

Pinay leads bid for women boxing in 2012 Olympics

by JOAQUIN HENSON
Philstar.com

MANILA — AIBA president Dr. Ching-Kuo Wu said the other day the organization's only female executive committee member Nieva Tesoro Embuldeniya, a Filipina, is playing a vital role in the effort to recognize women's boxing as an Olympic sport.

Wu told ABAP president Ricky Vargas, secretary-general Patrick Gregorio and executive director Ed Picson in a meeting in Taipei that the IOC will decide whether or not to include women's boxing in the 2012 London Olympics during its Congress in Copenhagen on Oct. 3-5.

"We are working hard to try to put forward a proposal the IOC cannot refuse," said Wu. "I have launched a task force to execute several projects to promote women's boxing. The team will work with AIBA headquarters to pro-

duce all promotional materials and participate in various meetings for the success of our mission."

Women's boxing made its SEA Games debut in 2005. It is not in the Asian Games calendar but if the IOC allows the event for London, the sport will likely be introduced in the Guangzhou Asiad next year.

Wu said at the moment, the concentration is to lobby for women's boxing in the Olympics.

Embuldeniya, vice president of the AIBA Women's Commission, was singled out by Wu as a key contributor in the campaign. She was the lead technical delegate at the fifth World Championships for women



Nieva Tesoro Embuldeniya

held in Ningbo City, China, last November. The tournament drew 218 athletes from 41 countries with the Philippines claiming a silver and two bronze medals.

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Pacquiao balances boxing, family life

by OLIVER TEVES & PAUL ALEXANDER
APWriters

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Manny Pacquiao is losing. And he's having a good time.

The intensive training regime for his next fight, on May 2 against Ricky Hatton in Las Vegas, is a couple of weeks away. Now the man considered by many to be the world's best pound-for-pound boxer can relax and take a break from the relentless demands on him: As family man, actor, advertiser and fledgling politician, not to mention the requests for his autograph, his money, his mere presence.

The scene is a concrete basketball court, swept of pebbles, in hardscrabble Labangal. That's a neighborhood of mostly dirt roads where the 30-year-old Pacquiao grew up poor in General Santos City, in the southern Philippines.

He and a group of friends are taking on all comers in five-on-five, first to 15 baskets. Word spreads fast, drawing teams from other areas, some players shod only in flip-flops. Friendly side bets are made.

A hundred or so people, accustomed to seeing Pacquiao come and play during breaks in his training—he paid for the basket supports and

rims—watch as late afternoon turns to dusk and the lights come on.

The only real signs that this is anything other than a regular Saturday night game are three camera crews and three armed security guards—two totting submachine guns—flanking the court.

The Philippines is known as Asia's kidnap capital and home to long-running Muslim and communist insurgencies, not to mention criminal gangs, and it's no secret that Pacquiao earned at least \$11 million for pounding Oscar de La Hoya into submission in December.

For three-and-a-half hours, Pacquiao plays with only brief breaks to towel off, grab sips of water or take a call on his cell phone. He's not going full speed, but he draws cheers when he hits a shot from the top of the key or makes his signature move, slamming the ball off the backboard then grabbing it and making a layup.

Rain ends play at 8 p.m., and Pacquiao heads to his former house, where his brother Bobby lives now, to change from his sweaty No. 17 jersey. His respite over, he has to head home to his sprawling mansion. Guests are waiting. ■

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