



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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VA'A AILIMA HONORED

From canoeing on a dug-out village canoe in Kalo village with no outrigger to representing Papua New Guinea in a Va'a Outrigger canoe, meet Team PNG's 2022 Northern Marianas Pacific Mini Games Flag Bearer, Ailima Kini.

At 36 years old, Ailima is a strong athlete with strong leadership on and off the water.

An emotional Ailima was speechless but honoured in every sense of the word to be announced for the role.

"My sport is Va'a.

"It is a sport I hold close to my heart.

"Let's push forward and go for the gold!"

Paddling is a daily part of her life in the village.

She entered a village canoeing competition, which was part of the Christmas program in 2012, paddling on a dug-out canoe with no outrigger. The idea of joining the sport of Va'a came out of that program.

In 2013, she was selected to be part of the Va'a team to the Pacific Mini Games that won 3 Silver medals. At the 2015 Pacific Games, she was again part of the Women's Va'a team that snatched the Gold Medal, her first gold medal, beating favourites Tahiti. At the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa, together with her team, they brought home a Silver and a Bronze medal.

She has been paddling since 2012 and is also the captain of her club.

In 2015, Ailima was named the captain of the Women's Va'a team.

Meanwhile Va'a Team Manager Diavabu Boge Morea thanked the Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee, the President and its Executive Board who voted for a Va'a athlete as the official flag bearer.

"We have won competitions and medals but to be recognized in this manner is a milestone for the Sport and Ailima as well.

"She was speechless.

Morea said the Va'a camp was overwhelmed and spent evening following the announcement singing and praising God for their blessings.

"It's a boost for them.

"This will be their drive to do their best!" Morea added.

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About the Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee

The Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee (PNGOC) is a non-government, not-for-profit organisation committed to inspire and unite Papua New Guinea through sporting excellence and success. The PNGOC is a believer of sport as an enabler for sustainable and inclusive development. We serve the three different global games movements, those being the Olympic Movement, Commonwealth Games Movement and the Pacific Games Movement. It is our responsibility to select, send and fund Team PNG to the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games and Pacific Games. This is achieved by working with our member national sports federations and with the support of our sponsors and partners, through fundraising events and with the backing of the Government. To find out more visit our website www.pngolympic.org.pg

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