

6 February 2013

## STTA prepares for Youth Olympic Games

STTA has released the selection criteria to invite youth players to join the Youth Olympic Games (YOG) training Team. The selection criteria is as follows:

- (a) Players who are from the School Within School (SWS) team and within the YOG age criteria, ie. born between 1 January 1996 to 31 December 1999, OR
- (b) Players born between 1 January 1996 to 31 December 1999 with the ITTF Under-18 World ranking below 300 as of January 2013, OR
- (c) Players born between 1 January 1996 to 31 December 1999 who have won medals in the Singles and Team events of the following championships: 2012 SEA Junior Championships, 2012 SEA Championships and 2012 Asian Junior Championships.

Every year, STTA organised a selection trial to select players to represent Singapore in the South East Asia Junior Table Tennis Championship and if qualified, to the Asian Junior Table Tennis Championship. This selection trial is open to all National Youth Team players. Taking this into consideration, while streamlining our selection processes, STTA has included in the YOG training Team selection criteria players born between 1 January 1996 to 31 December 1999 who have won medals in the Singles and Team events of 2012 SEA Junior Championships and 2012 SEA Championships.

A total of 11 players met the above selection criteria and if all decided to join the YOG training Team, there will be three additional players compared to the last version of the 2010 YOG training team. Out of the 11 players, 6 players are from the National Youth Team and the remaining 5 players are currently training in the SWS team. The players who finally represent Singapore in the YOG will be selected from the YOG training team by the **selection panel** according to the YOG qualification system. Eventually, a maximum of ONE boy and ONE girl, if qualified for YOG, will represent Singapore.

The training plan will commence on 18 February 2013 as it will include the training for the Asian Youth Games. As the nomination for AYG is in March 2013, the selection committee will also nominate the players from YOG training team based on their results of ITTF Junior Circuit and overseas competitions for the past 12 months as well as discipline, potential, level of commitment and attendance for training sessions.

STTA would require players who are invited to join the YOG training Team to be committed. STTA conducted a briefing for the selected athletes' parents on 1 February 2013. They were being briefed on the YOG training plan including the objectives, the intensive training programme, the YOG qualification criteria, the selection criteria and the commitment required from the athletes. Every selected athlete who choose to opt in for the YOG training Team is required to submit the athlete agreement within two weeks from the date of briefing. The content of the athlete agreement includes the following;

- (a) The players must commit to a 19 month of intensive training programme which include a series of overseas training/competitions and at least 10 training sessions ( one morning training and one afternoon training daily except on Sundays) per week. The training programme modelled after the success of Isabelle Li's training programme for the last YOG and the new addition to this training programme will be the joint training with the national team for the morning sessions;
- (b) STTA may recover the costs of all training and competition from any player should they decide to resign from the team prematurely without the approval of the STTA;
- (c) Selected players are responsible to arrange with their respective schools to customize the education programme.

STTA's president, Er. Dr. Lee Bee Wah commented, "The coming edition of Youth Olympic Games differs from the previous when Singapore is the host and Singapore representatives gain direct admission to the Games. The route to the YOG is a tough and expensive journey where the selected players needs to compete in a series of junior pro-tours and qualification events leading up to YOG. We need commitment from the players and their parents to the intensive training programme so as to bring up the standard of the players. This will in turn increase Singapore's chance of being qualified for the YOG."

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