



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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# **Three outstanding Papua New Guineans sport legends honoured in the Seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) Hall of Fame in 2022**

Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee delivered its Seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) Edition of the Papua New Guinea Sports Hall of Fame with the induction of three (3) outstanding sport legends, on the evening of Thursday, 08<sup>th</sup> of November, 2022.

The PNG Sports Hall of Fame was initiated in 2011 to honour and preserve the legacy of the individuals who excelled in the past, giving due recognition to sporting accomplishments, bringing pride and distinction to our country, and who have contributed to the development of sport in PNG.

The three individuals inducted were the late Joseph Abraham Turia from sport of Football-Soccer, Veitu Apana Diro, from the sport of Netball and Basketball and Tau John Tokwepota from the sport of Athletics.

The first inductee was Olympian and King of the Road – Tauvau John Tokwepota, from the sport of Athletics.

Tau John is arguably Papua New Guinea's best-known long-distance runner, and has etched his name into PNG's sporting history with his unbroken 46-year record in the 10,000m and Marathon events, in the sport of Athletics

He holds six of the ten fastest 10,000m races in PNG in a remarkable career, of which he still holds the National Records for the 10,000m (31:21.4 in 1976), and the Marathon (2:28:13 in 1980) and won 18 medals from competing at both the (South) Pacific Games and the Pacific Mini Games. He also represented Team PNG in 2 Commonwealth Games and the first Olympics that Papua New Guinea competed in 1976, in Montreal, Canada.

Second inductee Joseph Abraham Turia (1960 - 2021) is the first inductee from the Sport of Football (Soccer) to be inducted into the PNG Sports Hall of Fame for his contribution to the sport.

During his prime, Turia, predominantly a fullback, was widely regarded for his versatility, dribbling skills and sweeping capabilities that saw him Captain the PNG Men's National Team in the early 1980s.

He enjoyed a long and acclaimed career representing his country as Captain and then National Coach for the Youth Team and eventual Administrator, and was also passionately

involved in coaching clubs within the town competitions and national football clubs to many successes.

Turia represented PNG in the following Pacific Games: the 1983 South Pacific Games in Western Samoa, the 1987 South Pacific Games in Noumea where the team won Bronze and in the Second South Pacific Games held in PNG in 1991.

A household name synonymous with the Sport of Netball and Basketball, the third inductee was Veitu Diro who commenced her road to the Hall of Fame in the 1950s whilst a student at the Rabaul High School in the East New Britain Province.

She remains classed as one of Papua New Guinea's finest Netball players, as well as an established and formidable reputation as Captain and Coach in the sport.

Diro would go on to represent PNG again in 1975 at the World Netball Series as Captain and Coach, again in 1979 at the 6th South Pacific Games in Fiji as Captain and Coach, the 1981 Pacific Mini Games as Netball Coach, Coach PNG Netball to Silver Medal Wins at the 1999 South Pacific Games in Guam, and the 2001 Pacific Mini Games in the Norfolk Islands.

In recognition of her contributions towards sport, Diro received the Queen's Award in 1983 as a Member of the British Empire (MBE) and the Commander of the British Empire (CBE) in 2013, a recipient of the Silver Jubilee Medal from the Papua New Guinea Government, awarded the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Women in Sport Trophy for Oceania in 2007; and is a Life Member of the PNG Netball Federation and the Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee.

In congratulating the three (3) inductees for 2022, Sir John Dawanincura President of the PNGOC thanked them for their distinguished and outstanding feats in their chosen sports and for their collective contributions to each of the three (3) sporting codes and sports in PNG.

Sir John said the PNGOC's vision was to inspire and unite Papua New Guinea through sporting excellence and success, we were fortunate to have this annual fixture that provides an opportunity to tell the stories, honour their contributions, and above all, to inspire the next generation of Papua New Guinean athletes.

He also acknowledged the wonderful interest and enthusiasm of the PNGOC's Corporate Family of Sponsors who have supported Team PNG this year, and throughout the years, as we continue to make history, and in particular Trophy Haus and Media Partners who are the key sponsors of this event tonight, after a one-year hiatus.

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**About the Papua New Guinea Olympic Committee**

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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](http://www.pngolympic.org.pg)

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