



CARAGOLD Sports

News Updates



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2025 Palarong Pambansa opens with pride at the Marcos Stadium

Robert Pepe Jr.



The grand opening of the 2025 Palarong Pambansa was held at the Ferdinand E. Marcos Stadium in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, on May 24, 2025, gathered athletes, coaches, and officials from all 17 regions across the Philippines for the most awaited national sports event of the year.

The Caraga Region proudly appeared during the entrance parade among the vibrant delegations. The delegation was led by DepEd Caraga Regional Director Maria Ines Asuncion, CESO IV, and joined by the Schools Division Superintendents and Assistant Superintendents from the 12 Schools Division Offices in Caraga. Adding strong support to the athletes were Governor Ma. Angelica Rosedell M. Amante of the province of the Agusan

del Norte and Nasipit Municipal Mayor Roscoe Democrito Plaza personally accompanied the Caraga team as they proudly marched into the stadium.

The event was filled with excitement, cheers, and festive colors as athletes from all over the country gathered to compete and unite through sports. The atmosphere was electric, and the athletes proudly waved their regional flags, showing their identity and readiness to take on the challenge of national competition.

"Hindi madali ang inyong pinagdaanan — mag-aaral sa umaga, mag-eensayo sa hapon," President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said during his keynote speech

at the opening ceremony.

The Palarong Pambansa aims to discover potential athletes and promote student strength, discipline, sportsmanship, and camaraderie. It encourages young athletes to showcase their talents while building friendships beyond other regions.



Left to Right: Mayor Roscoe D. Plaza, SDS Jeanie L. Mativo, Sec. Nita Racho, Gov. Angel Amante



"Train Hard, Dream Big" — President Marcos Inspires Palaro Athletes

Honey Grace Buyan

The cheers of 15,000 delegates filled the stadium — but the President's words echoed the loudest.

May 24, 2025 — President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. delivered an inspiring message to young Filipino athletes during the opening of Palarong Pambansa 2025 at the Ferdinand E. Marcos Stadium in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte.

Addressing over 15,000 delegates—including student-athletes, coaches, and officials from 20 athletic associations—Marcos praised their commitment to both studies and training.



Photo Courtesy of DepEd Philippines

He encouraged the athletes to remain focused on their dreams and assured them of continued government support.

"Kami sa pamahalaan, ginagawa po namin ang lahat para matulungan kayong maging mahusay na manlalaro... Ang gobyerno ay laging nasa likod ninyo. Ang panalo ninyo ay panalo na rin namin."

"Pero tandaan ninyo, kayo ang pinakamagaling sa inyong paaralan, probinsiya, at rehiyon."





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UNITY IN MOTION

2025 Palaro Delegations Light Up Ilocos Norte with Grand Saludo

Catherine B. Verdeflor, Kenn Joseph Louie J. Cabrera

Laoag City, Ilocos Norte — In what many now call the grandest and most unforgettable opening ceremony in Palarong Pambansa history, the 2025 games launched in a dazzling celebration of youth, culture, and unity. From the lively street parade to the thunderous stadium entrance, the 18 regional delegations brought the spirit of the nation to life—culminating in a night that stirred hearts and etched itself into memory.

The festivities began on the streets of Ilocos, where a vibrant parade of athletes turned roads into rivers of pride. Despite the scorching heat, the crowd's cheers never faded. Locals welcomed delegates with cool water, warm smiles, and encouraging chants. Caraga's delegation stood tall and proud, echoing their signature cheer —“CARAGA, *saludo!*”—met by roaring support from the crowd.

Inside the Ferdinand E. Marcos Memorial Stadium, the energy surged as the Grand Saludo unfolded. Each of the 18 delegations presented synchronized formations and chants, proudly showcasing months of

preparation and unity. The performances radiated discipline, spirit, and regional pride.

The evening reached new heights with a cultural retelling of *Biag ni Lam-ang*, the Ilocano epic brought to life through mesmerizing narration, dance, and visual storytelling. Performers in vibrant costumes honored Ilocano heritage with grace and passion, leaving the audience in awe.

Then, the skies lit up in wonder. A breathtaking drone light show painted symbols of sports and unity across the night—volleyballs soared, runners sprinted, and the Palaro torch blazed in midair. Gasps and cheers echoed

through the stadium as the sky danced in celebration.

“This wasn’t just an opening. It was a love letter to our people, our youth, and our future.”

an official said with emotion.

Among the standouts was Caraga, marching not only with strength, but with heart. From street to stadium, their presence was powerful—showing that Caraga came not just to compete, but to inspire.

***The flame is lit.
The spirit is alive.
The Palaro has begun.***

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Laoag City, Ilocos Norte – Over 15,000 delegates from across the country converged at the Ferdinand E. Marcos Memorial Stadium on July 14, 2025, for the formal opening of the 65th Palarong Pambansa.

Carrying the theme “Nagkakaisang Kapuluan” (United Archipelago), this year’s national games aim to promote unity through sports, while highlighting eco-conscious and athlete-centered values.

The opening ceremony began at 5:00 p.m. with the Parada ng mga Atleta, a traditional parade of athletes along Abadilla and J.P. Rizal Streets. A total of 20 delegations participated, representing the country’s 18 regions, the National Academy of Sports (NAS), and the Philippine Schools Overseas (PSO).

Participating athletic associations included R1AA (Ilocos Region), CAVRAA (Cagayan Valley), CLRAA (Central Luzon), STCAA (CALABARZON), MRAA (MIMAROPA), BRAA (Bicol Region), MRAA (MIMAROPA), BRAA (Bicol Region), WVRAA (Western Visayas), CVIRAA (Central Visayas), EVRAA (Eastern Visayas), ZPRAA (Zamboanga Peninsula), NMRAA (Northern Mindanao), DAVRAA

4 (Davao Region), SRAA (SOCCSKSARGEN), CRAA (Caraga), BARMM-AA



15K Delegates Gather as 65th Palarong Pambansa Opens in Ilocos Norte

Jasmine R. Lacuna
Assistant Schools Division Superintendent

(Bangsamoro), CARAA (Cordillera), NCRAA (National Capital Region), NAS, and PSO.

Education Secretary Sonny Angara introduced President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., who officially declared the games open. In his keynote address, President Marcos emphasized the role of sports in youth development, discipline, and national unity.

The ceremony featured the Lighting of the IN Palaro 2025 Lightbeam, performed by selected athletes and sports personalities: Jemmuelle James Espiritu (archery), Mark Anthony Domingo (athletics), Jesson Cid (SEA Games decathlon medalist), Roger Tapia (Paralympian), Eric Ang (Olympian), and Edgardo

Daquioag (MPBL player). They were joined by Ilocos Norte’s Junior Baseball and Softball Teams.

The lighting was accompanied by a live performance of the official Palaro theme song “United Archipelago” by Chase Pagtagconan. Artist Angeline Quinto also performed “Ako ay Pilipino” and “Piliin Mo ang Pilipinas” during the ceremony.

The opening concluded with a fireworks display over the Laoag skyline.

The weeklong Palarong Pambansa is expected to feature competitions in over 30 sports disciplines, drawing student-athletes from both public and private schools nationwide.



Ilocos Norte — Caraga Region marked its first victory in the Secondary Boys Volleyball division of the 2025 Palarong Pambansa after overpowering BARMM in straight sets, 25-14, 25-17, in a heated showdown on the court.

The match opened with BARMM taking an early lead, scoring the first two points.

However, Caraga quickly regained composure and leveled the score at 9-all, sparking momentum for the team.

Caraga's Escobal emerged as a key player, delivering powerful blocks and spikes that forced BARMM to call two timeouts in the first set.

The momentum stayed with Caraga, closing the first set at 25-14.

The second set heated up under the scorching sun of Dingras.

Energized by the inspiring presence of Akari Chargers middle blocker Fifi Sharma and Iya Yongco of Pocari Sweat-Air Force Lady Warriors, Caraga surged ahead with renewed vigor.

The dynamic duo of Escobal and Bolabola dominated the court, combining for a powerful 7-point run against BARMM's 2.

Caraga sweeps BARMM 25-14, 25-17 to secure first win in Secondary Boys Volleyball

Kenn Joseph Louie J. Cabrera,
Catherine B. Verdeflor



Bolabola's precise and effortless serves further extended Caraga's lead to 12-3.

Despite BARMM's efforts to defend with occasional successful blocks, Caraga maintained dominance through consistent plays from Hayahay and Libero, who contributed crucial points to stretch the lead to 23-15.

Ultimately, Caraga sealed

the match with a 25-17 second set win, securing their first win in the volleyball boys secondary division and making a strong statement in this year's national games.



The team hails from Tandag City and has proudly represented Caraga for three consecutive years.

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EDITORIAL

The Palarong Pambansa is more than a sporting event—it is one of the most meaningful educational experiences in a learner's life. It teaches values no textbook nor teacher can fully capture: resilience, discipline, humility, teamwork, and leadership. As John Dewey said, "Education is not preparation for life; education is life itself." And for young athletes, the Palaro is a living classroom.

In a society that often measures success through grades, the Palaro reminds us that character and courage matter just as much. Win or lose, learners grow—learning to lead, to rise from failure, and to play with heart.

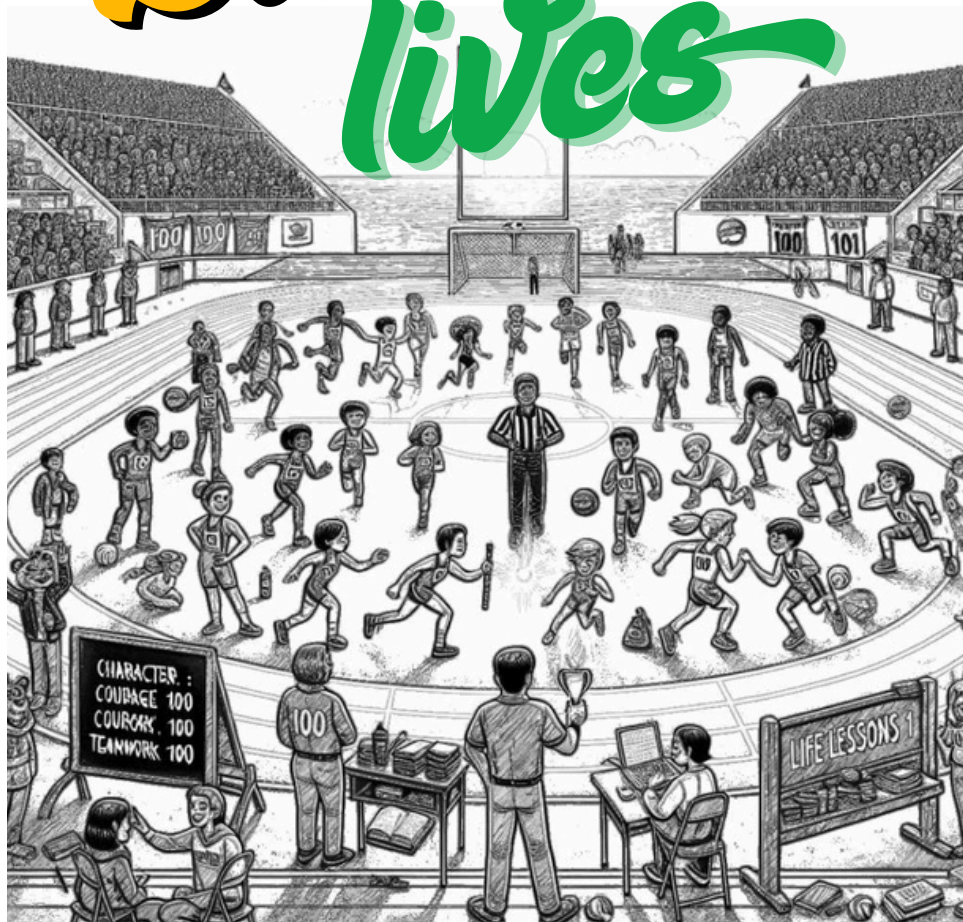
Maya Angelou's words ring true: "Do the best you can until you know better. Then when you know better, do better." On the field, they learn better. And they grow together. To paraphrase Conrado de Quiros words: "[The Palaro] wasn't about making everybody else look small, it was about making everybody else look big."

The Palaro also unlocks opportunities—scholarships, careers, and life-changing experiences. For many, it's their first glimpse of what's possible beyond their hometown. It also unites diverse regions under one flag, proving what Nelson Mandela once said: "Sport has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does."

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Indeed, the Palaro is not a break from learning. It is rather learning in its most powerful form. On every track and court, the youth are not just playing games—they are building their lives.

The Palaro Classroom: *Building lives*



PBBM opens 2025 Palarong Pambansa

Ponciano G. Alngog

We in the government are doing everything we can to help you become excellent athletes. The government is always behind you. Your victory is also our victory.

<https://tinyurl.com/yhbnrcjl>
DepEd Caraga Region

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. officially opened the 65th Palarong Pambansa on May 24, 2025, at the Ferdinand E. Marcos Memorial Stadium in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte. This event marks the return of the national games to the President's home province, which last hosted the Palaro in 1968.

The 2025 Palarong Pambansa brings together over 15,000 student-athletes, coaches, and officials from 19 delegations, including 17 regional athletic associations, the National Academy of Sports, and Philippine Schools Overseas. The event features 34 sports disciplines, encompassing regular, demonstration, exhibition, and para-sports.

The opening ceremony was graced by Olympic gold

medalist Hidilyn Diaz, who led the judges' oath, while para-athlete Roger Tapia lit the ceremonial torch.

President Marcos emphasized the significance of the Palarong Pambansa as a platform for nurturing future national and international sports champions.

With the theme "Nagkakaisang Kapuluan" (United Archipelago), the 2025 Palarong Pambansa aims to foster national unity through sports.

The ceremony also honored Teófilo Yldefonso, the first Filipino and Southeast Asian Olympic medalist, born in Piddig, Ilocos Norte. Known as "The Ilocano Shark," he won bronze in the 200m breaststroke at the 1928 and 1932 Olympics.

The event will run until May 31, 2025, with various competitions held across multiple venues in Ilocos Norte.

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PALARONG 2025
ILOCOS NORTE
NAGKAKALAKAS NG KAPULUPAN



AMONG THE

RAREST

FINDS

BY RICHARD E. DAVIDE
PDO I-DINAGAT ISLANDS DIVISION

In the southern frontier of the Philippine archipelago, nestled between the swelling Pacific tides and the ancient fold mountains of Mindanao, lies a region whose spirit pulses with history, resilience, and pride: Caraga. Known to many for its mineral wealth, carved deep within the bowels of its mountains, Caraga is more than a land of literal gold. It is a cradle of enduring dreams, of young athletes whose sweat glistens like sunlight striking ore — refined by hardship, shaped by tradition, and molded by time.

As the Caraga Regional Athletic Delegation marches to the 2025 Palarong Pambansa, it carries not only banners and uniforms, but also the quiet courage of twelve Schools Division Offices: Agusan del Norte, Agusan del Sur, Butuan City, Bislig City, Cabadbaran City, Dinagat Islands, Bayugan City, Surigao del Norte, Surigao del Sur, Tandag City, Siargao, and Surigao City. These divisions, though geographically dispersed across islands and provinces, converge like rivers feeding into a single source of strength. This is the collective identity of being Caraganon.

Their footsteps echo the legacy of warrior ancestors who once paddled these same shores in balangays, and of farmers who rose

with the sun to till the earth with calloused hands. They are heirs to a culture of grit, honor, and humility. For these young Caraganon athletes, the Palarong Pambansa is a convergence of stories, of ancestry, and of the enduring heartbeat of the region.

Gold, as Heritage and Aspiration

"Caraga: Home of the finest gold. Land of golden opportunities and endless possibilities." The words resonate deeply, not just as a tagline but as an identity. It is an invocation of a people long underestimated, long quiet, but never voiceless. Gold in Caraga is not just dug up from the earth. It is grown in classrooms where dreams are first whispered, in gymnasiums where bruises become badges of

honor, and in school fields where morning dew is shaken off by swift strides and louder hopes. The young sprinters, the iron-willed wrestlers, the eagle-eyed archers — each one a gem polished by sacrifice.

They are trained by coaches who wear many hats: mentors, counselors, second parents. Some of these athletes run barefoot across mountain trails to reach training grounds. Others swim in rivers to build endurance, using nature as their only arena. And yet, when they stand shoulder-to-shoulder with competitors from urban metropolises, they do not flinch. Because in Caraga, adversity is not a hindrance. It is a teacher.

A Tapestry of Cultures

The Caraganon identity is as diverse as it is rich. In the chants of Manobo elders, in the dances of the Mamanwas, and in the stories of migrant settlers from the Visayas and Luzon, the region's cultural fabric weaves unity in diversity. And during the Palaro, these threads shimmer in unison.

The delegation is a living museum of the region's past and present. When a Caraganon athlete raises the flag, they raise the legacy of a region often left in the margins of mainstream narrative. They tell the world: We are here. We are gold.

History in the Making
This year's Palarong Pambansa is one for the books if not a page in history. The delegation's presence is a declaration of the region's readiness to rise beyond stereotypes and reclaim its place in the national consciousness. In every relay baton passed, in every goal scored, in every finish line crossed, the youth of Caraga will proclaim their right to be seen, heard, and remembered.

Their journey to this national stage is paved with stories of families who sold livestock to fund their children's gear, of teachers

who offered food and shelter, and of communities who cheered them on even when victories seemed out of reach. These are the real gold veins that run through Caraga — veins of community, compassion, and conviction.

Caragold: A Future Forged in Flame

Caragold speaks more than a brand. It is a movement. It is the dawning recognition that the youth of Caraga are not merely chasing medals but charting futures, forging pride, and breaking ceilings.

And while the finish line at Palaro may signal the end of a race, it is only the beginning of a longer journey, one where each athlete becomes a bearer of legacy, a keeper of hope, and a living embodiment of what Caraga truly is: **a home of the finest gold, a land where golden opportunities and endless possibilities await those brave enough to dream.**

So when the national anthem plays, and Caraga's delegation stands with hearts pounding and eyes lifted, remember this: behind every young athlete is a region that has long known how to endure, how to hope, and how to shine, not in borrowed light but with the brilliance of its own.

Caraga. Caragold. History written not in ink, but in sweat, soil, and spirit.



Letter to the athletes

Ponciano G. Alngog

Dear Caraga Athletes,

As the 2025 Palarong Pambansa kicks off, know that you carry with you the hopes and prayers of the entire Caraga region. We honor your hard work, dedication, and the sacrifices you've made to reach this national stage. From your first steps in school sports—where your talents were nurtured by your coaches—you have grown into champions ready to represent Caraga with pride.

Now is your moment. Give your best. Give your all.

As you compete, remember: true strength lies not only in physical ability but in the values you uphold. Be resilient—stay focused even in the face of setbacks. Let discipline guide you, and trust the training that brought you here. Show courage under pressure, and rise above every challenge with heart.

Keep your composure, no matter the outcome. Embrace humility, support your teammates, and fulfill your role with honor. Be adaptable, honest, and always compete with integrity—win with grace, and learn from every loss.

Each game is more than a match—it's a step toward becoming the best version of yourself.

Compete with pride. Carry the Caraganon spirit. And above all, play with purpose.

With utmost respect and belief in you,

Fellow Caraganons

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