

## **GREAT MOMENTS IN OUR SPORTING HISTORY**

### **JACKSON & DAVID SEETO - WEIGHTLIFTING**

Two of the leading lights in the history of PNG Weightlifting were the Rabaul brothers, Jackson and David Seeto. Their family was a well-established one with the grand parents arriving from China in 1900, during the German colonial period.

They attended boarding school in Australia, and while there they were exposed to a very wide range of well-organised sports. They participated with enthusiasm and good success.

On return from school in Australia in the early sixties they continued to join many different sporting teams in Rabaul, again with considerable success. They started body-building at the Spartacus Club in Rabaul. This club was on the property of Mr Chin Hoi Meen, whose son Raymond established PNG's top music recording company.

To help channel their efforts, Eric Evans from Hoskins came to Rabaul and taught many enthusiasts the correct techniques of weightlifting. From a background of all-round sporting excellence, they had found their niche. PNG weightlifting had now arrived.

First to represent PNG was David, who was selected to be a member of the Weightlifting Team in the 1962 British Empire and Commonwealth Games in Perth. He was part of our trail-blazing group of sportsmen who were the first ever to compete in a multi-sport Games. Other sports represented in that 1962 Team were Athletics, Boxing and Lawn Bowls.

David finished in 8<sup>th</sup> position in the 56kg category with a combined total of 485 lbs. (We were still using the old Imperial measurements in those days. It converts to 219.99 kg).

It was a good start in the Commonwealth Games for a sport that has proved to be our most successful in the 52 years of our participation. We have now won two gold and one silver medal in Weightlifting. David led the way.

In the following year we saw the First South Pacific Games in Suva, Fiji. Unfortunately Weightlifting was not on the programme. Jackson, however, being a good all-round sportsman was selected for the Basketball Team. They went on to win the bronze medal.

Weightlifting made its debut in the 1966 SPG in Nouméa. Here the two brothers were up against each other in the Featherweight Division.

The older brother, Jackson, won this tightly contested division with a total of 250kg. Only marginally behind him was David with 247.5kg. Gold and silver to the Brothers Seeto – and PNG.

After the Nouméa Games the brothers made a pact that they would not compete against each other again, and they arranged their body weights to ensure that they would be in different divisions next time the Games came around.

In the 1969 Port Moresby SPG, competing in front of their home crowd, Jackson won the gold medal in the Bantamweight Division with a total of 545 lbs (247.20 kg) and David won the gold medal in the Featherweight Division with 578.5 lbs (262.20 kg).

Two years later, in the 1971 Tahiti SPG, David won the gold again in the Featherweight Division with a total lift of 260 kg. Jackson, competing in the Flyweight Division won the bronze medal with a combined total of 217.5 kg.

Jackson was one of two flag bearers at the Tahiti Games. In the pre-Independence era PNG had two official flags.

After three SPG their friendly rivalry had produced four gold medals, one silver medal, and one bronze medal for PNG. Weightlifting in PNG was off to a great start with much more success in the Games ahead – and on the wider world stage.

Their last outing to represent PNG at the SPG was at the 1975 Guam Games. Now living in Kimbe, without any good training facility, they were still able to both finish in 4<sup>th</sup> position in their respective divisions. Like all sporting stars, life eventually dictates a change in priorities as family and business responsibilities became much more important. The two brothers had represented PNG at the first five Games – a significant achievement. They can look back on those 14 years of representative honours with a well-deserved sense of satisfaction.

Sadly some South Pacific Games medals, and sporting memorabilia, were lost in a house fire in Kimbe (Jackson's house) in the late 1970's. Many photos however, did survive. Despite the loss of some of the memorabilia, the memories of their sporting success remain and we are glad that they have been able to share them with *Great Moments in Our Sporting History*.

The brothers regularly return to PNG with their families, and travel to Bougainville, where they are involved in church activities. They expressed an interest in returning to Port Moresby for the Games in July. We hope that they can make it.



From the left - David Seeto and then Jackson Seeto.