



Mixed-gender swimming relays will be part of the calendar during the 2010 Youth Games. TODAY FILE PHOTO

Mixed-gender events to keep Youth Olympics fun

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THE sports programme for the inaugural Youth Olympic Games, to be held here in August 2010, was firmed up on Wednesday (*yesterday morning, Singapore time*).

And Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee (SYOGOC) chairman Ng Ser Miang promises the programme will be “exciting”, as well as “well-balanced”.

The standout new feature of the Olympiad is the introduction of mixed-gender team events for archery, athletics (medley relay), cycling (combined-BMX mountain bike-road event), equestrian, fencing, judo, modern pentathlon (relay), swimming (relay), table tennis, tennis and triathlon (relay).

Some sports will be modified to suit the Youth Olympics, with basketball now a three-on-three event.

“It’s a good programme that will be interesting and exciting for young athletes in 2010. It’s well-balanced,” said IOC executive board member Ng from Lausanne, Switzerland, after the first day of the annual year-end International Olympic Committee (IOC) executive board meeting.

“This is really interesting, and it will also promote the Olympic values, as well as cross-cultural understanding.

“The National Olympic Committees (NOCs) would be now be in a position to focus on the preparation for the sports competitions of the Youth Olympic Games.”

According to the IOC, the Games — to be held from Aug 14 to 26, 2010 — will feature 3,594 athletes from 205 countries competing in 26 sports comprising of 201 events — of which 27 will be for athletes aged 15 to 16 years, 111 for athletes aged 16 to 17, and 63 for athletes aged 17 to 18.

Each individual sport will feature at least four athletes from each participating country to preserve Games’ universality. Each NOC is also allowed a maximum of 70 athletes in individual sports regardless of how many qualified.

While other protocol issues were not discussed, medals will be awarded.

“There will be medals, and medal ceremonies, but what form it will take would be something else to be addressed,” said Ng.

“It hasn’t been decided, but it will be in keeping with the concept of the Youth Olympic Games: Fun, lively and exciting.”