

**DepEd Story****On his mark: Raul Cultivar's race to *Palarong Pambansa* 2019**

Life is often compared to a marathon, but it is more like a sprint—long stretches of hard work punctuated by fleeting moments of triumph when you know you have given your best shot. A lot of people run a race to see who is fastest, but today's course is not all about speed. It is more about motivation and dedication to become a champion.

The gun goes off, and this is how the life of Raul Abasolo Cultivar, a student of Sto. Tomas National High School (STNHS) in Davao del Norte, started. He has been playing track and field for almost five years, and got his first medal in the Davao Regional Athletic Association (DAVRAA) Meet 2017. In the 2018 tournament, he bagged two gold medals and a silver for 400-meter hurdle and 4x400-meter relay. He also won 8<sup>th</sup> place in the *Palarong Pambansa* in Vigan City.

The year 2019 became a turning point in the life of this 18-year-old athlete when he became champion with three gold medals for long jump, triple jump, and 4x400-meter relay in this year's DAVRAA Meet held at the University of Mindanao.

"He started in grade 8 with no knowledge in running and jumping. Raul is a good athlete. He follows instructions, knows how to sacrifice, and stays focused all the time," coach Beverly Villarino, a senior high school teacher of STNHS, shared.

"The truth is I never dreamed to become a champion. Before I achieved this, I had a lot of struggles—injuries, school work, and financial problems. But I rose up to the challenge because my family, my coach, and my school serve as my inspiration," Raul relayed.

The young athlete shared that there are times when he can't go to school because he doesn't have money for the fare. Despite this, his strong fighting spirit prevailed.

Like all other student-athletes, Raul also had to balance sports and academic work. He did this through time management and self-discipline. He believed in himself, sacrificed personal time, and exerted his best effort in training for his chosen sport.

Although this year will be his last performance in the *Palarong Pambansa*, Raul said he will give his all for a scholarship he is aspiring for. To him, this is the only way he can finish school because his parents could not afford to send him to college. He wants to take up a maritime course at the University of Perpetual Help System Dalta in Las Piñas City, the school which offered him a scholarship grant.

Raul never paid heed to negative thoughts and pressures; he always chose to stand on his own feet to run and jump through the roadblocks in life. In doing so, he discovered what champions, like himself, are made of.

**END**

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