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Wednesday, 06 February 2022

IOC awards five athletes with Paris2024 Olympic Athlete Scholarships

The Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee (PNGOC) announced today that five (5) Team PNG Athletes have been awarded individual Olympic Athlete Scholarships (OAS) under the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Olympic Solidarity program towards assisting athletes qualify and compete at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

The five athletes include Morea Baru from the sport of Weightlifting, Rellie Kaputin and Sharon Toaka from Athletics and Ryan Maskelyne from Swimming.

The athletes were nominated for the scholarships based on PNGOC's athlete tiering system policy and in consultation with their respective National Federations.

The selection of athletes for the scholarships worldwide is made jointly by the International Olympic Committee and respective International Federations.

- Morea Baru – Weightlifting (Men's 61kg)
 - Participated at the Tokyo2020 Olympic Games
 - Gold medallist at the 2019 Pacific Games
- Rellie Kaputin – Athletics (Women's Long Jump)
 - Participated at the Tokyo2020 Olympic Games
 - Finished in the top 20 in Tokyo
 - Gold medallist at the 2019 Pacific Games
- John Ume – Boxing (Men's 63.5kg)
 - Gold medallist at the 2019 Pacific Games
 - Participated at the Tokyo2020 Olympic Games
- Sharon Toako – Athletics (Women's Javelin)
 - Gold medallist at the 2019 Pacific Games
- Ryan Maskelyne – Swimming (Men's 200m Breaststroke)
 - Silver medallist at the 2019 Pacific Games
 - Participated at the Tokyo2020 Olympic Games

This scholarship aims to assist the athletes with their quest of qualifying and competing at the Paris2024 Olympic Games.

The duration of the Scholarship will run from January 2022 through to the Paris2024 Olympic Games in August 2024 and can cover costs associated with preparing to qualify for Paris2024. These include training costs, competition costs, coaching costs and attending competitions and Olympic qualifiers.

In announcing the Olympic Athlete Scholarships, a delighted PNGOC President, Sir John Dawanincura said this was great news for our five athletes in qualifying for the Paris2024 Olympic Games.

“This Olympic Athlete Scholarship will greatly support these five athletes to pursue their dream of competing at the Paris2024 Olympic Games. Their preparations are already underway with Ryan and Morea in Australia and we’re looking to have Rellie and Sharon join their respective coaches in Australia. There are plans for John to also gain further sparring and competition experience with international sparring camps planned. These athletes can concentrate fully on training and preparing for the upcoming Games which include the Pacific Mini Games in Saipan in June 2022, the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham in July 2022 and the Pacific Games in the Solomon Islands in late 2023 and the Olympic Games in Paris in 2024”

Sir John also acknowledged the organisation’s Team PNG Performance Strategy 2021-2024 in this new strategic term as it ensures that the athletes, coaches and National Federations have adequate support in preparing for the respective Games.

She said that the PNGOC along with Olympic Solidarity ensured there was gender balance in the awarding of the scholarship to two (2) females and three (3) males.

“The PNGOC and the IOC is all about gender equality and have ensured that we support both genders equally. We wish the athletes all the best, we will support the athletes and their coaches and National Federations to prepare as best as possible and be able to meet the qualification requirements to qualify for Paris2024” Sir John said.

Morea, Rellie, John and Ryan competed at the Tokyo2020 Olympic Games with Sharon chasing her dream of competing at an Olympic Games.

Athlete comments:

Morea Baru - “I am honoured, and I know this Scholarship will help me for the preparations towards the Game's especially to qualify for the Olympic Games and the lead up competitions”

Ryan Maskelyne - “I feel very lucky to be receiving this scholarship. It will mean that a great deal of pressure will be taken off me and allow me to concentrate on my swimming. It will go a long way in assisting me in my preparation for the Paris Olympics where I hope to make PNG proud”.

The IOC approved the qualification system for the 32 sports this week where it outlines the various ways in which athletes and National Olympic Committees can qualify for the Paris2024 Olympic Games. These criteria’s will be released over the coming weeks.

The first version of the Paris2024 competition session schedule was also released this week.

The 2024 Olympic Games will be held in Paris, France from 26 July – 11 August 2024.

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