

Singapore's mark on the Games

Country launches global scholarship for teens to study at Sports School

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SINGAPORE — With 201 days to go before the Youth Olympic Games (YOG), organisers yesterday revealed details of a scholarship programme that will be inaugural hosts Singapore's lasting legacy to the world's young athletes.

The scholarships, to study and train at the Singapore Sports School, will be awarded at every YOG to a deserving young athlete between the age of 13 and 15 from each of the five continents and the Republic.

Ng Ser Miang, chairman of the Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee (Syogoc), said the first batch of six scholarships will be awarded during the first Games here from Aug 14-26.

They are supported and fully funded by the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, and targeted at seven Olympic sports — aquatics, athletics, badminton, football, golf, sailing and table tennis.

Ng, who is also a vice-president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC),

said the first batch of successful scholars are scheduled to begin their four-year term at the Sports School next January. He said the scholarships will include another two years of the school's International Baccalaureate programme for those academically inclined.

The Syogoc chairman was speaking to the media at the Singapore Cadet Fencing World Cup 2010, which is part of the on-going Friendship Games at the Suntec International Convention Centre, where the Republic's Clive Lew, 16, won a gold in the boys' individual sabre.

"This is going to be one of the legacies of the Games in Singapore," said Ng. "The YOG is about sports, culture and education, and it is something Singapore believes in. So, the scholarships will continue linking Singapore to the Olympic movement and the youth of the world by bringing them here to learn, train and to take part in sports."

The scholarships will cover the athletes' school fees, accommodation, training and airfare to their home countries after the first two years.

Applications, which are not restricted to YOG athletes, opened yesterday and will close on April 16, and Ng said he is confident of a substantial response as the IOC are helping to promote the programme to



Mr Ng Ser Miang (centre, in white) watching a few rounds of fencing among teams contesting the Friendship Games yesterday. OOI BOON KEONG

their 205 member countries.

Richard Tan, Syogoc director of corporate planning, said that apart from age, applicants must also show they have a high potential to succeed in their chosen sport as well as studies.

The final selection will be made by a panel comprising staff from the Sports School and the Singapore National Olympic Council. Syogoc will also be represented this year.

The seven sports, said Tan, were chosen because they are the only Olympic disciplines currently offered at the school, but others may be considered when they become available.

"What is more important is that these are also the sports in which we are confident of providing the best training and quality coaches," he said.

Ng believes the foreign athletes will also benefit students at the Sports School as they can help improve performance standards through increased competition. He also hopes the scholars will continue to represent their countries while training and studying in Singapore.

"I hope they will do well and represent their countries because we are training them and it will show that the Singapore Sports School is doing a great job," he said.