 participating in Lae. All funds raised from these activities went towards Team PNG's participation in the 2015 Pacific Games and Commonwealth Youth Games.

Team PNG was also able to elect new members to the PNG Athletes' Commission. The Athletes' Commission is established as a working committee of the PNG Olympic Committee set up to provide the perspective of an athlete to the organization and its other working committees. The Chair and Deputy Chair of the Athletes' Commission also sit on the Executive Board of the Olympic Committee as full voting members. Karo Lelai and Ryan Pini were elected by the newly formed Athletes' Commission as Chair and Deputy Chair respectively.

In addition to this, the PNGOC also successfully commenced its Managing Olympic Sports Organisation ('MOSO') and Olympic Values ('OVEP') education programs. MOSO is designed to train sports administrators in the competencies of managing a sports organization. There are eleven participants in this edition of MOSO but the PNG Olympic Committee is hoping to grow this number in future editions of the program. OVEP was launched to promote the values of the Olympic Movement and the ideals that sport teaches. The PNG Olympic Committee believes strongly that teaching the Olympic Values of Respect, Friendship and Excellence to the general population, particularly young people, can create a better society.

Both of these programs are precursors to the fresh strategic direction that the PNG Olympic Committee will be taking in the coming years.

Since the completion of the Pacific Games, the organisation has consulted its members and other key stakeholders such as coaches, managers, corporate partners, the PNG Sports Foundation and athletes in relation to its strategic plan to inform the organisations strategic objectives its next operating period from 2016-2020.

The consultative process culminated in the formation of a new Vision for the organisation which is to inspire and unite Papua New Guineans through Sporting Excellence and Success. During the 2016 – 2020 period, this new strategic direction will see a renewed focus on enhancing the capacity of our National (sporting) Federations, Games success for Team PNG, stronger partnerships with our stakeholders and providing more opportunities for athletes to inspire - all contributing to the PNGOC becoming the best performing NOC in the Pacific.

To guide the organisation in the achievement of its strategic targets will be its Values of Honesty, Excellence, Respect and Openness (H.E.R.O).

With this renewed Vision, the PNGOC is more determined and as passionate as ever to deliver on its objectives and is excited about moving into this new era.



These achievements would not have been made possible without the support of our partners which included the National Government, Ministry of Sports, PNG Sports Foundation, Pacific Games Authority, 2015 Pacific Games Organising Committee and also our family of corporate partners which we would like to acknowledge:

- SP Brewery
- Trukai Industries
- Air Niugini
- Pacific MMI
- The National
- National Gaming Control Board
- ExxonMobil PNG Limited
- Coral Sea Hotels
- IBS
- Theodist
- Media Partners
- Remington Technologies
- CHM

Throughout the year, the media has also played a very important role in disseminating sports-related news and information if it wasn't for their tireless efforts not only during the Games but in the lead up to and since, many of Team PNG's efforts would not have reached the Nation. The PNG Olympic Committee was also pleased to have facilitated the formation of PNG Sports Journalist Association and we look forward to working with the Interim Chair, Ephata Samuel and the Association closely in 2016.

Above all, we would like to thank the people of Papua New Guinea for the support and inspiration throughout the year. In 2016, PNGOC will embark on another sporting journey and for Team PNG, this will be to the Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. We welcome you all to be a part of Team PNG and join us for what will surely be another exciting ride.

The PNG Olympic Committee wishes you all a safe and Merry Christmas and a prosperous 2016.

Please note, the offices of the PNG Olympic Committee will close on 18 December 2015 and reopen on 4 January 2016.

You can follow the PNG Olympic Committee and Team PNG on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter ('@pngolycom', '@teampng')

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