



21st November 2023

AFP members prepare athletes for 2023 Pacific Games

AFP members who live and work in Solomon Islands have dedicated their extra time and expertise in various sports to help prepare local athletes competing in the 2023 Pacific Games.

AFP member, Kevin Shaw, an advisor for the RSIPF-AFP Policing Partnership Program (RAPPP) is the coach of the Solomon Islands Judo team.

Since his deployment into the country, Shaw has dedicated his private time when not doing policing duties to training the judo team.

Shaw has been practicing judo for 40 years and was approached at a competition in Australia to work with the Solomon Islands judo team for the Pacific Games.

He has been performing his AFP role while also coaching local judo athletes to get them to reach competition standards, introduce them to new skills and get them mentally prepared for a major tournament.

"The team has been going very well. They are very keen, willing to learn and have enjoyed their training.

There has been a huge improvement in the skills of these judo athletes. It has been so rewarding to be a part of the story and journey of these athletes.

There are a lot of players who will be competitive at this Pacific Games, but the main thing is the local judo athletes are enjoying themselves. This is the first competition for all the athletes so as long as they enjoy themselves and they learn from it, they will just get better and better," Shaw said

Local judo athlete, Elizabeth Masae, said the team has prepared well for these games.

"The Pacific Games are a history making moment for Solomon Islands and we are very proud to be a part of it," Ms Masae said.

She said they are so thankful to have Shaw as their coach who trained them in many new skills and techniques.

Another AFP member who is coaching the Solomon Islands Golf team for the Pacific Games is Senior Constable Nathan Weaver, a professional golfer prior to joining the AFP.

Senior constable Weaver has spent most of his private time improving players' technical and mental ability for tournament play.

In collaboration with the Solomon Islands National Institute of Sport (SINIS), he has been instrumental in ensuring the team is resourced with new clubs, balls, shoes and gloves.

Senior constable Weaver was also instrumental in organising a team trip to Australia where the team had the opportunity to play world-class golf courses as part of their preparation for the Pacific Games.

He said it had been extraordinary to be able to give the players an opportunity to represent their country in this regional event.

"Golf has been a big part of my life and it has been so special to be able to give back to a country that means so much to me," Senior Constable Weaver said.

He said members of the local golf team are proud to represent their country in this event, and on their home golf course, and to showcase what they have been working hard towards.

"If we were to win at least two medals in the Pacific Games, one in the ladies' comp and one in the men's comp, it would make me prouder than anything," Senior Constable Weaver said.

Local golf athlete, Ravatu Tabe, said it was a privilege to have the guidance of Nathan ahead of the games.

"We are so blessed to have the opportunity to train under Nathan who has taught us new skills and given us a lot of confidence in preparation for the Pacific Games," Ms Tabe said.

She said she is excited to represent her country in front of a home crowd.

"I have been playing golf here for more than 20 years and I can't wait to showcase my skills this year- in this Pacific Games," Ms. Tabe added.

Another AFP member is also providing coaching support to the SINIS track sprint by supporting a group of 95 local athletes from the National Training Squad and Emerging Talent Squad including three para-athletes.

He has helped the athletes develop their running technique, speed endurance, strength and power ahead of the Pacific Games.

At the Solomon Games, held in Honiara earlier this year, athletes he trained won more than 40 medals.

"The tenacity and determination of these athletes is truly amazing given the challenges they face in their daily lives.

Media inquiries

RSIPF Media Unit:
24016 or 23800 Ext 239

Email:
rsipf.media@rsipf.gov.sb

The Royal Solomon Islands Police Force (RSIPF) was established in 1954. It's mission is 'To provide a safe and peaceful Solomon Islands by strengthening relationships with the community'. The RSIPF strive to provide efficient and effective policing services for the Solomon Islands and expect RSIPF officers to adhere to the RSIPF values.

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It has been both humbling and extremely gratifying training these young men and women who just want to better themselves, represent their country and be positive role models for Solomon Islands youth," the AFP member who is coaching the local track sprint athletes said.

Some other AFP members are supporting local athletes, in other sports like rugby, with trainings.

The support these AFP members offered have been on volunteer-basis and during their time outside police duties.

The passion to hone the skills and knowledge of local athletes and engage with the community is what drives these AFP members to commit to help training them.

This is the first time in more than 40 years the Pacific Games is hosted in the Solomon Islands. Over 5000 participants from 24 Oceania countries and territories are in Honiara competing across 24 sports.

The AFP is also working side-by-side with the RSIPF in support of its Pacific Games security operation.

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