

DepEd Story

Rough terrains: Jem Russell Taboco's road to success



It was 15 minutes before five o'clock in the morning. A little boy tiptoes discreetly on the cold bamboo floor where he sleeps at night, careful not to wake up his loved-ones. He creeps outside the cramped room and starts getting ready for school.

Jem Russell Taboco, a nine-year-old fourth grader from Namuag Elementary school, conditions himself for another trek along the two misty and rough terrains of Barangay Cacao, Panabo City. Jem has to endure this trip every day just to arrive in time for the school's flag ceremony, most of the time drenching himself either in rain or sweat.

His daily routine caught the eyes of Coach Tarsing, a 60-year-old teacher in the same school, who then enjoined Jem to be his trainee for athletics. The coach saw potential in the boy who, without reservations, submitted himself to a series of intensive training. Jem joined the school's intramurals until he reached the City Meet. His mother, who is a store errand, and his father, a driver, supported and allowed him to submit himself to Coach Tarsing for rigid practice.

All his hardships in life which include feeding hogs and goats further drove Jem to strive harder to be part of the Panabo City delegation not because of the incentives promised to him, but because of his dream to be the best athlete ever.

After tedious trainings and rigorous trials, his time has finally come. Jem, now in Grade 6, brought pride and honor to Namuag Elementary School when he bagged the first gold medal in the 2019 Davao Regional Athletic Association (DAVRAA) Meet after dominating the long jump event for boys-elementary category. He is thankful to his fatherly coach, his parents, and all those who cheered for him.

Aside from long jump, Jem also indulges himself in running events. He looks forward to joining the 2019 *Palarong Pambansa* in Davao City.

END

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