

24 DEC 1993

Singapore Government

# PRESS RELEASE

Media Division, Ministry of Information & The Arts, 36th Storey, PSA Building, 460 Alexandra Road, Singapore 0511. Tel 2799794/5

93-307-24

Release No. : 07/DEC  
04-1/93/12/06

**SPEECH BY MR YEO CHEOW TONG,  
MINISTER FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH,  
AT THE LAUNCH OF SPORTS EXCELLENCE 2000  
AT COMMUNITY HALL, LEVEL 18,  
MINISTRY OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT (MCD) BUILDING  
ON MONDAY, 6 DECEMBER 1993 AT 3.00 PM**

I am very happy to join you this afternoon for the launch of Sports Excellence 2000, or in short, SPEX 2000.

#### **A new national goal in sports**

I am glad to see so many familiar faces here today - from the National Sports Associations (NSAs), sponsors, sportsmen and sportswomen, coaches, parents, spouses, journalists, employers, principals and teachers, and officials from various government and statutory bodies.

You represent the flesh and blood, the spirit and the driving force that will make SPEX 2000 a living reality. Together, we will make SPEX 2000 a success, and put Singapore on the world map of sports.

On 17 July this year, the Prime Minister heralded a new era in Sports Excellence in Singapore. The Prime Minister gave us a new mission and a new national goal. The new national goal -- Winning for Singapore.

#### **Room for sponsors**

The Prime Minister announced that Government will increase its Sports Excellence budget four-fold to \$4 million a year. The Singapore Pools will similarly increase its annual contribution four-fold, to \$4 million.

We will however need \$10 million for SPEX 2000. There is therefore plenty of scope for more sponsors in SPEX 2000. They can help fund training schemes, sponsor school sports programmes, or a team or an individual athlete; or they can sponsor coach development plans. I would therefore like to take this opportunity to invite more sponsors to come forward and join us - be our partners in SPEX 2000, be our partners in Winning for Singapore.

#### **Some important features of SPEX 2000**

We have taken some time to carefully finalise the plans for SPEX 2000. The Ministry of Community Development and the Singapore Sports Council had in June completed the initial draft of the proposed Sports Excellence Plan. They then consulted the National Sports Associations, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Education and the Singapore National Olympic Council. They also consulted individual sportsmen and sportswomen, parents, school principals, coaches and employers.

The feedback, comments and suggestions from the various organisations and individuals have resulted in a greatly refined and improved plan, now termed SPEX 2000. I would like to place on record my appreciation and thanks for their cooperation and support.

Let me now highlight some features which I found to be particularly significant. Mr Ng Ser Miang, Chairman of the Sports Council, will take you through the details later.

Most of you have had a chance to study the plan. I am sure you will agree with me that it is not only comprehensive and realistic, but also challenging. It covers the entire spectrum of support which athletes, officials and the NSAs need to improve our standards in sports -- training schemes, training grants, support and recognition for athletes, talent development, coach development, administrative support for

NSAs, facilities and sports medicine. No stone has been left unturned.

Under SPEX 2000, no sport will receive less support. While the plan acknowledges that we need to take a focused approach in view of our limited resources, I am glad that it has not limited support to only the seven identified Core Sports. The plan also includes seven Merit Sports, making an expanded list of 14 sports which will receive enhanced support and attention. The list is also flexible and will be reviewed from time to time. This is a rational and sensible approach.

What is also important is that the plan provides extra support for all promising athletes regardless of the sport they are in. This ensures that talented individuals who spring up from time to time in the sports which do not have a large support base will still be given our full support.

There is even a song to help inspire and motivate athletes. In today's sophisticated sports arena, success cannot come through hard work and toil alone. Successful athletes need to adapt and apply intelligently the latest advances in sports science, sports psychology and sports equipment.

But at the end of the day, the threshold factor is the human spirit which says I will try harder, I will triumph over adversity and I will win for Singapore. This human spirit, this will and determination to give of one's best and to succeed, is one which SPEX 2000 aims to foster in our athletes.

Results in sports competitions are not always predictable. Even world champions experience ups and downs. The key is for every individual to do his or her very best. This will enhance the overall competitive spirit in Singapore. It is in line with our national policy - to be the best that

we can be, whether it is academic achievement, economic development or sports.

**Conclusion**

I am confident that SPEX 2000 will raise the level of sports excellence in Singapore and produce many future sports champions who will do Singapore proud.

With that it is my pleasure and honour to present to you SPEX 2000.

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