



## WIN OR LOSE, WE MADE HISTORY

◆ (Top and left) Teo Ser Luck at a Boys' Town's piggy-back event, organised to support Singapore's Youth Olympics bid.

Pictures: BOYS TOWN

*Teo Ser Luck, Parliamentary Secretary for the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports, is a key member of Singapore's 2010 Youth Olympic Games bid committee. Today, on the eve of the International Olympic Committee's announcement of the first-ever Youth Olympics host, he tells ERNEST LUIS his observations of how Singaporeans have reacted to this historic bid*

AND the winner is ... Singapore! Cue Singaporeans jumping for joy at the Padang tomorrow evening during the live webcast of the announcement by the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Well, that's what Teo Ser Luck – a key face of Singapore's groundbreaking bid for the first-ever 2010 Youth Olympic Games (YOG) – has probably been dreaming about for the past few days.

Cue, again, to sad faces in Moscow. Will Moscow win over the traditionalists in the IOC, or will it be Singapore, the underdog, that prevails?

Teo laughed and said: "The decision's been made but I'm hoping for the best outcome."

"If we win or don't win, I think the historic part about our bid is not that we actually dared to do it. It's that I eventually saw so many Singaporeans coming forward to show some support for the country's bid."

"I've met young people, who have never been interested in such national campaigns, show so much enthusiasm."

"We've set a precedent – that it's possible to get our citizens involved in such campaigns, to see them wanting the best for Singapore."

"It's a milestone and that's history for me, as far as Singapore's sporting culture is concerned."

Over the past two months, young and old Singaporeans from all walks of life have been featured in various media reports lending their voices, skills or abilities to spread the message of supporting Singapore's bid.

### ◆ DRAWING THE 'SIMPLE SINGAPOREAN'

The New Paper chose to cover this support from a "simple Singaporean" angle.

Last month, in our Singapore at Large series, we asked readers – who don't have the resources to create products, car decals, badges and so on – to spread the "Youth Olympics virus" by simply designing their own t-shirt designs, or creating their own e-mail or blog sign-offs to spread the word of Singapore's bid to their friends, families, and even those they know overseas.

After all, there's nothing like simple gestures from the citizen in the street to show how a country is fully behind its official bid.

### ◆ GETTING SUPPORT FROM FOREIGNERS

Earlier this month, we followed up by highlighting a t-shirt design entry from a Myanmar student here.

Teo said: "I was particularly touched to see that someone who's not from Singapore didn't think twice about supporting our bid."

"I think the support has been great overall. The media's coverage was varied and interesting. It also gave the IOC members a good grasp of the buzz here."

"I'd like to applaud readers of The New Paper for their reactions, contributions and ideas."

"Even in a small way, they all did it out of their own free will."

Teo found that inspiring. This is because, often, Singapore has been known for a few stereotypes – that is, its top-down campaigns.

### ◆ BOTTOM-UP, NOT TOP-DOWN APPROACH

Teo remarked: "The support for the bid could have easily fallen into a process where it's just the bidding committee doing everything."

"But, from the start, we wanted to intentionally involve the Singaporean out there."

"The young, the old, the business people – we wanted to see how much of a Team Singapore we could rally around."

"Singapore's always been known for its structure. But through this, we wanted it to be known also for its people."

"And I'm glad Singaporeans came around and responded."

### ◆ HOW A NATION'S PEOPLE CAN INFLUENCE VOTING

It is also interesting to note that this is probably one of those rare times when Singaporeans can actually influence a vote for a major event.

The South-east Asia Games, for example, is always decided beforehand on a rotational basis.

Teo said: "I think once we hit home with the message that you're virtually free to show your support in any way possible, we saw all sorts of ideas and events."

He cited last week's "He Ain't Heavy, He's My Brother" event, organised by Boys' Town and four final-year communications students from Nanyang Technological University.

The idea – as part of Boys' Town 60th anniversary celebrations and to support Singapore's YOG bid – saw students and teachers from Assumption English School and Assumption Vocational Institute getting involved, too.

The symbol of a person piggy-backing another is actually Boys' Town's motto.

Teo noted: "Boys' Town's event was certainly one of the more interesting ideas and events that were done to support Singapore's bid for the 2010 YOG."

"It's a good effort and, most importantly, it's fun, too."

"That's why we could sell Singaporeans and their energy, and show the IOC that we can rise to the occasion."

Come tomorrow between 6pm and 8pm at the Padang, will it be Moscow – or Singapore?

Sweet dreams, Singapore.