

## **First Global Filipino Sports & 32<sup>nd</sup> NASA Easter Sports Games in Sydney hailed a success**

- By Mila Cichello (Melbourne)

The **1<sup>st</sup> Global Filipino Sports Festival and 32<sup>nd</sup> National Australian-Filipino Sports Association (NASA) Easter Games held on 22 - 23 March 2008** at Kevin Betts Stadium in Mt Druitt was hailed an outstanding success by Sydney and interstate Filipino communities.

Ten basketball teams from Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne, Gold Coast, Sydney and Singapore participated in the Open Division: ABS CBN Sydney Amigos, NBA Brisbane, Melbourne Integrated Sports Club Inc (MISCI) Melbourne, Aeon International Travel Sydney, Gold Coast Filos, Singapore BA Distillers, FSA- Adelaide and Northwest Filos Sydney. Two teams participated in the Under18 Division: MISCI Juniors Melbourne and Aeon Travel Youth Sydney.

The 2008 event host is Philippine- Australian Sports & Culture Inc (PASCI) whose officers and volunteers worked wonders in arranging visas, airport transfers, accommodation at Assumption Conference Centre in Plumpton, cooked meryendas, breakfast, lunch and dinner over the Easter week end.

"PASCI is unique because it evolved from necessity," says Manny Castillo, PASCI President. "The Philippine Australian Sport Council (PASC) was formed in Bankstown by a group of volunteers to organise major sports events for Filipino migrants in metropolitan Sydney."

"From the humble Palarong Pilipino of basketball in 1976, we then organised golf, table tennis, tenpin bowling, chess, darts, tennis, softball and briefly, even swimming." adds Danny Garcia, fellow founder and current Vice President of PASCI,

PASCI volunteers fondly recounted how in time PASCI led the growing Filipino community in organizing cultural shows, charity fundraising and annual fiestas in addition to sport tournaments. To better reflect its sports and cultural programs, the organisation's name was changed to Philippine Association for Sports & Culture Inc (PASCI) in 2002. PASCI remains the most responsive and successful Filipino community organisation in Australia, receiving various awards from Australian governments and from the President of the Philippines.

The same PASCI vision founded NASA in 1976, an affiliation of Fil-Aust interstate sports clubs. The NASA Interstate State Directors have since taken turns hosting the annual Easter sports fest in a different capital city. The year 2008 marks NASA's 32<sup>nd</sup> year and is historic because it heralds the beginning of Global Filipino Sports. Current NASA Directors Manny Castillo (Sydney), Sammy Riego (Melbourne), Rene Dino (GC), Ramon Cruz (Adelaide) and Billy Torrano (Brisbane, on behalf of Leony Santos) warmly welcomed Coach "Macky" Macaambac and his Singapore Distillers Team (**photo below on left**) into the fold Marino Salinas (Perth), busy organising key players for USA basketball trials, sent a team representative to cover the event.



"There is a large community of 125,000 registered Filipino workers in Singapore", shares Distillers Coach Macky who is Project Engineer with Nippon Express. "That does not include the TNTs", quickly quip two other young team mates, all engineer or IT consultants in Singapore. The community boasts some 40 Filo basketball teams, registered with Filipino Friendship Basketball League. The Distillers Team impressed with their stylish sports gear, team spirit and off-court discipline.

The 2008 Games were opened by Councillor Charles Lowles from Blacktown City Council and The Hon Louise Markus MP (Federal member for Greenway). Ms Markus praised the Melbourne Juniors contingent (**photo below right**) for welcoming Sudanese refugees to their club and bringing a multicultural team to Sydney. Staunch community leader Lolita Farmer OAM highlighted the unifying power of global sports and compered the opening, while Ray Policapio, anchor of Filo sports in Sydney, expertly steered the 100 players through their paces (for more pics and the Ray Reports, go to [www.northwestfilos.wetpaint.com](http://www.northwestfilos.wetpaint.com)).



After the Saturday Open Age round robins, two Sydney teams, Gold Coast and Melbourne emerged as top contenders. In the Sunday semi- heats, Gold Coast (53) gave Sydney Amigos a run for their money but the GC excellent teamwork was overtaken by Amigo's tactical defence (62). North West Sydney (60) tenaciously trailed the high shooting MISCI Melbourne (65) in a dramatic seesaw.



The exciting Sunday final showdown saw defending champion Sydney Amigos without Team Captain Cromwell Alvarez (who suffered a wrist injury) fronting MISCI Melbourne (who lost Team Captain Ivan Carlos and forward Bradwyn Guinto to ankle injury in the semis). Sydney Amigo's shooting skills (49) prevailed over MISCI Melbourne's first half lead (30) (**photo at left shows the two teams after the games**). So Sydney held on to the NASA Perpetual Cup donated by Secretary Lito Atienza,

from Philippine for Department of Natural Resources, and the coveted Most Valuable Player Trophy was awarded to V Alcantara (Sydney). In the Under18 best-of-three games, Aeon Travel Youth Sydney and MISCI Junior Melbourne drew one win each. On the Sunday finals, MISCI Melbourne (49) dominated the game until Aeon Travel snatched the Youth Championship Trophy in dramatic minutes before the final siren (53).

In other Easter Sports, Saturday **tennis** at Parramatta Tennis Courts was cancelled due to inclement weather. The Sunday **Golf** at Georges River Golf Club fared much better weather-wise, with the Golf Perpetual Cups going to champions Marsden Social Golf Club (Team) and Danny Martinez (Individual). In **tenpin bowling** at the Blacktown AMF Centre, GloCom Communications Sydney won the day and plucky Team Singapore proudly took home the Tenpin Bowling Runner up Trophy on board the plane next day.

In a finale, the Sunday Awards Night was held at FunHaus Restaurant, Mt Druitt where trophies were presented to the victors, teams vowed to return stronger for **Adelaide 2009** and a zillion thanks given to the dedicated local and interstate volunteers who deliver interstate sports year after year!

**Postscript:** Marami pong salamat to Sister Salve, Manny, Thelma, Ruben, Virgie, Danny, Tita, Moises, Maria, Professor Gali, Tay Enteng Flores, Nay Trining, Lina, Tony, Richard and unnamed PASCI volunteers; to the players and coaches; to Raymond "sports commentator", to the young scorers and the referees, and the crowds who came to cheer the players on!