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SPEECH BY DR TAN ENG LIANG, CHAIRMAN, SINGAPORE SPORTS COUNCIL,
AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE SOUTH ZONE STUDENTS SEMINAR:
LEADERSHIP IN SPORTS, ON TUESDAY, 16 NOVEMBER 1982 AT 9.10 AM

I am happy to have this opportunity to talk about "Leadership in Sports" to the young sports leaders from the Singapore South Zone Schools' Sports Council.

In recent years, students are showing greater involvement in the educational process, and in most cases, this increased involvement has been satisfactory to both students and administrators. The primary purpose of this seminar is to find out how meaningful co-operation can further exist in students' leadership, participation in sports and physical education programmes.

As student leaders, you have important roles to play. You were all chosen because you are better in one or more than one of the following:- physical fitness, motor ability, sports skills, leadership or other positive personality characteristics. The roles you have to play are diverse.

Leaders have to gain their colleagues' respect. As leaders, you can show your colleagues that you can teach them to develop their skills, and that you are willing to make the effort to do so. You should be fair and considerate leaders by showing them that you care about them as individuals and that you are glad to be leading them. Set a good example by showing respect for yourself, for them, and for others - opponents, parents and officials. You cannot demand respect. True respect must be earned.

A respectable leader that had endeared himself was the late 'Pop' Lim Yong Liang, Singapore's Grand Old Man of Soccer. He was a legendary and prolific soccer who had the power, pace and acceleration when he was a national player from 1920 to 1930. Many who have known him were able to recall that he was a selfless man as a player, coach or advisor. He had the dedication, stamina, cheerfulness and enthusiasm to demonstrate and teach players the right way to play the ball. He was awarded Member of the British Empire in 1959 and the Public Service Star in 1964. 'Pop' Lim was an admirable sports leader worthy of emulation.

Good sports leaders are exemplary in their behaviour. A sports reporter once asked Pele after he has retired from competitive soccer as to what was the greatest moment of his colourful soccer career. Pele replied that he was never sent out of the field for foul play or misconduct. Lately the mass media have reported many incidence of foul play and bad sportsmanship such as walkouts in local soccer matches. These teams, I believe, were led by irresponsible leaders such as captains, coaches or managers. These were the sports leaders who did not instill a sense of sportsmanship and fair play to their players.

Good sports leaders are also efficient organisers. Most of us know that our water-polo national team have been winning the SEAP and SEA Games gold medals consecutively for eight series. I feel they may yet do well if not win again in the coming 1983 SEA Games in Singapore. I have faith in the team because I know that the leaders behind the team are good organisers. They plan ahead of time to make sure that young potential players are groomed for

national honours once the old members retire. In the process of grooming a strong combination, team spirit is built up between leaders and the team players. They carry out a planned continuous training programme for the trainees. Planning, good management and organisation are therefore important factors that help to cultivate team spirit and high morale among players.

Successful sports leaders are able to motivate their trainees to reach their goals. Michael Koay is one who has coached several medal winners in weightlifting. At the 1981 SEA Games in Manila, the Singapore lifters did a creditable performance with a haul of two golds and seven silvers. A recent success was Chua Koon Siong's bronze medal at the 12th Commonwealth Games recently held in Brisbane. Michael is able to produce results because he knows how to encourage his trainees by using good psychological approaches. In 1979, he was awarded a Diploma by the International Weightlifting Federation for his outstanding contribution to weightlifting in Asia.

Firm discipline is yet another quality of a good sports leader. Mr Kee Soon Bee reflects that kind of firm discipline when he trains our young swimmers. As a result, he has produced numerous champion swimmers including Junie Sng. Dedication is yet another quality in Mr Kee Soon Bee. He is there by the Toa Payoh pool, everyday at 5.00 am and 5.00 pm, six days a week, 40 to 45 weeks year in and year out steadfastly working, training, and encouraging his young swimmers to further heights of swimming. Such is dedication.

In summarising, as leaders demonstrating how skills, games and strategies are to be performed or taking charge of a small number of students for an activity, you have to earn their respect, to be caring, to be efficient in planning and organisation, to be dedicated and disciplined, and exemplary in your behaviour. I have only highlighted some of the many qualities that make good sports leaders. You may not have all these qualities yet. However, they can be learned and developed through practice and experience. Above all, you should also learn to enjoy the tasks and be cheerful to the end.

Finally, I wish to commend the South Zone Schools' Sports Council for organising this seminar. I am sure it is going to be beneficial for both students and teachers.