

Bring Out The Winner In You



By

Yeo Khee Leng

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“ We should dare to dream that one day, a unionist or an NTUC Team could step up to the rostrum to receive the winning medal in a national or international competition...”



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AYG, YOG, EPL, NBA, PGA, F1 - a mere jumble of letters? Not so... Most of us can easily identify that each set of letters represents an iconic sports event or association. Every day, we turn to the back pages of the dailies to find out how our favourite team did in the English Premier League. We follow the exploits of our favourite tennis player or golfer or F1 driver relentlessly. We cheer even louder when our local heroes triumph in regional and international tournaments.

Sports is big on emotional connection. Even if you are not a player, there may still be that connection with a sportsperson in your family. Maybe he is someone from your workplace, or even your neighbourhood. And if the occasion is really big like the Olympic Games, we have all gotten excited about someone from our country just making the finals, let alone taking home a medal.

Closer to NTUC, what if this champion is from your union? I dare say the sense of pride is going to be really huge.

Sports has always been a feature on the calendar of activities of unions. There had been times when it was on the up and up but there had been times when interests waned. In recent years, sports had probably taken somewhat of a back seat. Sporting programmes were few and far between. Back in early 2007, Secretary-General Lim Swee Say threw a challenge to bring back the heydays of union sports and his vision was to hold a "Union Olympics" when the new National Stadium is built.

Young NTUC immediately took up the challenge and organised SPORTACULAR that very year. Assisted by the Sports and Wellness Department of NTUC Club, this one-day event took place at ITE Simei and received overwhelming support from unions leaders and their athletes. The consensus was that they wanted more, in a bigger and bolder form.

NTUC Club, enthused by this success, then put together an ambitious nine-month sports calendar that packed in nine sporting events, of which some were one-day events, and most were in a league format to accommodate the

high participation numbers. Called U Games, the series attracted 40 unions participating in at least one sports event, with several unions supporting multiple events. All in all, more than 2,000 union members squared off in friendly, yet highly competitive games. The result is a sterling bonding experience and a community-building opportunity that is parallel to none.

The Grand Finale of U Games took place on 30 May 2009 at Downtown East in the form of a Mega Telematch. Although designed with a lot of fun in mind, it was nevertheless a highly competitive affair, at least, for five teams that had a chance for a shot at the overall Championship. In the end, it was the Singapore Bank Employees' Union that triumphed in the overall standings to be crowned Ultimate Inter-Union Challenge Champion.

Even before the current series of the U Games was over, union leaders and their athletes have clamoured for more sports events as a way to build, engage and strengthen our communities in the Labour Movement. NTUC Club is responding with a sharper focus on sports by launching a U Sports initiative to position sports as a key engagement engine to bring together union members from all sectors, regardless of age, gender and nationality.

Not only do we want to continue to promote a sports-for-all mindset that every union member can have fun while keeping healthy, we also want to help develop the full potential of individuals and teams to achieve ultimate sports excellence. We should dare to dream that one day, a unionist or an NTUC Team could step up to the rostrum to receive the winning medal in a national or international competition, and credit U Sports for having nurtured his interest in the sport, leading to his personal dedication to achieve his sports dream.

Will it be a bowler? A golfer? A table tennis player? A triathlete? Why not? There are so many opportunities to excel.

Let's support U Sports. We already work hard to make a good living. Let's play hard too for body fitness and mind finesse. Not to mention that it is great FUN too!