

'Sports a catalyst for human capital devt'

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KOTA KINABALU: Swimmer Chuah Jia Peng and hurdler Felnidiah Lok Kassim scooped the Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Sportsman and Sportswoman 2011 awards respectively at its Sports Awards Night held at the 1Borneo Grand Ballroom on Monday.

Taiping-born Chuah, who is a final year medicine student at the varsity, was chosen among five other nominees namely Asry Abbas (badminton), Kenson Rubanjar (athletics), Nitas Bin Camillus Tan Sing Bee (athletics), Abdul Azim Azizan Abdul Malek (silat) and Pang Tsun Kuo (athletics).

His excellent show throughout 2011 impressed the selection panel.

His notable achievement was at the MASUM Sports Carnival 2011 where he created a new meet record en route to winning three gold medals in the men's 100m, 200m medley and 200m butterfly events.

At the meet, he also bagged another four silver and four bronze medals.

Chuah, 24, also won another 10 gold medals three other meets of almost the same level.

Chuah was not around to receive his award as he was said to be in the national capital.

On the other hand, State Sukma hurdler Felnidiah eclipsed three other nominees - Asong Joseph (athletics), Dayang anak Manggie (netball) and Norsyamsiah Waridi (athletics) - to eventually win the award.

The first year Sports Science (Education and Social Development) student shattered the meet record in the women's 100m hurdles en



SPORTSWOMAN WINNER ... Felnidiah (right) receiving her prizes from Pang (2nd right) as Kamaruzaman and Asyraaf (left) look on.

route to winning the gold medal at this year's MASUM Track and Field Championship.

She also won the gold medal in the same event at the Sabah Open Track and Field Championship.

An ecstatic Felnidiah, who hails from Kg Landung Ayang, Kudat, when met after receiving her award, said this (winning the award) will inspire her to work harder both in her studies and the sport.

The 22-year-old lass is also determined to win her first individual medal when she dons the State colours at the upcoming Sukma in Pahang in July.

"I'm happy and thank God for being given this recognition. I would like to say thank you to all who have been giving me all the support," said Felnidiah.

Both Chuah and Felnidiah respectively received a trophy and RM1,000 cash from Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Peter Pang En Yin, who was the guest of honour at the function.

Eldy Sham Bin Irlon and

ROLL OF HONOUR:- SPORTSMAN: Chuah Jia Peng (Swimming); **SPORTSWOMAN:** Felnidiah Lok Kassim (Athletics); **MOST PROMISING MALE ATHLETE:** Eldy Sham Irlon (Athletics); **MOST PROMISING FEMALE ATHLETE:** Emmy Ahkim (Athletics); **BEST COACH:** Lim Min Hee (Taekwondo); **BEST TEAM:** Taekwondo Team (Poomsae - Raymond Toh Meng Hui, Mohd Fakhur Razi and Yeo Kok Siong).

Emmy Ahkim, both from athletics, were named as the Most Promising Athletes while Korean Lee Min Hee (taekwondo) walked home with the Best Coach Award while her team (Taekwondo Poomsae) Raymond Toh Meng Hui, Mohd Fakhur Razi and Yeo Kok Siong won the Best Team Award.

Speaking at the function, Pang said sports is no longer a venue just for seeking glory or for leisure pursuits, but it has become a catalyst for human capital development as well as potential to generate great returns.

In the Western countries for instance, Pang said the sports industry is one of the industries that contributes to economic growth.

Meanwhile, UMS Vice

Chancellor Datuk Seri Panglima Dr Kamaruzaman Hj Ampon said nowadays, sports people are fortunate because sports has been given top priority before insisting that the perception that university is the grave of sports has been buried.

"Sportsmen nowadays are being encouraged and given vast opportunities to enter universities with minimum qualification. They are even given sports scholarships, of which the amount is bigger than the other scholarships," said Kamaruzaman.

Prof Madya Datuk Dr Hj Kassim Hj Mansur, who is the Deputy Vice Chancellor, and UMS Sports Unit Director, Mohd Asyraaf Abdullah were among those present at the function.