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"NOC SRI LANKA - CRYSBRO NEXT CHAMP" INITIATES PHASE II

13 Athletes set to bring victory to Sri Lanka on International Stage

Crysbro conceived the vision of "Next Champ" almost a half a decade ago, but it blossomed into a full scale junior athletic strategy in 2019 with the advent of the NOC SL - CRYSBRO NEXT CHAMP initiative where programme supported twenty fledgling junior athletes who had the promise to deliver locally and internationally.

In reality, at the end of the first phase it proved that envisioning has borne the desired result and during the explanation we will dwell upon the details.

Now, following up on the success and high-potential of the previous edition, Phase II of the NOC SRI LANKA - CRYSBRO NEXT CHAMP -

initiative is once again shining a deserving light on Sri Lanka's young, committed and active talent who reside across the rural regions of the country, this time with a 13-strong roster consisting of promising athletes from across the rural communities of Sri Lanka.

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No	Athlete	Sport	Event
1	Nethmi Ahinsa (F)	Wrestling	53kg
2	Chamodya Keshani (F)	Wrestling	55kg
3	Amaya Ranasinghe (F)	Taekwondo	42kg
4	Dumindu Abeywickrema (M)	Badminton	Single
5	RL Sachini Rajika (F)	Weightlifting	55kg
6	HA Minuwanda de Silva (M)	Weightlifting	55kg
7	MDM Premarathna (F)	Weightlifting	45kg
8	Nilupul Pehesara (M)	Track and Field	High Jump
9	Mithun Raj (M)	Track and Field	Discuss Throw, Shot Put, Hammer Throw
10	W. Thusen Silva (M)	Track and Field	Pole Vault
11	K.L.A. Akalanka (M)	Track and Field	400m H
12	Ranindi Pehansa (F)	Track and Field	High Jump
13	K.M.D. Dharshana (M)	Track and Field	400m H

An empowering and futuristic initiative from inception, NOC SRI LANKA – CRYSBRO NEXT CHAMP is the result of a successful collaboration between the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka and Crysbro, a 100% Sri Lankan-owned agriculture-based Group of Companies that is active in rural areas in the country. The announcement was made at the Sri Lanka Olympic House Auditorium on August 17, 2023, and was attended by key individuals representing both organisations, as well as members of the local media.

Explaining the advent of phase II, NOC Sri Lanka Secretary General Maxwell De Silva stated that, “As we saw with the immense success of our first phase, we know that Sri Lanka is blessed with an abundance of very talented and resilient young people who haven’t received the support they deserve, in order to excel in their athletic interests. The NOC SRI LANKA – CRYSBRO NEXT CHAMP initiative has therefore been reignited with a second phase, and we are proud to announce that we have identified 13 gifted athletes who will receive the support they need to propel their skill and growth to bring further victory to Sri Lanka and shed light on the more deserving and capable youth potential in the country.

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*Maxwell de Silva
NOC SL Secretary General*

An exhilarated, Crysbro Marketing Manager Amores Sellar commenting on the success of Phase I noted, “The immense feeling of pride for our country and the forthcoming generations with the NOC SRI LANKA – CRYSBRO NEXT CHAMP initiative is very strong, as we championed this area of identifying and supporting the success of aspiring young athletes who were hidden in the rural areas of Sri Lanka, and that effort has grown into a national treasure. We are very thankful to the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka, and are excited to once again join forces and play an integral role in bringing pride, success and international recognition to our country. We wish all the very best to our new athletes and hope they dominate the international stage.”

The NOC SRI LANKA – CRYSBRO NEXT CHAMP initiative supports and nurtures the growth and development of young and aspiring sportsmen and women, providing them with food supplements, clothing, sporting gear, equipment, training, and a monthly wage to propel them towards successful sporting careers and bring pride to the nation.

Phase One of the NOC SRI LANKA – CRYSBRO NEXT CHAMP initiative discovered high-potential athletes like Nethmi Ashinsa, who earned a bronze medal at the Commonwealth Games in 2022 - the first medal for Sri Lanka in the Wrestling event at the Commonwealth Games 2022. Also, Tharushi Karunarathne brought home Gold from the 800m Women’s Sprinting event at the Asian Athletic Championship 2023.

Besides the programme also supported a number of Crysbro Scholarship holders to develop their skills overseas in a scheme outside the main programme.

*Pre-Competition Sports & Exercise Medicine Workshop
for 19th Asian Games 2022 and other International Competitions*

ENHANCING PERFORMANCE & ENSURING SAFETY



In the realm of sports, success isn't solely about raw talent; it's about harnessing science, knowledge, and holistic well-being. Such was the focus of the Pre-Competition Sports & Exercise Medicine Workshop held on August 19, 2023, at the Sri Lanka Olympic House. This workshop, a collaborative effort between the Medical Committee and Gender Equity Committee of the National Olympic Committee Sri Lanka (NOC SL), aimed to equip athletes and officials with the tools necessary for excelling in the 19th Asian Games and other international contests.

With a turnout of over 60 participants including athletes and officials, the event resonated as a crucial stepping stone in their journey to international podiums.

The first segment, conducted by the Medical Committee of NOC Sri Lanka, delved into the scientific intricacies that underpin exceptional performance through a series of impactful sessions.

Prof. Ranil Jayawardena emphasized the significance of nutrition in optimizing an athlete's potential while Dr. Chamara Wijesinghe's presentation explored the often-neglected aspect of mental strength in sports, providing athletes with essential tools for maintaining mental equilibrium. It was followed by Prof. Aranjan Karunanayake's session, highlighting the importance of proactive measures in safeguarding athletes from injury setbacks where techniques for athlete screening and injury prevention strategies were shared.

Then, Prof. Chathuranga Ranasinghe elaborated on recovery strategies that not only enhance performance but also prevent injuries and maintain overall health and he also provided essential updates on Covid-19 protocols, ensuring the safety of athletes remained a top priority. The session series concluded with Dr. Rishitha Wijesuriya shedding light on the anti-doping measures integral to maintaining the integrity of sports.

The sessions culminated in a dynamic Q&A segment that enabled participants to engage directly with the experts.

Dr. Eshan Jayaweera, Chair of the Medical Committee of NOC Sri Lanka, encapsulated the workshop's essence by emphasizing the symbiotic relationship between talent and science. He commented, "The session was mainly targeting the elite athletes who have been selected to go for the Asian Games and other international events. So I was happy that there was quite a good turnover here.

"What we need to realize is all these elite athletes are talented – that's why they are here today. But talent alone is not going to take them to their next step, which is to compete at the international level. So to compete at an international level and when our target is to win a medal for the country, you have to compete with elite athletes who are at that level in other countries."

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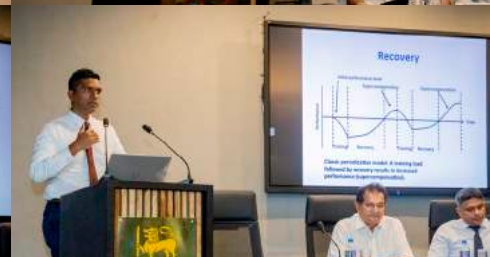


“For most of those athletes from other countries nowadays, their talent of course is there but there are a whole lot of other things that go behind the talent – like the science behind the sport. So apart from your talent, the rest of it is that science behind the sport and training. So once you have enhanced that and developed that, that is the time that you can even think of that jump in that small step which gets you into that elite level.” He highlighted the pivotal role of science-backed knowledge in propelling athletes towards international glory. Nutrition, mental resilience, injury prevention, recovery techniques, and ethical conduct, he asserted, collectively mold athletes into well-rounded contenders on the global stage.

The latter part of the workshop, spearheaded by Ms. Niloo Jayathilake, Chairperson of the Gender Equity Committee of NOC Sri Lanka, centered on the concept of "Safe Sport."

This section aimed to foster an environment of safety, respect, inclusivity, and gender equity within the realm of sports. Ms. Reshika Udugampola, Member of the Gender Equity Committee and Deputy Chef de Mission for the 19th Asian Games, elaborated on Safe Sport practices in a comprehensive presentation. The workshop concluded with panel discussion featuring Mr. Suresh Subramaniam - President, NOC Sri Lanka, Ms. Niloo Jayathilake, Ms. Caryll Tozer - Chairperson, Complaints Committee of NOC Sri Lanka and Ms. Reshika Udugampola. This session facilitated a deeper understanding of fostering safe and all-encompassing sporting cultures.

Overall, the event marked a pivotal step towards athletic excellence and respect within Sri Lanka's sporting community. As athletes embark on representing their nation, they carry not just talent but also strategies to excel, embodying their country's pride.



FANNING THE FLAMES OF ASIAN GAMES VICTORY

NOC SL Presents a Brand New Game Plan for Athlete Support



The journey to the Asian Games is not just a matter of physical skill; it's a journey of passion, dedication, and personal growth. Recognizing the need to provide holistic support to its athletes, the National Olympic Committee of Sri Lanka (NOC SL) embarked on a groundbreaking initiative that promises to reshape the way athletes experience the Asian Games.

By conducting site visits and engaging with athletes and coaches, the NOC SL aims to personalize the journey for every participant, from the pre-Games preparation to the post-Games reflections.

Leading this pioneering initiative is the Chef De Mission of the Sri Lankan contingent, Mr. Nishanthe Piyasena. Alongside him, the NOC SL HQ team members, Air Cmdr. Erandika Gunawardena and Mr. Ruwan Alahakoon, have embarked on a journey that goes beyond mere preparation.

Their vision is to weave the Asian Games experience into the fabric of each athlete's life, creating an environment that nurtures not just physical abilities but also emotional resilience and mental well-being.

The site visits orchestrated by the NOC SL HQ team are not merely routine check-ins; they represent a profound commitment to understand, empower, and uplift the athletes who carry the nation's hopes on their shoulders.

During these visits, HQ team members had candid conversations with athletes and coaches, delving into their aspirations, motivations, and personal challenges. This allowed the team to gain a deeper understanding of each individual's journey and tailor the support offered to their unique needs.

One of the key aspects of this initiative is the screening process conducted to gather comprehensive data about each athlete.

This process is not limited to the athletes' sporting history and achievements; it delves into their past experiences, struggles, and triumphs.

This meticulous data collection serves as the foundation for creating a support system that goes beyond the confines of the playing field.

Armed with this information, the NOC SL HQ team is better equipped to provide guidance, mentorship, and resources that can make a tangible difference in an athlete's journey.

Recognizing the pivotal role that physical and mental well-being play in an athlete's success, the NOC Sri Lanka brought in Prof. Chathuranga Ranasinghe, Member of the Medical Committee of NOC Sri Lanka and the only professor in Sport and Exercise Medicine in Sri Lanka.

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The inclusion of a medical screening process underscores the holistic approach of this initiative and is a testament to the NOC SL's commitment to ensuring that athletes are not just physically fit but also mentally and emotionally resilient.

Discussions center around immediate health concerns and overall well-being, creating a safe space for athletes to openly address any challenges they might be facing.

The NOC SL HQ team's approach is aligned with the modern understanding of athletes' needs. While physical training is undoubtedly crucial, the mental and emotional dimensions of an athlete's journey are equally important.

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By fostering an environment where athletes are heard, understood, and supported, the NOC Sri Lanka hopes to sow the seeds for a new era of athlete development.

Moving forward, the data collected through these site visits and screening processes will play a pivotal role in shaping the support strategies for the Asian Games athletes.

From targeted training regimens to mental health resources, the insights gained will serve as the blueprint for a comprehensive support system that addresses every facet of an athlete's journey.

