

INVITATION

The Cambodian Gymnastics Federation invites you to attend a public display by the Cambodian National Aerobics team before they leave for the SEA Games in Thailand.

WHEN? 5.30pm, Tuesday 27 November
WHERE? Small gymnasium, Olympic Stadium

Reporters and photographers welcome!

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Aerobic Gymnastics ("sports aerobics") is a growing sport in Cambodia. Recently two Cambodian athletes competed in at the Asian Indoor Games in Macau. This was the first time the two young men, Veas Sarith (18) and Sum Srorn (18) had competed internationally. Eleven Asian countries competed in the Individual Men, Individual Women, Mixed Pair and Trio categories. Cambodia competed in the Individual Men category only, and was placed 6th and 16th (out of 17 competitors). Srorn's 6th place was a remarkable achievement, and surprised many of those attending, as Cambodia had come out of nowhere. Compared with other countries, Cambodia faces many barriers to achieving a top placing. For example, Cambodia has no aerobic floor area on which to train, and at Macau was the first time the two athletes had ever used a sprung wooden floor. The strong showing by the Cambodians can be attributed to several factors. Firstly, the hard work and dedication of the athletes and their coaches. The National Aerobics squad trains twice a day 6 days a week at the Olympic Stadium, under the instruction of Mr Nay Phonna (Head Coach), Madam Pich You and Madam Doung Samay. They have been assisted since March by a former Cambodian aerobic champion, Soreth Un who has returned to Cambodia after 12 years in New Zealand. He represented Cambodia and later New Zealand at many international aerobic competitions, and has drawn on his extensive experience to help prepare the young athletes. In addition, top New Zealand coach, Dianne McMillan was brought to Cambodia by the Cambodian Gymnastics Federation for 2 weeks earlier in the year. Dianne provided several pieces of world-class competitive aerobics music, and choreographed six routines during her stay. Her visit, supported financially by the President and members of the GGF, provided a huge boost for the Cambodian athletes.

Since returning from the Asian Indoor Games a month ago, the athletes have continued to improve. At the SEA Games they will be competing in both the Individual Men and Trio categories. Sum Srorn and Veas Sarith will be joined by Sor So Pheng, the youngest member of the team. Spectacular new costumes arrived from Brazil last week, which will add to their performance. The competition from Thailand and Vietnam will be particularly strong, as those countries have full-time top coaches from Bulgaria and are well funded to attend many international competitions. However, coaches Phonna and Soreth believe that they have a good chance of a top three placing in both categories.

CGF President, HE Dr Thong Khon, hopes to be present at the SEA Games to support the athletes. In the future, the CGF has plans to develop the sport of Aerobic Gymnastics for children and youth, and several clubs around the country have already started programs as part of their gymnastic club activities.

Further information available from:

Mr Nay Phonna, National Coach, CGF Tel: 012-550790

Mr Soreth Un, Assistant Coach, GCF Tel: 016-627196

Dr Callum Durward, Honorary Advisor, CGF Tel: 012-394534

Email: Callum_durward@hotmail.com