

PRESS RELEASE**DepEd chief opens Cordillera athletic meet 2019 in Apayao**

LUNA, APAYAO, March 1, 2019 – A crowd of around 7,000 athletes, coaches, tournament officials, and heads of delegations from all over the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) flocked to the Apayao Eco-Tourism and Sports Complex (AETSC) for the opening of the five-day CAR Athletic Association (CARAA) Meet, which will end on March 3.

Department of Education (DepEd) Secretary Leonor Magtolis Briones graced the festivities and delivered the keynote address: “You have prepared so hard for this and your parents have been inspiring you. Now is the time...this is the culmination of all your efforts, so I encourage all of you, each of the participating teams, particularly the athletes, to do your very best.”

Briones is the first DepEd Secretary to visit the Schools Division of Apayao. Since she assumed leadership of the Department, she has visited nearly all 221 schools division offices nationwide.

The Education chief, who was formally introduced by Undersecretary for Field Operations and the Bureau of Human Resource and Organizational Development Revsee Escobedo, also reminded the young athletes that while winning is their target, “beyond winning, of course, is how you played the game.”

Colors, festivities

The colorful parade of delegates—Abra Stallions, Baguio e-Lions, Benguet Stingers, Ifugao Builders, Kalinga Bulls, Mt. Province Brave Mountaineers, Tabuk City Brewers, and Apayao Eagles—were followed by the street dances portraying festivals of the seven towns of Apayao.

A unity dance led by the Apayao Eagles; the hoisting of the DepEd and delegation banners led by DepEd-CAR Director May Eclar of DepEd-CAR; the lighting of the CARAA torch by 11th grader Harry Jones Olivas, who was a bronze medalist in Arnis during the 2018 *Palarong Pambansa*; and the administration of the Oath of Sportsmanship led by 11th grader Kate Angelique Baysa, who was also a bronze medalist in Arnis in the 2018 *Palaro*, all formed part of the festivities.

Lone District of Apayao Rep. Eleanor Bulut-Begtang, who welcomed the delegations, was likewise present in the occasion, and lauded the national line agencies and the local governments for their contribution to the success of the annual sports event.

Important lessons

Briones also called on all the athletes to compete to the best of their abilities, and do so with their values intact: “This is an athletic meet. This is a competitive meet. Compete to the best of your ability with each other, but do it with all honesty. Do it with all courage. Do it with all dignity.”

“However don’t forget also that even as you consider each other as competitor, a possible enemy, a rival, an opponent, by the end of this meet, by the end of

this event, you will all be one because you will be representing the CAR,” she stated.

She also added that more than playing well, having the best uniform or most comfortable shoes, and carrying the most colorful umbrella, the most important lesson of the athletic meet are the friendships developed out of team work.

“So let us all have a good time. We compete with each other. We fight with each other. We study each other, but at the end of the week, we will all be one. . .” the Secretary concluded.

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