



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Friday, December 18<sup>th</sup>, 2020

### **PNG Mourns passing of Iwila Jacobs.**

The Papua New Guinea sporting fraternity mourns the passing of Iwila Jacobs. The Board and staff of the Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee share shock, a deep sense of loss and sadness on his sudden passing.

Selfless, epitomizing a humble dedicated volunteer serving at various times as an administrator, coach and referee in three (3) sports he built up over a span of five (5) decades since 1966 – Bodybuilding, Powerlifting and Weightlifting. He was instrumental in establishing the National Federations of these three sports.

He was Honorary Life Member with the Papua New Guinea Weightlifting Federation; received three SP Sport Awards for Distinguish Services to Sport in 1992; Coach of the Year in 1993 and Technical Official of the year in 1997; awarded the Logohu Medal and the International Weightlifting Federation's Distinguished Service Award of Merit Gold Star and National Honour Award Gold Medal.

Iwila competed as an athlete as part of Team PNG in the 1979 Suva South Pacific Games, the 1982 Commonwealth Games, and the 1983 Apia South Pacific Games.

He also competed in numerous Masters powerlifting events where he reigned as champion in the Australian National & Pacific Challenge 60kg Masters Category for 14 years until his retirement in 1999.

He was proactive in all facets of Powerlifting and Weightlifting and his career is splashed with his role as an Athlete, Coach, Referee and Judge, Trainer, Tournament Director, Team Manager and Administrator.

He coached weightlifting and powerlifting teams to Oceania and Commonwealth Championships, Pacific Games and to the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester, United Kingdom.

He was also an accomplished Referee for Powerlifting and Weightlifting at the Pacific Games, Oceania and Commonwealth Championships.

He went beyond our shores, helping establish the Oceania Powerlifting Federation and a founding member of the Oceania Weightlifting Federation.

With the sport of Bodybuilding, Iwila started out as an athlete and went onto achieving accreditation as one of PNG's first Bodybuilding Judge officiating at various regional events including the national championships and PNG Games.

While a Grade 4 child student, Iwila was physically and brutally attacked resulting in losing his hearing which in a turn of good fortune allowed him to get treatment in Australia, where he also attended Arthur Phillip High School in Parramatta, Australia. Most remember that he could only whisper when chatting. If he couldn't say what he wanted to, he simply wrote it down.

In hindsight, his life is testimony to the nation, to everyone, that he was, never was, despaired nor impeded by his hearing and speech challenges, but rather, one who rose above those and went on to lead a worthy life which we all celebrate now.

Iwila was an employee of High Performance Sport PNG and Technical Adviser on the PNG Weightlifting Federation Executive at the time of his passing.

PNG Olympic Committee describes Iwila's passing as a tremendous loss to PNG sport and the nation. He was a great ambassador for Papua New Guinea. His pioneering and spirit of excellence advanced PNG's success in the three sports he served Bodybuilding, Powerlifting and Weightlifting.

His accomplishments are a testament to the enduring passion, commitment and determination to excel and achieve as an athlete and official. His path blazed a trail for all those who wanted to push their limits and excel and inspiring champions and generations to come.

The PNG Olympic Committee Board, Staff and National Federations convey our heartfelt condolences to his family, the PNG Weightlifting and Powerlifting Federations; and High Performance Sport PNG.

Godspeed Iwila Jacobs

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