

'We need athletes who can think'

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KOTA KINABALU: The country needs to produce quality athletes with intelligence, said Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Tawfiq Abu Bakar Titingan in his opening speech at the 3rd Borneo Graduates Games which is held at University Malaysia Sabah (UMS) on Tuesday.

"We need athletes who can think. The knowledge of strategy, tactic and technique is very important in elite athletes and they cannot solely be based on skills and the institution of higher learning is the perfect place to produce such athletes," he said.

He hopes more athletes will be discovered through the Games and go on to represent the state and the country in the future as in the case of Pandalela Renong who has won an Olympic bronze for the country in London in 2012.

He said sports is no longer just merely an exercise for the masses and he called on parents to encourage their children to get involved in sports in the early stage as it can become a very lucrative career for

them in the future.

"Just look at the developed countries such as Japan and Korea, many of them have used sports as platforms to become millionaires. Therefore I urge parents to expose their children to sports early so that their talents could be identified and further developed into elite athletes."

He also cited footballers in the country as an example where they can earn at least RM15,000 a month while Super League team such as JDT can afford to pay RM50,000 and above for their players.

Also present at the opening ceremony was UMS Vice Chancellor Prof Datuk Mohd Harub Abdullah and other officials.

Meanwhile, a total of 26 teams are taking part in the four-day event and participating teams comprised of both private and public Higher Education Institutions from Brunei, Kalimantan, Indonesia as well as Sarawak and hosts Sabah. Seven sports will be contested namely Futsal (Men and Women), Beach Volleyball (Men and Women), Sepak Takraw, Volleyball (Men and Women), Chess, Ping-Pong and Petanque (Men and Women)



The biennial event is aimed at providing opportunities to higher education students of Sabah and Sarawak to compete against students from other parts of

Borneo as well as to identify potential talent in the respective sport.

It is also an effort to support the country's core sports and to give exposure to

the students on the Sports Science and Physical Education (PJ) programme in Sabah and Sarawak IPT related to high-level management.

Tawfiq giving away a souvenir to one of the contingents with Harun (right) looking on.