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RP citizenship sought for Roach

by LIRA DALANGIN-FERNADEZ
 Inquirer.net

IT'S time for the man behind Manny Pacquiao's legendary triumphs in the ring to take center stage.

Just as everybody appeared to be in awe of the Filipino boxing champion's feat, a lawmaker has proposed to give due recognition to Pacquiao's long-time coach, American Freddie Roach.

In filing House Resolution 1142, Congressman Edgar San Luis of Laguna called on the House of Representatives to confer honorary Philippine citizenship on Roach.

"Behind Manny Pacquiao's legendary boxing triumphs is his 49-year-old American coach Freddie Roach, who over the years has masterfully sharpened the skills of the Filipino boxing icon to become one of the greatest fighters in the history of the sport," the congressman said in his resolution.

Roach, who has been Pacquiao's trainer-coach for years, "has equally shown his deep understanding of our people . . . that he has easily become a part of the local community without as much raising any negative issue," San Luis said. ■



A congressman has filed a resolution to make Manny Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach as an honorary Filipino citizen. Inquirer.net Photo

Calderon completes historic ride

by NELSON BELTRAN
 Philstar.com

BAGUIO—Smart Buddy's Joel Calderon teamed up with his fellow Nueva Ecijano riders to easily defend his hold of the "MVP" yellow jersey and complete a stirring triumph in the final stage of the 2009 Padyak Pinoy Tour of Champions last May 15.

What was expected to be a climactic finish turned out to be a virtual victory ride for Calderon with provincemates Eric Feliciano, Oscar Rindole and Bernard Luzon, safely towing him to the finish.

Baler Ravina, a Pangasinense, was able to launch an attack only in the last 15 kilometers, ruling the punishing Baguio-to-Baguio run for the second time in a month.

Ravina, winner of the same stage in the recently held Liguigaz Tour of Luzon, copped the King of the Mountain honors to go with his fifth-place finish in the overall individual championship.

Except for Irish Valenzuela, no other title contenders dared to challenge Calderon.

"I didn't put up a fight. It would just be a waste of time with the Nueva Ecijanos riding as one to protect Joel," said Lucien Lloyd Reynante, finishing runner-up to Calderon.

A big consolation for Reynante was his American Vinyl team's victory in the team championship. The UBE Media team of Rindole placed second, followed by Tanduay, Columbia Sportswear, Smart Buddy, Burger King, Gin Kapitan, Wow Magic Sing, Air2100, U-Freight, Go 21, Cargohaus, Solarlina and Navray.

"I asked my provincemates for their help, and they obliged. We all wanted to bring home the championship in our province," said Calderon who

made history for being the first Novo Ecijano to emerge tour champion since Armando Catalan's triumph in the 17-stage Marlboro Tour in 1988.

"They carried me through the flat lands and didn't abandon me in the mountain climbs. They sacrificed their own title bids to

guarantee a victory by a Nueva Ecijano. This is not just my victory but victory by the province," added the proud Guimba, Nueva Ecija son.

"With Joel's victory, we also felt winning the championship," said Rindole, also from Guimba.

Valenzuela, a Bicolano who's based in Pangasinan, made his move in the first Baguio climb via Naguilian, breaking away with the help of Julius Diaz.

But Diaz faded away early, leaving Valenzuela in a lonely solo ride for hours until he himself lost energy after passing through the Lion's head in Kenon road.

Valenzuela was a spent force the rest of the way, struggling for a ninth-place finish in the stage. His overnight deficit of 13 minutes and 16 seconds behind Calderon even increased by five minutes.

Calderon, who competed in this tour on a Trek bike borrowed from a nephew, submitted an aggregate time of 29:52'33 in the 1,229.30-km event, winning by one minute and 39 seconds over Reynante.

Feliciano was third, followed by Rindole, Ravina, Ronnel Hualda, Valenzuela, Santy Barnachea, Renato Sembrano and Warren Davadilla.

Calderon, a farmer during the day and tricycle driver at night, won P100,000, some of which he's sharing with the other Nueva Ecijano riders. ■

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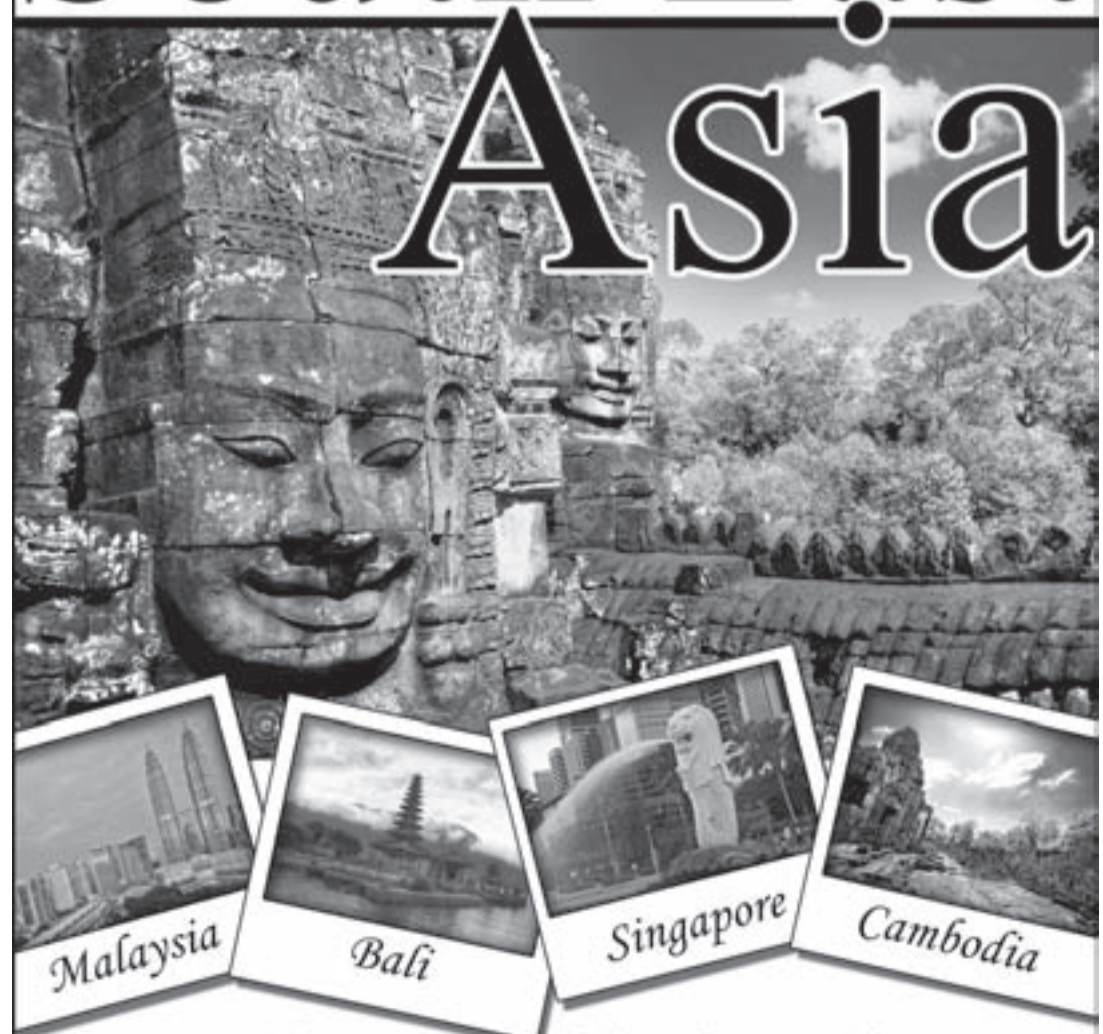
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