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EMBARGOED UNTIL AFTER DELIVERY

SPEECH BY DR TAN ENG LIANG, CHAIRMAN, SINGAPORE SPORTS COUNCIL AT THE CHEQUE PRESENTATION CEREMONY OF THE SSC/YEO'S ASCOT NATIONAL SQUASH TRAINING SCHEME TO BE HELD AT THE NATIONAL STADIUM CONFERENCE ROOM ON SATURDAY 29 DECEMBER 1984 AT 11.00 AM

Going through the assessment report completed recently by the Singapore Sports Council on the SSC/Pepsi Squash Training Scheme, there were a few findings that caught my attention. Before I talk about the positive findings, I would like to voice my disappointment with a number of trainees who did not respond to our questionnaire.

Among the 64 ex-trainees whose addresses were known, only 21 or 32.8% submitted their returns, despite two reminders and several telephone calls made by the research staff. Forty-five or 64.3% of trainees presently in the Scheme responded to the survey. It was a let down - to put it mildly. I would have thought that we should get a 100% response from our present trainees. Please remember that all trainees and ex-trainees have benefitted in one way or another from the Scheme be it free coaching, free use of facilities, free attire, etc. It is, therefore, obligatory that trainees should respond positively when such a request is made. They owe it to the Scheme and the sponsor.

However, I am happy to note that the Scheme has contributed to the marked improvement of squash in Singapore. The findings of the study confirmed that the objectives of the Scheme have been achieved. The presence of many of you who are here who were in the SSC/Pepsi Scheme and who have graduated to the SSC/Yeo's Ascot National Squash Training Scheme is a testimony of this.

I am also happy to know that almost all trainees thought very favourably of their coaches in areas like attitude, coaching knowledge and ability. This speaks well of our coaches and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their dedicated and valuable services. I would also like to thank the Singapore Squash Rackets Association (SSRA) for selecting the cream of their coaches for our Schemes.

From the study, we have learnt that a small percentage of trainees was not satisfied particularly with "training aids and equipment", "course syllabus", "location of centre" and the "size of the trainee group". We are presently discussing with SSRA to see how best we can find a solution to these dissatisfactions.

I would also at this juncture like to thank Martin Webb for his services to both the SSC/Pepsi and the SSC/Yeo's Ascot National Squash Training Schemes in the last two years. He certainly has helped in the development of squash in Singapore.

I understand that the SSRA has come up with an ambitious five-year plan to accelerate the development of matured player while they are still in their teens. This plan is a stage in the right direction as it ensures a steady supply of talented players with the capability and potential for top level competitions.

A five-year plan will call for the setting of intermediate objectives and target attainments. For example, a 14-year-old player with talent must have already made a name for himself or herself in local tournaments by the age of 16. The same player would be groomed for junior international championships by the time he or she is 18.

To make further headway the player must continue to be exposed to international events and further training to refine his skills. There must be continued commitment and national representation at the senior level for another three to five years for player to reach full maturity.

I am happy to announce that the SSC Sports Aid Fund, together with the SSRA, are offering six scholarships worth \$500 each to young squash talents in our Schemes who need financial assistance. This scholarship will assist towards expenses needed in the purchase of specialised apparatus and equipment and the training and educational needs of the trainee.

Finally, I thank Yeo Hiap Seng Limited, Sunrise and Company (the agents for Ascot) and the SSRA, for their continued support of the Scheme.