

DepEd Story**Goal post: Francis Iverson Sambaan aspires to become football star of 2019 *Palarong Pambansa***

On his second year of playing for the Cagayan de Oro Athletic Association (COAA), Francis Iverson Sambaan emerged as one of the most popular players in the Northern Mindanao Regional Athletic Association (NMRAA) Meet held in Tangub City from December 16 to 20, 2018.

Francis scored 13 goals in four games including the championship match against the Misamis Occidental Football Team, for which he was named the "scoring machine." He was instrumental in making history for COAA football team after winning the championship games for the last two years. His commitment, dedication, and optimism earned him respect from in and out of the football field.

One of two siblings and the youngest in the family, Francis is a Grade 6 learner from Pagatpat Elementary School. His greatest motivation and inspiration is his family. On his journey to the 2018 *Palarong Pampook*, he encountered challenges in adjusting his training schedules and balancing it with his studies. He believed that his strong faith in God, positivity, and self-discipline are what made him victorious.

The young footballer, who started playing the sport at the age of seven, is also thankful for the support of his parents, coach, teammates' parents, the school, the officials of DepEd Cagayan De Oro Division, and the local government unit.

"I'm so grateful to my parents who supported my decision in playing football. Also, to the champion of education in Cagayan De Oro City, Hon. Oscar Moreno, Schools Division Superintendent Jonathan Dela Peña, and Assistant Schools Division Superintendent Alicia Anghay for believing in me," Francis shared.

He likewise attributed his success to his teammates, coach/trainer Wilbert Racines, and the COAA management. His humility, focus, and willingness to be trained served as his gears and weapons for success.

With his passion for football, Francis aspires to become a professional football player and to join the Philippine football team in the future. For now, his goal is to be the football star of the 2019 *Palarong Pambansa* to be held in Davao City.

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