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Aidid: Athletes must qualify on merit from now on

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THE Malaysian AAU (MAAU) want State affiliates to unearth new talent for the 2001 Kuala Lumpur Sea Games, 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester, and 2002 Asian Games Pusan.

This is part of the MAAU's comprehensive plan to uplift the sagging fortunes of athletics as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had voiced concern over the sorry state of Malaysian sports.

MAAU president Datuk Syed Mohamad Aidid Syed Mustaza said the union plan to host several meets and it is important the State affiliates identify new talent so that prospective athletes could be identified.

"The Sea Games are scheduled to be held in September and prior to that, MAAU will be hosting the national meet scheduled in July.

"There will be other smaller meets and the State affiliates could test their athletes to see whether they meet the qualifying times set by us," said Syed Aidid at a centralised workshop for coaches from all States at the Risda Institute in Alor Gajah yesterday.

A total of 72 local and nine foreign coaches who are attached to the National Sports Council are attending the four-day workshop which started on Monday.

As MAAU have already set the qualifying marks, the State affiliates could now assess the progress and achievements of their athletes.

The qualifying marks for the centralised training scheduled in July and the Sea Games are based on the third placings at the last Sea Games in Brunei.

Syed Aidid emphasised that eight disciplines have been given priority - sprints, middle, long, walk, field, hurdles, jumps and throws.

National walks queen Yu Fang and sprinter Watson Nyambek competed at the Sydney Olympics and their performance left much room for criticism.

On the qualifying marks that have been set, Syed Aidid said it would not be changed or compromised.

"Athletes have to qualify strictly based on merit and MAAU would not entertain any appeals just for the sake of exposure or for them to gain experience," he said.

2001 Kuala Lumpur Sea Games qualifying times and marks based on third placings for central training - Men: 100m (10.4-10.7secs); 200m (21-22s); 400m (46.8-48s); 800m (1.54-1.57 mins); 1,500m (3.55-3.58 mins); 3000m (9.20-9.30 mins); 5,000m (14.5-14.8 mins); 10,000m (32-33 mins); 110m hurdles (14.5-14.8s); 400m hurdles (53-55s); 20km walk (1hr 38mins-1hr 40mins); 50km walk (4hr 30mins-4hrs 35secs); Marathon (2hr 40mins-2hrs 45mins); High Jump (2.05-2.15m); Long Jump (7.1-7.3m); Triple Jump (14.5-15m); Pole Vault (4.5-4.8m); Shotputt (14.8-16m); Decathalon (6000-6500 pts).

Women: 100m (11.9-12.5s); 200m (24-25.5s); 400m (55-58s); 800m (2.15-2.25 mins); 1,500m (4.4-4.5mins); 5,000m (18.5-19.0mins); 10,000m (40-43mins); 100m hurdles (14.0-14.3s); 400m hurdles (63-66s); 10km walk (57mins-1hr); 20km walk (1hr 45mins-1hrs 50s), Marathon (3hr-3hrs10mins); High Jump (1.5-1.6m), Long Jump (5.5-6m); Triple Jump (12.8-13m); Pole Vault (3.4-3.6m); Shotputt (12.-14m); Heptathalon (3800-4000pts).

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