



NEWSLETTER

Monthly News Digest
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Main Stories: Twenty-one athletes received Athlete Leadership Training...and SOPNG revived its Family Support Network Program

Twenty-one athletes receive training to enhance their leadership skills

Twenty-one athletes participated in a training conducted by Special Olympics Papua New Guinea to develop their leadership skills.

These aspiring athlete leaders were supported by six mentors who guided them throughout the training process.

The participants included students with intellectual disability (ID) from Callan Inclusive Education Resource Centers, Red Cross Society, Cheshire Disability Centre, and the Academy of Inclusive Learning.

The training held at John Guise Stadium on 5 April 2025 covered two essential courses: Introduction to Athlete Leadership and Understanding Athlete Leadership, which aimed to empower athletes to take on leadership roles.

The program featured a combination of group and individual activities, incorporating both theoretical and practical components.

The athletes also met SOPNG's longtime athlete leaders, Japheth Narrey and Pauline Paul, and heard their inspiring stories. The duo shared their experiences as athlete leaders with SOPNG, offering valuable insights into the work they do and the leadership roles they undertake within Special Olympics.

The training facilitators, including reigning Papua New Guinea Miss Hannah's Beauty Box, Shonaye Leslie, emphasized the key qualities of effective leadership and the various roles athletes can assume within Special Olympics, their schools, and local communities.

Each athlete leader will now be paired with a mentor to form a mentor-mentee relationship, providing ongoing support and personal development.

Facilitators explained the significance of this training, noting that while sports are the main focus of Special Olympics, they also focus on capacity building to help develop their athletes.

Such training is crucial for the personal growth of athletes, as leadership development is not commonly taught in schools.

Parents who were present during the training were encouraged to continue supporting their children at home and to bring them to similar programs in the future.

Miss Leslie (in front) leading a session on 'Understanding Athlete Leadership'



At the conclusion of the training, athletes were awarded certificates and badges, marking the beginning of their leadership journey with SOPNG.

Zechariah Abaik, a Grade 8 student from the Academy of Inclusive Learning, shared his experience: "I have learnt how to become a leader, and now I will go back to school and take on leadership roles.

"I always enjoy giving speeches during special occasions," said Abaik.



Twenty-one athletes proudly displaying their certificates of completion and badges pinned to their T-shirts.

Additional training sessions will be offered in the near future to further support the athlete's growth and leadership development.

The training was facilitated by dedicated volunteers – Eunice Wanjumoe, Jenny Luff, Sylvester Nandawo, Shonaye Leslie, and Patience Hahambu.

SOPNG extends gratitude to Special Olympics Asia Pacific, PNG Sports Foundation Venue Management Team, and His Highness Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan for supporting this training.



Athletes participating in group and individual activities with support from their mentors.



Athletes and a mentor participating in a fun game.



Athletes participating in group and individual activities with support from their mentors.

Main Stories: Twenty-one athletes received Athlete Leadership Training...and SOPNG revived its Family Support Network Program

Family Support Network hosted meet and greet orientation

SOPNG’s Family Support Network program representatives and staff hosted a successful meet and greet orientation for both new and existing members. A total of 25 parents and siblings of athletes with intellectual disability attended the program on 20 April.

The event served as a valuable opportunity for families of athletes to come together, connect, and learn more about SOPNG’s mission and the many ways they can support their children’s participation in its programs.

Family Support Network (FSN) Team Leaders, Mathew Angori and Samantha Nauku, led the participants in an engaging and informative session.

Mrs Nuaku facilitated discussions on several important topics, including A Guide to Increasing Family Engagement, Family Retention Strategies Program Quality Standards: Family Engagement Guidance, and The Benefits of Special Olympics Involvement

These discussions emphasized the vital role families play in supporting the holistic development and success of athletes within the SOPNG community.



Mr Angori speaking to the parents and siblings.

Volunteers, Patience Hahambu, Eunice Wanjumoe, and Shonaye Leslie delivered presentations covering the history, purpose, and key programs of SOPNG, highlighting the many opportunities available to athletes and their families.

Athlete Leader Japhet, Narrey inspired attendees by sharing his personal journey with SOPNG and how the program has helped him build confidence and strengthen his interpersonal skills.

The event was supported by Hannah’s Beauty Box (HBB) and reigning miss HBB, Shonaye Leslie.

In November 2024, Miss Leslie, together with Hannah’s Beauty Box, donated four thousand kina to SOPNG. The funds were used to support the implementation of this program.

SOPNG extends its heartfelt gratitude to the PNG Sports Foundation Venue Management Team for their generous support.



Parents and siblings of athletes with ID.



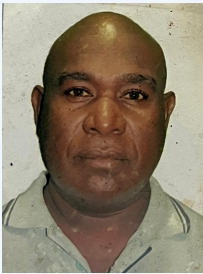
Shonaye Leslie and Patience Hahambu (in front) leading a session.



A mother of an athlete speaking during the discussion session.



Athlete Leader, Japhet sharing his personal experience with SOPNG.



SOPNG FSN Coordinator (2025-2026), Mathew Angori.



SOPNG FSN Assistant Coordinator (2025-2026), Samantha Nauku