



CARAGOLD Sports

News Updates



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CARAGA'S ARNIS TRIO REIGNS AGAIN IN ESPADA Y DAGA, CLINCHES SECOND GOLD IN PALARONG PAMBANSA

By PONCIANO G. ALNGOG

San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte – With precise strikes, seamless coordination, and unmatched discipline, Caraga's formidable trio in Arnis – Mer C. Najaro, Ysai Winslet T. Lorejo, and Charlyn M. Diaz – once again captured the gold medal in the Synchronized Espada y Daga – Secondary Girls category during the ongoing 2025 Palarong Pambansa at the F.E. Marcos Mini Cultural and Sports Center.

This latest victory marks their second gold medal in this year's Palarong Pambansa, further cementing their dominance in the national Arnis arena. Their precise and polished performance reflected a deep mastery of the sport, as they executed each strike, block, and stance with remarkable accuracy, rhythm, and flair. The judges took notice, awarding them a final score of 29.4, narrowly surpassing Region VIII with 29.1.

Their routine was evaluated based on Synchronization and Coordination, Proper Execution of Techniques, Creativity and Variety of Movements, Degree of Difficulty, Martial Attitude and Expression, and Timing and Fluidity – all of which they delivered with mastery.

In an interview, Mer C. Najaro admitted feeling the pressure of expectations, especially as defending champions.

"This is our second gold, and we're hoping to win another in the remaining categories," she said with determination.

Coach Shella Mae C. Najaro also expressed pride and joy over their victory. "It's overwhelming to witness the hard work of these girls pay off once again. They've trained with so much heart," she said.

Representing Jacinto P. Elpa National High School of the Tandag City Division, the Arnisadors have proven once more that Caraga is a force to be reckoned with in Arnis – not only in defending titles, but in elevating the standard of the sport.



EDITORIAL

Behind a champion's heart is a Mother's Sacrifice

In honor of Maria Lyn D. Mosende, the quite force behind a Caragold Gymnast

Behind every athlete is a story of sacrifice. For Caragold rhythmic gymnast Yeleina Mosende, that story is her mother, Maria Lyn D. Mosende—a school nurse, mental health advocate, and the unwavering presence in her daughter's athletic journey.

Each Palarong Pambansa season is more than just another tournament for Maria Lyn—it is a chapter of her daughter's life she refuses to miss. Since Grade 4, when Yeleina first qualified to compete, Maria Lyn has always been there—not as a mere spectator, but as a lifeline. She would file leaves of absence from work, willingly risk salary deductions, and carry the financial burden of travel and accommodations—all for the sake of being near her daughter at every step, on every mat, in every moment.

In the dizzying pressure of national competition, a mother's presence is often the still point in a turning world. Her support isn't just logistical—it's deeply emotional, even devotional.

As one of DepEd Caraga's pioneering school nurses, Maria Lyn is no stranger to service. But her greatest commitment is to her three children—Yeleina, 17, Brandon Josh, 15, and Ysabel, 13. She and her late husband shared this devotion. When she was assigned to be far from home, he left his job to care full-time for their children—a sacrifice she remembers with tears and deep gratitude.

As Yeleina competes for her fifth and final Palarong Pambansa, her mother's constant and quiet presence once again proves to be her unseen armor.

And when the spotlight shines on the gymnast twirling in graceful defiance of gravity, let us not forget the woman in the shadows, the mother who made sure her child could soar.

To Maria Lyn D. Mosende—thank you. For showing us that behind every champion is a heart that beats not for glory, but for love.



Maria Lyn hugs daughter Yeleina after her performance on May 26, 2025, at the Vintar Municipal Gymn, Ilocos norte.

Caraga stuns Central Visayas, sweeps group C to enter Sepak Takraw quarterfinals

By PONCIANO G. ALNGOG, ROENTGEN D. VILLASIN JR.



The Caraga Region Secondary Girls Sepak Takraw team remains unbeaten in Group C of the Palarong Pambansa 2025 after pulling off a dramatic straight-set victory against the powerhouse Central Visayas squad in Match 25 of the eliminations held earlier today, May 28.

Both teams entered the match with identical 2-0 records, each seeking a crucial win to secure a spot in the quarterfinals. Central Visayas came out blazing, taking a commanding 5-0 lead in the opening set. But Caraga slowly chipped away at the deficit, eventually tying the set at 12-all.

With momentum on their side, the resilient Caraganons surged ahead to claim the first set, 15-12. In the second set, CVIRAA regained their composure and built a 6-1 lead, which they extended to 10-4. But Caraga mounted another comeback, scoring

our straight points to narrow the gap to 10-8. Central Visayas called a timeout to halt the rally, but Caraga would not be denied.

After leveling the score at 12-12, Caraga briefly took the lead at 13-12. A tense back-and-forth ensued, with the scoreboard locked at 14-all. Then came a turning point as Caraga claw back after falling behind 14-15 and 15-16. With incredible poise under pressure, Caraga rallied to win the set 17-16 and secure the game in straight sets.

The victory capped a flawless group stage performance for Caraga, finishing with a perfect 3-0 record and earning a place in the quarterfinals.

Caraga is now set to face Region 2 - Cagayan Valley in the next stage of the competition, with hopes of continuing their dominant run and securing a semifinal berth.



PALARO 2025

**ILOCOS
NORTE**
NAGKAKAISANG KAPULUAN



Siargao's differently-abled athlete wins bronze in Para Athletics Seated Shot Put

By PRELYN P. SANDIMAS-BARSAGA
Education Program Supervisor, SDO Cabadbaran City

Mark Jancent P. Mante, a Grade 12 student from Socorro National High School, Siargao Division, proudly bagged a bronze medal in the Seated Shot Put (Orthopedically Handicapped category) at the 2025 Palarong Pambansa, held in Laoag City, Ilocos Norte.

He was coached by Ruth E. Ruaya, who played a vital role in preparing him for this prestigious competition.

"This achievement is more than just a medal—it's a statement that our para-athletes can stand tall in the Palarong Pambansa," said Coach Ruaya. "Mark's performance is an inspiration to many differently-abled athletes back home."

Mante's success shines a light on the growing strength of inclusive sports in the region and encourages the development of more support programs for differently-abled student-athletes in Caraga.

Mark Jancent P. Mante exemplary performance brings honor to the Schools Division of Siargao, and the entire Caraga region.



**DID
YOU
KNOW**



Mante is one of the first timers orthopedically handicapped athletes from Caraga region who joined the Palarong Pambansa.

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Caraga Sepak girls storm into semis with a commanding win over Region 1

By PONCIANO G. ALNGOG, CATHERINE B. VERDEFLOP

With a fiery display of skill, strategy, and team synergy, the Caraga Girls Sepak Takraw team delivered a resounding victory against Region 1 (Cagayan Valley) in the Quarterfinals of the Palarong Pambansa 2025, held in Ilocos Norte.

The match began with Caraga immediately seizing control. Within moments, they surged ahead to a 5-0 lead, leaving Region 1 struggling to respond. A single point from Cagayan Valley offered a brief pause in Caraga's scoring run, but it was quickly answered by the relentless attacks of the Caraga spikers.

The crowd roared as Montero delivered back-to-back "magic spikes," widening the lead to 10-2. With their defense unbreakable and momentum firmly in hand, Caraga pushed forward to 14-2. A final perfectly executed play sealed the first set with a resounding 15-2 win—an early display of the firepower they brought to Ilocos Norte.

In the second set, Region 1 tried to regroup and capitalized briefly on a service error from Caraga to score the opening point. But Caraga responded with renewed intensity, quickly overtaking the lead at 6-1. The coordination between spikers, setters, and tekong was razor-sharp, leaving Region 1 grasping for answers.

As Caraga stretched the lead to 10-1, the rhythm of the game was unmistakably theirs. Even as Cagayan Valley managed to inch forward to 3 points, it was Bullo's solid service that sealed their fate. With seamless transitions and tight defense, Caraga stormed to a commanding 15-3 finish in the second set.

With this explosive victory, the Caraga Sepak Girls have advanced to the semifinals, riding a wave of momentum, discipline, and heart. Their eyes are now fixed on the championship, as they continue to carry not just the hopes of their school and region, but the spirit of Caraganon excellence.



Make a Splash: Niño's Story of Excellence

By RONALD ALLAN A. ARCAYERA, PhD
Secondary School Principal, SDO Surigao City

Since an early age, he has been diving for medals. He gives pride and recognition to his parents and school through the many swimming tournaments he has participated. He is growing and becoming stronger as he continues to fulfill his ultimate dream- to become a great swimmer.

Too many accomplishments to mention, and it must be said that swimming is a sport that pushes him to achieve greatness in the pool, in the school, and in the future.

Let's dive into the remarkable feat of Cosme II Calejesan- a name that echoes in the annals of swimming greatness. His parents are Cosme G. Calejesan Jr. and Jenny I. Calejesan.

His first Palarong Pambansa is uncontestable as he qualified through the division and regional levels, making him one of the best local and national swimmers. The seeds of his dominance were planted in sixth grade, when he joined the division athletic meet and won 7 golds last October 2024.

His division records were also unchallenged. He remains optimistic about excellence and resilience. His legacy, marked by winning seven medals in the Caraga Regional Athletic Meet last 2024, is worthy of praise and remembrance.

He also competed in external aquatic competitions and claimed 7th place in an Open Water Swimming last March 24, 2024, at Britania Islands, San Agustin, Surigao del Sur.

Little did the Surigaonons know, this learner from Surigao City Pilot School would become an icon in swimming. He competed in the Caraga Speedo Swimming Series Leg 1 Competition in Butuan City, bringing home 4 medals which confidently placed him as one of the youngest and strongest swimmers in the event.

With these successes, he hauled remarkable medals and recently secured bronze in the 200-meter freestyle in the Palarong Pambansa 2025, competing with the best athletes nationwide. He underwent training under coach Ronel Tandayag- a remarkable partnership that his parents fully supported to ensure Niño's skills, alertness, and preparedness.

He is truly a champion. More events, more medals won, and record set in the local, national and even international tournaments. He is seriously unstoppable —becoming one of the best faces of his generation.

From Surigao City Division, his story is a tapestry of early triumphs, redemption arcs, and a relentless pursuit of excellence. His journey is a reminder that greatness isn't just about winning —it's about rising while keeping your head low.

His name is now part of history as an elementary graduate with a powerful stroke. His story is one of dreams realized, and records that seemed untouchable. His name, "Niño- the splash of excellence," remains as vibrant as ever.

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Kakayahan Higit sa Kapansanan

Ni DORES P. CLARO
Education Program Supervisor, SDO Cabadbaran City

Sa gitna ng ingay ng palakpakan, sigawan ng suporta, at mga matang punô ng pag-asa, tatlong kabataang atleta mula sa Caraga Region ang nagpamalas ng isang hindi matatawarang aral: ang tunay na lakas ay hindi nasusukat sa pisikal na anyo kundi sa tapang ng puso. Sa Palarong Pambansa 2025, umangat ang kanilang mga pangalan—hindi lamang bilang manlalaro, kundi bilang inspirasyon ng buong bayan.

Sila ay sina Mark Jancent P. Mante ng Siargao Island, Joramie Jamito, at Raul Engalan mula sa Cabadbaran City—mga atletang differently abled ngunit buo ang loob, matibay ang paninindigan, at walang kapantay ang dedikasyon. Sa bawat pag-indak ng katawan at bawat pagsambit ng sigaw ng tagumpay, pinatunayan nilang hindi kailanman balakid ang kapansanan sa pagkamit ng pangarap.

Si Mark Jancent, isang orthopedically handicapped athlete, ay nakipagsabayan sa mga piling kalahok sa Seated Shot Put – Para Athletics. Habang pinapawalan niya ang shot put sa ere, tila kasama niyang ibinabato ang mga agam-agam at takot, palayo sa kanyang landas. Ang kanyang bawat tira ay may kasamang paninindigang nagsasabing, "Ako'y narito, at ako'y lalaban."

Samantala, si Joramie Jamito, isang learner na kabilang sa Intellectual Disability (ID) category, ay buong tapang na hinarap ang Shot Put event. Bitbit niya ang tiwala ng kanyang mga guro, ang dasal ng kanyang pamilya, at ang buong pusong suporta ng Cabadbaran City. Hindi rin nagpahuli si Raul Engalan, na buong giting na kumatawan sa Bocce Secondary. Tahimik ngunit puno ng kumpiyansa, isa-isang umikot ang mga bola ng kanyang laro na tila sumasayaw sa precision at diskarte. Sa larangang ito, ipinamalas ni Raul na ang katalinuhan ay hindi lamang para sa lohika kundi para rin sa pakiramdam—at higit sa lahat, sa tiwala sa sarili.

Ang kwento nina Mark, Joramie, at Raul ay higit pa sa medalya o tropeo. Ito'y kwento ng pag-angat mula sa panghuhusga, ng paglaban sa katahimikan, at ng pagkamit ng tagumpay sa sariling paraan. Hindi lamang sila mga kalahok sa isang palaro. Sila ay buhay na patunay ng inklusibong edukasyon, ng pantay na oportunidad, at ng paninindigang walang pinipiling kalagayan o kondisyon.

Sa likod ng kanilang tagumpay ay isang malinaw na mensahe para sa buong lipunan: ang kakayahan ay hindi nasusukat sa limitasyon ng katawan kundi sa laki ng pusong handang mangarap at lumaban. Sa huli, tunay ngang Kakayahan Higit sa Kapansanan.

RAUL ENGANAN
SDO Cabadbaran City



MARK JANCENT P. MANTE
SDO Siargao Islands



JORAMIE JAMITO
SDO Cabadbaran City



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Caragold basketball secondary team claims first win against CARAA

By RONALD ALLAN A. ARCAYERA, PhD
Secondary School Principal, SDO Surigao City

Laoag City Hall Amphitheater, Ilocos Norte. The Lady Falcons of Surigao City National High School displayed a jaw-dropping performance, claiming their first win against Cordillera Administrative Region Athletic Association (CARAA) in the Palarong Pambansa Basketball Secondary category, May 27.

Despite losing their first game against EVRAA, the Caragold basketball team was motivated and merciless in their next match against Region 2, securing a 1-0 standing.

"Height is might. We did our best but we came out short. This experience serves as a learning tool for us to move forward to the next game,"

posted through Facebook page of the team showing their commitment and motivation to win on the next game.

The team delivered a strong defense against players of Region 2, winning 78-75 with their efficient playmaking, scoring and game-controlling efforts of Nicole J. Cervantes, who was named player of the game.

"Salamat sa kadaugan," said Mr. Jayson Sales, the basketball coach, as he expressed his sincere appreciation to the team and to the Almighty God for another achievement.

From the opening to the closing quarters, the team imposed its dominance, surprising the opponents with a two-point lead.

The first and second quarters thrilled Caragold as score remained close, 45-48 but they surpassed their opponents and gained strong footing until the last quarter.

As the third quarter unfolded, both teams maintained their defense, but Lady Falcons continued their tremendous efforts to win the game.

The team is now gearing up for another match and turning its focus- showcasing their remarkable skills and intentions at the same venue holding the same ground, aiming to secure another well-deserved victory.



An Ilocano angel on three wheels: The story of Tatay Fernando Basillo

By RANDY P. LAMANILAO

In a world often preoccupied with headlines of conflict and division, stories of quiet heroism and genuine human kindness continue to remind us of the goodness that still exists in the hearts of everyday people.

Such was the case on May 23, 2025, when a group of parents from Loreto, Agusan del Sur, found themselves lost and anxious on unfamiliar ground in Ilocos Norte. They had traveled hundreds of kilometers to support their young athletes competing in the prestigious Palarong Pambansa, but as they arrived in the northern province, the excitement quickly turned into confusion—they couldn't locate the billeting quarters assigned to the Caraga Region delegation.

Came Tatay Fernando Basillo, a tricycle driver with a kind face and an even kinder heart. Seeing the weary parents looking around with uncertainty, Tatay Fernando approached them with a simple but powerful offer: "I'll help you find your way."

Without hesitation, he led them through the unfamiliar streets, navigating with ease the roads he had probably known all his life. He wasn't obligated to help. He didn't ask for compensation. And yet, he went out of his way to ensure the guests from Mindanao would arrive safely and without worry.

When the group offered him money as a token of gratitude, he respectfully declined. It wasn't about the money. For Tatay Fernando, it was simply about being there for people who needed help—strangers, yes, but also fellow Filipinos.

The act was small in scale, but monumental in meaning. It was a moment that spoke volumes about the values of hospitality, compassion, and humility—qualities that many say define the Ilocano spirit.

The Official Facebook Page of the Municipality of Loreto later shared the heartfelt encounter, calling him "an Ilocano angel." The post quickly gained attention and warmed the hearts of many across the country. For those who read the story, Tatay Fernando became more than just a tricycle driver—he became a symbol of the everyday hero, the kind of person we all hope to meet when we're lost.

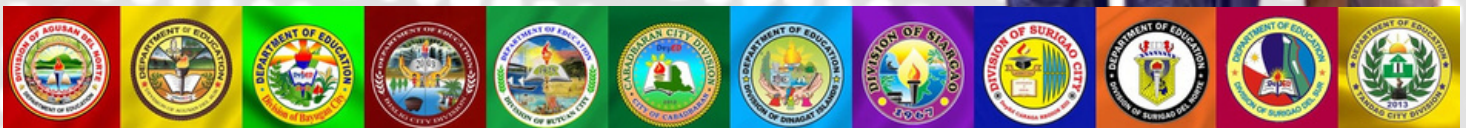
In a nation known for its bayanihan spirit, this simple act of guiding lost visitors becomes a powerful reminder that kindness doesn't require grand gestures. Sometimes, it just takes one man, one tricycle, and a heart full of generosity.

Thank you, Tatay Fernando Basillo. May your story inspire others to offer help, even when it's least expected, and especially when it's most needed.



SHINE Loreto BIBO Loreto

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Lloren clinches Silver in Elementary Taekwondo Kyorugi

By ELLA MAE SILAO NAVARRA

Llocos Norte, May 27, 2025 — Dwynard Sauier Lloren grabbed the silver medal after delivering strong and determined performance in the Elementary Boys Taekwondo Kyorugi Category 3 at the 65th Palarong Pambansa held at Laoag, Ilocos Norte.

Lloren marked an exceptional use of chagi (kicking techniques) and strategic prowess in kyorugi (sparring) matches. His agility and tactical execution were evident as he advanced through the rounds, and demonstrated rigorous training and discipline.

Guided by coach Elizalynde A. Guliman and trainer Junrey S. Robles, Lloren's preparation was both intensive and focused. Guliman expressed her pride, stating,

"We are thrilled and glad that we got the 2nd place. We competed and trained hard to reach the silver medal." Lloren, reflecting on his achievement, shared,

"I am happy to get a medal. My competitors are also strong contenders."

Dwynard Sauier Lloren

This achievement not only brings honor to Clementino V. Diez Memorial Central Elementary School but also highlights the dedication and potential of young athletes from the Caraga Region.

Lloren's success serves as an inspiration to aspiring taekwondo practitioners and underscores the importance of perseverance, discipline, and support in reaching athletic excellence.



Blades of Glory

Tandag's Arnis Champions Strike Gold in Sport and Scholarship

By JEANETTE R. ISIDRO

In the quiet hours before sunrise and the long nights after classes, they trained—not just to win, but to become. In a world where youth is often torn between passion and responsibility, three young warriors from Jacinto P. Elpa National High School stood tall, wielding both their arnis sticks and their schoolbooks with unmatched determination.

Celia Mer C. Najaro, Ysai Winslet Lorejo, and Charlyn Diaz are not ordinary students. they are champions—on the mat and in the classroom. Their journey from humble beginnings to national recognition in the Palarong Pambansa is not merely a story of athletic victory; it is a story of heart, grit, and balance.

Their saga began in 2023, when Ysai carved her name into the arena with a silver in the combative event, while Celia Mer claimed a bronze, each medal a hard-earned tribute to hours of sacrifice. In 2024, destiny aligned as Charlyn joined the formidable pair, and Celia Mer, now team captain, led them to a gold medal in the Synchronized Double Weapon and a bronze in the Synchronized Single Weapon, while also snatching a silver in her individual event. By 2025, the trio was unstoppable—precision, power, and poetry in motion—bringing home yet another gold in Synchronized Double Weapon, cementing their legacy.

But behind the medals lies a deeper triumph. These young women never allowed their pursuit of athletic excellence to eclipse their academic aspirations. Celia Mer and Charlyn, consistent academic achievers, proved that

excellence in one field need not mean compromise in another. They learned to live in two worlds—the quiet discipline of study and the fierce intensity of competition—navigating both with grace.

Their days were shaped by relentless routines: early morning drills, long hours in class, grueling evening practices, and late-night reviews. But they endured. Why? Because they believed that greatness does not come from talent alone - it comes from the will to push beyond limits, even when no one is watching.

This journey would not have been possible without the guiding hands behind the scenes: coaches Christine Rose Montenegro (2023), Alyn Tolero (2024), and Shella Mae Najaro (2025), the unwavering support of trainers Lotchie Bautista and Kennex Donasco, and the watchful mentorship of event manager Mrs. Egy I. Jumadla. Together, they nurtured not just athletes, but future leaders and role models.

At the heart of it all was the love of family and the faith of the Tandag City community, a force that lifted them in moments of doubt and gave them strength when the burden felt too heavy. In their cheers, the girls heard not just support—but belief.

To every young dreamer standing at the crossroads of passion and responsibility, the story of Celia Mer, Ysai Winslet, and Charlyn offers this truth: you don't have to choose. You can be both brilliant and brave, a scholar and a warrior. And in doing so, you light the way for others to follow



Caraga's Rachel Ann Sarmiento Secures Palaro Bronze in Taekwondo

By RANDY P. LAMANILAO

For 12-year-old Rachel Ann E. Sarmiento of Claver Central Elementary School in Surigao del Norte, the journey to a bronze medal in the Elementary Taekwondo Kyurogi, Category 3, at the Palarong Pambansa 2025 was a poignant mix of triumphs and tears, ultimately culminating in hard-earned success.

Guided by Coach Diane T. Apatan and trainer Kinleo Dador, Rachel Ann showcased immense courage on the mat. Reflecting on her path, she shared the intensity of her first bout: "My first game was against Region 7. My opponents were really quick." While her second opponent withdrew due to a medical issue, her final fight for a chance at gold proved to be the most heart-wrenching. "My last fight, against Region 11, was only a one-point gap," she recounted, her voice still holding a hint of the disappointment, "I really cried."

Accepting defeat, especially by such a narrow margin, is a tough lesson for any athlete, particularly a young one. "I cried. It was just a one-point gap. What a waste," Rachel Ann admitted, raw with emotion. "But I accepted the defeat." This moment of vulnerability highlights the depth of her commitment and the passion she brings to her sport.

When asked about the hardest part of her final match, Rachel Ann pinpointed her opponent's strategy. "Her techniques, her flicker, hit my head. She frequently walked during the fight. She kept attacking." Despite facing such an aggressive opponent, Rachel Ann recognized her own strengths, confidently stating, "My strong points are cut kicks."

The bronze medal, while not gold, is a testament to Rachel Ann's tenacity and the unwavering support system behind her. She expressed heartfelt gratitude: "Thanks to my parents for their support, to everyone who always wished me good luck, my coach, trainers, and friends." Her journey at Palarong Pambansa 2025 is a powerful reminder that true victories often lie not just in medals, but in the courage to compete, the grace to accept challenges, and the enduring spirit of a young fighter. Congratulations, Rachel Ann!



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Letter to the athletes

Ponciano G. Alngog

To our young athletes,

As the 2025 Palarong Pambansa draws to a close, our hearts remain full of pride knowing that you stood among the few chosen to represent the Caraga Region on the national stage. We've witnessed your journey from the very beginning—how you trained with determination, made countless sacrifices, and overcame every challenge that came your way. Reaching this point alone is already a triumph, and for that, you have made us immensely proud.

Now, you stand on the national stage. And though we may not be by your side in every match, please know that our love and support are with you every step of the way. You've already made us proud—not because of medals or scores—but because you've shown courage, discipline, and heart in representing our region.

We long for the day we welcome you home—not for the glory of a win, but simply because you are ours. Whether you come back with a medal around your neck or with stories of battles bravely fought, you will return to open arms and grateful hearts.

You are already victors in our eyes. You carried the Caraganon spirit to the grandest arena, and that in itself is a victory worth celebrating. So play with all your heart. Let every stride, every serve, every leap be a reflection of who you are and what you've become. We wait for your return—not just as athletes, but as young heroes who made Caraga proud.

With all our love and longing,
Your Parents



steaming kinohaya



A Local's Warm Welcome in Dingras

By WINSTON C. EBEN

YUM!

While exploring the heart of Dingras in search of a good meal this afternoon, May 28, 2025, we stumbled upon An unexpected gem: a humble eatery serving steaming bowls of miki noodles that offered more than just comfort food.

Tucked along a quiet street, Joe Andrews Miki and Eatery stood out not just for its aroma, but for its heartwarming story. Established in 1980 by Nanay Letty and named after her eldest son, Joe Andrews, this small food stall has become a local favorite. Through her flavorful miki noodles—rich, savory, and lovingly prepared—Nanay Letty was able to support her family and send all her children to school. Today, they are all professionals, a proud legacy built from a humble kitchen.

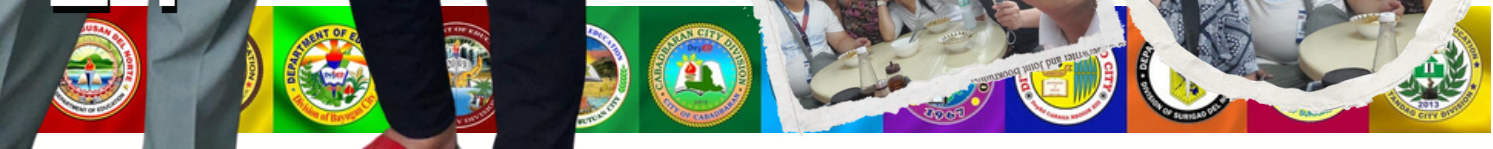
As delegates from the Caraga Region, we were deeply touched by the warm hospitality. Nanay Letty graciously served us a full meal for free as a gesture of welcome—crisp lumpiang gulay, their well-loved special miki noodles, and a sweet graham bar for dessert.

Adding to the joy of the visit was a heartfelt conversation with our officemate, who shares Ilocano roots through her mother's side. This instant connection brought smiles, stories, and laughter around the table, making the experience even more special.

In Dingras, kindness is not just a custom—it's a way of life. And at Nanay Letty's eatery, it's served with every bowl of miki. Her story is one of resilience, love, and the kind of hospitality that makes you feel instantly at home.



tasty



Suot ko ang CARAGA

Pero ramdam ko ang
kabutihan ng

ILOCOS

BY FRENGIE BOTOY

Bilang bahagi ng delegasyon ng Rehiyon Caraga sa Palarong Pambansa, lagi kong suot ang damit na may tatak na “Caraga” nang may buong pagmamalaki. Hindi lang ito lugar sa mapa—ito ang tahanan ko. Dito kami tinuruan ng respeto, kabutihan, at pagpapakumbaba. Kaya nang may isang taong nagbitaw ng hindi maganda at mapanirang komento tungkol sa Ferdinand E. Marcos Stadium, parang tinamaan kaming lahat.

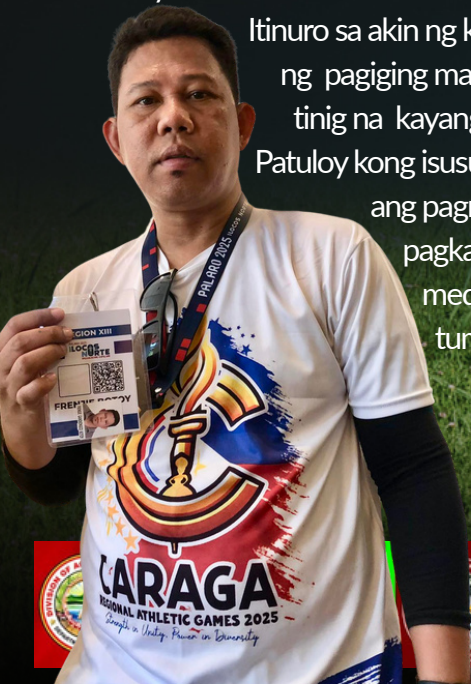
Ang sinabi ni Dahlia—“Kala ko ba maganda ang stadium ng Ilocos, maganda pa ang sports complex ng Agusan del Sur oi!”—ay tila lumampas sa pagiging opinyon. Agad namang naglabas ng pahayag ang Region Caraga na hindi siya bahagi ng opisyal na delegasyon, at na ang kanyang pananalita ay hindi sumasalamain sa pananaw ng buong rehiyon. Pero kahit malinaw na ang lahat, dama pa rin namin ang epekto.

Habang suot ko ang “Caraga” sa aking damit, pakiramdam ko ay iba ang tingin sa amin. May mga bulungan, may mga tanong sa mata ng tao. “Ay, taga-Caraga. Sila ‘yon.” Gusto kong ipaliwanag. Gusto kong sabihin na hindi kami ‘yon. Gusto kong ipagtanggol ang rehiyon ko, kahit alam kong wala akong ginawang mali.

Pero sa kabila ng lahat, hindi nagbago ang pakikitungo ng mga Ilokano sa amin. Mainit pa rin ang kanilang pagtanggap, maayos ang pakikisalamuha, at ramdam namin ang tunay na paggalang. Mas lalo akong nahirapan. Dahil sa kabutihan nila, mas napatunayan kong may nasaktan talaga—at sana hindi na ito nangyari. Kung pwede ko lang silang makausap bilang kapwa Pilipino, sasabihin ko: “Pasensya na po. Hindi po kami ganoon. Pumunta kami dito para makipagpaligsahan, makipagkaibigan, at magdala ng karangalan sa aming rehiyon.”

Itinuro sa akin ng karanasang ito ang mga bagay na hindi matututuhan sa paligsahan—ang halaga ng pagiging maingat sa salita, ang bigat ng pagiging kinatawan, at ang kapangyarihan ng isang tinig na kayang makasira, ngunit mas kayang bumawi ng marami pang tinig ng kabutihan.

Patuloy kong isusuot ang “Caraga” sa aking dibdib. Marahil mas maingat na ngayon, pero mas buo ang pagmamahal. Dahil alam ko kung sino kami. At alam ko, kaya naming itama ang pagkakamali. Nawa’y magsilbing paalala ito sa ating lahat—na sa bawat laban, higit sa medalya, ang tunay na panalo ay nasa pagiging mapagpakumbaba, marunong tumanaw ng utang na loob, at laging may paggalang sa kapwa.



SACRIFICES WE RARELY SEE

by HONEY GRACE BUYAN
Teacher III, SDO Agusan del Norte

Their names aren't called, but their hands build champions. Their words build courage. Their hearts stay behind every triumph.

Every athlete who stands on the stage of victory has someone behind them. Someone who believed in them before anyone else did. Someone who pushed them to rise, not just to win—but to grow. That someone is the coach.

A coach is more than just a teacher. A coach is a guide, a listener, a protector, and sometimes, a second parent. Long before the games begin, the coach is already there—training, correcting, encouraging. In the quiet hours of practice, in moments of frustration, in the middle of doubt—the coach stands beside their athlete.

When an athlete wins, it's the coach's hug that means the most. It's not just about the medal. It's about the early mornings, the painful injuries, the tears held back, and the hard days when giving up seemed easier. That hug says, "You did it. We did it."

But even in loss, the coach stays. They do not walk away. They offer their hand, a quiet word, a nod of understanding. They remind the athlete that failure does not define them. It is simply part of the journey.

A coach does not only cheer for the gold. They celebrate small wins—the first clean landing, the improved time, the brave comeback because a real coach sees the heart, not just the result.

While athletes compete in front of the crowd, coaches often work in the shadows. They give up sleep, time with family, and their own personal dreams. They carry stress, pressure, and responsibility—but they rarely complain. They have their team on their shoulders, quietly and with pride.

A coach does not ask for medals. They ask for effort, respect, and honesty. They give everything, not for glory, but for the growth of every young person they train.

At Palarong Pambansa 2025 in Laoag City, thousands of young athletes chase their dreams. But behind every sprint, every dive, every perfect routine—is a coach who made it possible.

This week is not just about the athletes. It is about the ones who lifted them.
To the coach who never gave up...
To the coach who clapped the loudest...
To the coach who wiped away tears, gave the hard truth, and stayed even when it was difficult...
Thank you.
You are the reason these athletes stand tall.
This Palaro, the spotlight is also yours.

While the world watches seconds on the clock, coaches give hours, days, and years we never see.

16



Bronze secured, gold in sight for four Caraga Boxers

by HONEY GRACE BUYAN
Teacher III, SDO Agusan del Norte

B ATAC CITY — Four young boxers from Team Caraga secured bronze medals and advanced to the semifinal round of the Palarong Pambansa 2025 following a strong performance during the quarterfinals held on May 28, 2025, at the Imelda Cultural Center in Batac City, Ilocos Norte.

With six athletes representing the region, four emerged victorious in their respective bouts, boosting Caraga's medal count and hopes for gold.

In the Pin Weight (44–46 kg) division, Mike Clifford L. Tesoro displayed tenacity and sharp counterpunching to edge out his opponent from Region 8 via a split decision. Meanwhile, in the Minimum Weight (46–48 kg) category, boxer Lorenz Kit Pallares engaged in a tactical bout against Region 3, eventually earning a hard-fought split decision victory.

Another standout performance came from Jevan Galanto in the Flyweight (48–51 kg) division, who dominated his match against Region 4A. Galanto's superior control and effective combinations led to a unanimous decision win, showcasing Caraga's growing skill in technical boxing. In the Bantamweight (52–54 kg) division, Fredelynson Cuarteron rounded out the winning team with a gritty display against Region 9, also clinching a split decision victory.

By reaching the semifinals, all four boxers are now assured of bronze medals under the tournament format, with opportunities to advance further and vie for silver or gold. Their victories not only reflect individual determination but also signal a promising resurgence in grassroots sports development in Caraga. As they move into the next stage of the competition, hopes remain high for more podium finishes that could elevate the region's standing in this year's national games.

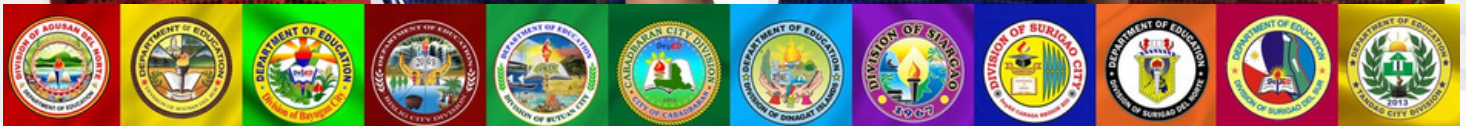


Mike Clifford L. Tesoro

Lorenz Kit Pallares

Jevan Galanto

Fredelynson Cuarteron



Janella Arpellida impresses judges, advances in Women's Artistic Gymnastics Finals

by HONEY GRACE BUYAN
Teacher III, SDO Agusan del Norte

First-time Palarong Pambansa athlete Janella D. Arpellida of Caloc-an Elementary School, under the Magallanes District in the Division of Agusan del Norte, has earned a place among the Top 8 finalists in the Single Bar apparatus for Cluster 1 – Women's Artistic Gymnastics Elementary Division. The competition was held at the Ilocos National High School Gymnasium as part of the ongoing Palarong Pambansa 2025.

Representing the Caraga Region, Arpellida showcased impressive skill and composure on the single bar, setting herself apart from other gymnasts despite being a newcomer on the national stage. Her performance secured her a spot in the final round, where she now eyes a potential medal finish.

Behind her strong debut is the steady support and training of her coach, Catherine L. Tiu, whose guidance helped the young athlete rise to the challenge of her first Palaro appearance. Arpellida's advancement is a proud milestone not just for her school but also for the entire Caraga delegation.



18



Caraga's Oser secures spot in Cluster 3 balance beam finals

by HONEY GRACE BUYAN
Teacher III, SDO Agusan del Norte

Seasoned gymnast Julia Mae Oser of Nasipit National High School Main Campus, representing the Caraga Region, has made a commanding return to the national spotlight by advancing to the Cluster 3 Finals in the Balance Beam Apparatus at the Palarong Pambansa 2025.

No stranger to high-stakes competition, Oser previously competed in the Palarong Pambansa held in Cebu, and her experience showed as she executed a poised and confident routine on the balance beam. Her routine reflected both technical precision and artistic grace, earning her a well-deserved place in the finals of one of the most challenging events in Women's Artistic Gymnastics.

Oser's continued success is proof of the comprehensive support system behind her. She is guided by head coach Resel S. Ligue and supported by trainers Rhony Ruiz, Joel A. Clarito, and Jasper R. Magbanua—a team committed to refining her skills and boosting her competitive edge.

The athlete's advancement to the final round reaffirms her status as one of the region's standout gymnasts and a strong contender for a podium finish. Her performance not only uplifts her school and district in SDO Agusan del Norte but also strengthens Caraga's growing legacy in the national gymnastics arena.



19



Caraga archer qualifies for elims after career-best performance

by ROBERT PEPE JR. , SDO Agusan del Norte

May 28, 2025- The winds of Ilocos Norte carried not just arrows but the hopes and spirit of the Caraga Region as young archer Lyndy E. Caponpon stepped into the field with fire in her heart. The lone female archer representing Caraga, Lyndy, a first-time Palarong Pambansa athlete, made her debut in archery with passion, grace, and a spirit that couldn't be ignored.

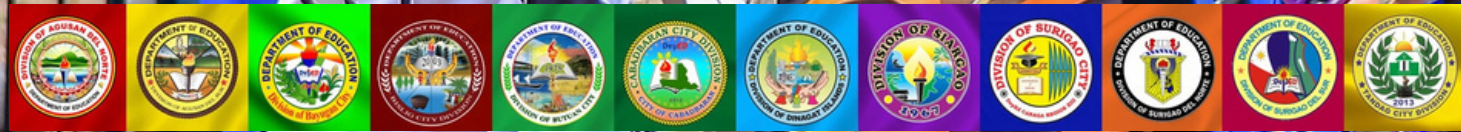
Held at the vast open grounds behind Robinsons Mall in Ilocos Norte, the archery event gathered some of the most promising young archers from across the country. Among 52 skilled participants, Lyndy landed at Rank 29, scoring 1139 points, a personal milestone as she surpassed her previous best and regional score of 1101. Naina Dominique Tagle claimed the top spot with 1294 points—but for Lyndy, the real victory was in growth and grit.

Adding to her achievement, Lyndy is now qualified for the 1/16 elimination round in the Olympic round and is still set to compete in the Mixed Team event. Representing Nasipit National Vocational School in Agusan del Norte, she is guided by Coach Al Patrick Chavit and accompanied by Chaperone Ma. Theresa Brani B. Tabanao.

Her calm focus and respectfulness off the field stand in contrast to the fire she brings when she grips the bow. Many say she reminds them of the fierce and fearless Katniss Everdeen from The Hunger Games. Despite the intense heat at the venue, Lyndy pushed forward with strength and determination—truly a Fireblaze on the archery range.



20



THE BAR THAT BEAT THE HEAT

by FRENGIE G. BOTOY
SEPS, SDO Agusan del Norte

In the blazing 44-46°C heat of Palarong Pambansa, where exhaustion and sunburn were constant companions, one unexpected oasis offered more than just cold drinks—it served up comfort, connection, and community. Welcome to the Caraga Bar, the heartbeat of hospitality in the billeting quarter of the Caraga Region at Dingras National High School, Laoag City, Ilocos Norte.

Amid the high-stakes energy of competition and the scorching summer sun, the Caraga Bar became the place to cool down. Coaches, guests, and VIPs could drop in for a glass of iced coffee, a soothing hot drink, or a zesty mocktail or cocktail. But this was more than a refreshment stand—it was a gathering place, a karaoke stage, and a symbol of how thoughtful touches can transform a space.

The idea for the Caraga Bar was brewed during the Division and Regional Athletic Meets in Agusan del Norte, where it quickly gained popularity. But its journey to the national stage began even earlier—back during the Palarong Pambansa in Cebu when the seeds of the concept were first envisioned. Recognizing its potential, SGOD Chief Glorina L. Siclon, with the full support of Schools Division Superintendent Jeanie L. Mativo, nurtured the idea until it became a fully realized initiative at this year's national games.

At the center of it all was Teacher Jason Dalogdog, who not only served as the main bartender but also brought along and trained students, giving them invaluable real-life experience in hospitality and customer service. For these young volunteers, the bar was a classroom unlike any other—lively, dynamic, and filled with real-world lessons. And then there was the karaoke. As night fell and the day's competitions faded into memory, voices rang out—sometimes in tune, sometimes not—but always with joy. It wasn't just a bar; it was a celebration.

The Caraga Bar didn't just quench thirst; it warmed hearts. It embodied the Caraga Region's culture of care, creativity, and camaraderie. A simple idea, nurtured with heart and vision, became a highlight of the national games and a proof to the spirit of DepEd Caraga.

So, if you're ever wandering the halls of Palarong Pambansa and hear laughter over music or catch the scent of brewed coffee in the breeze—follow it. You might find yourself at the Caraga Bar, where everyone is invited to chill, sip, sing, and smile.



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