

Asian American P

"BUILDING COMMUNITY WITHIN DIVERSITY"



US Team: L-R: Loui Tienthong, Pheng Vang, Nou Yang, and Peng Ti Vang.

Canadian Open Sepaktakraw Championships 2001

BY PHENG VANG

On August 4th to the 6th, 2001, a local Minnesota Takraw Team, representing Team USA went to Edmonton, Canada to compete in the 2001 Canadian Open Sepaktakraw Championships. They came back as the all-around International Champions.

The Canadian Open is a three-day event of the Edmonton Heritage Festival, which alone attracts 300,000 visitors to experience over 50 different cultures that are showcased through clothing, song, dance, artifacts, food and drink. At the same time as the Takraw Tournament and the Edmonton Festival, there are also the World Track and Field Championships of the Canadian Open, an event to decide which Canadian team will hold the national title for Canada.

There are four divisions in which to compete, including: Girls, under 19; Boys, under 19; Women's; and Men's. Last year, a Canadian team from Winnipeg won the national title; and with a guest team from Minnesota representing Team USA won the all-around competition.

Team U.S.A. is the only international guest team at the Open last year. However, through hard work, Rick Engel, president, Sepak Takraw Association of Canada, was able to get a national men's team and a women's team from Japan. Since there is not enough team showing up for both of the Boys and Girls U-19 Division, the Japanese women's team has to compete with the Boys under 19. For the Japanese men's national team, they and the U.S. team were the main feature attraction Sepaktakraw event at the Open. However, Japan does rank higher than U.S. at the King's Cup in Thailand. They are in Division One and the U.S. is in Division Two.

Members of Team U.S.A. at the Open this year were Pheng Vang, a member of the U.S. National Team for many years, Peng Ti Vang (Pheng's younger brother), Nou Yang (reserve player), and a new young spiker, Loui Tienthong.

To attract the crowds to the game before the start of the tournament, U.S. and Japan played two special exhibition

Takraw - continues on page 9

Remembering "Big Minh"



Vann Phan, assistant director, VSS

"He (Minh) was too naive politically," said Phan. "He believed the communist propaganda and that negotiations would work."

"He was the last President of the free Vietnamese Republic" is what most people say about Duong Van Minh who died in California August 8, at the age of 85. "He was also the President who surrendered the Republic to the Communist North Vietnamese," is what has become his epithet.

There was much more to know about Duong, better known as "Big Minh" for his size. He was a man who had the power to change the outcome of his country's civil war, and the consequences of his actions cost the South Vietnamese Republic their ultimate victory, according to Vann Phan, assistant director, Vietnam Social Services of St Paul.

Big Minh's praise only seems to come from the people who saw the surrender in April 1975 as the only way to avoid thousands of soldiers fighting to the last man in the streets of Saigon, with plenty more civilian deaths that would have followed. However, the surrender they speak of was not the act in 1975. It was a series of actions spanning over a decade earlier that served to demoralize a nation and undermine the legitimacy of Vietnam's popularly elected government which effectively "surrendered" the country to Communist North Vietnam.

"From the point of view of free Vietnam only he (Duong) is the one who should be

held accountable for the loss of South Vietnam to North Vietnam," said Phan.

The Republic of Vietnam had four presidents: Ngo Dinh Diem (1955-1963), Nguyen Van Thieu (1967-1975), Tran Van Huong (7 days in 1975) and Mr. Duong Van Minh (last 3 days in 1975).

General Duong was a military officer while Vietnam was under French control and gained rank rapidly for defeating opposition to the young Republic in the 1950s. He was a general and advisor to Ngo Dinh Diem, the first elected president of South Vietnam. Duong received U.S. support for the assassination of President Ngo and his brother in a 1963 coup d'etat.

The 1963 coup was the responsibility of Duong Van Minh and according to Phan, President Ngo was held in high esteem, despite the rift he created by allowing Catholics a favored status over the Buddhists, creating a tension that may well have been handled peacefully by Ngo.

According to Phan, the murder of President Ngo effectively removed the symbol of the South Vietnamese struggle. His death destroyed the will and fighting spirit of the South Vietnamese people. Ngo was the first president and represented the cause of the nation's freedom movement. To

"Big Minh" - continues on page 9



Tibetan Democracy Day

Tibetan American Federation of Minnesota and the Regional Tibetan Youth Congress co-hosted the Annual Tibetan Democracy Day Sept. 2, at Columbia Park, Minneapolis. The event has been held each year since the establishment of the free-Tibet Parliament by His Holiness the Dalai



Left: Tao Wang, president, TAFM. Right: Ann Ayrault, executive director, TAFM, at Tibetan Democracy Day.

Lama in 1960.

The Dalai Lama remains the spiritual and political leader of Tibetans. However, the Parliament had been electing a prime minister from within for forty years. Kalon Tripa became the first popularly elected prime minister on July 29, 2001 and took office officially on Sept. 5. The

participation of distant exiled communities was a timely event and enhanced the Democracy Day activities.

"We explained to the community the significance of democracy and why we observe this day," said Kalsang

Tibetan - continues on page 9

AND Photos by Ernest Thronson

Takraw

Continued from page 1

matches. The first exhibition match was quite a battle. Japan took the first set and then U.S. came back and won the second set. Japan went on to win in the third set in a tie-breaker. The second exhibition match later in the day, also went into a tie-breaker. Luck went with the U.S. this time though.

A huge crowd was going wild and amazed when U.S. and Japan were battling since these two teams are the only competitive teams that have the high level skills of takraw at this tournament. Loui Tienthong demonstrated his awesome skill at spiking. He flew high in the air each time to spike the ball, giving the Japanese a hard time of adjusting to block them successfully. His spiking skills are as good as some of the Thai top takraw players and with his young age of only 19 years old, he surely will a premier U.S. spiker for many years to come.

With the exhibition matches behind,



US spiker, Loui, doing a roll spike over Japan.

U.S. and Japan again have to battle one more time in the finals in an official match to see who will play the Canadian champions. The confident U.S. won a tough match taking the first set easily, only to let the second set slip in favor of Japan after blowing a four-point lead. Another tie-breaker for the third times resulted with a U.S. victory. This is the first time that the U.S. players ever play together in a major

tournament and were pleased with their chemistry as a team. Winning takes good skill, communication and the three of them handled like veterans. Loui was very strong at spiking, Ti at serving and setting. Pheng, the most experienced player, controlled the games strategy.

To learn more about the sport of Takraw, email Pheng at: Mntakraw@aol.com or call 612-740-0297.

Canadian Open Results:

Men's Division All Around
Champions:
1st: Team USA from Minnesota
2nd: Team Japan
3rd: Canada

Canadian Champions (Men):
1st: Lao Community of Edmonton
2nd: Saskatoon

Women's Division:
1st: Japan
2nd: Regina

Youth U-19:
1st: British Columbia Sockeye
2nd: Winnipeg



Top: Japan; Bottom: US Team: Loui, Nou, Ti, and Pheng.

"It was good thing to me that he saved lives by saying that there was no need to have to shed blood any more when it



First Place Khmer Minnesota Soccer Club Front Row: (left to right) Back Row: (left to right) Davy, Vuthy, Louy, Chong, Youn, and Air Ty

Khmer Minnesota S

It was a perfect day at Hazelwood Park in Maplewood Sept 1, and 1,000 of the Cambodian community enjoyed every minute of the Khmer Minnesota Picnic and Sports Festival. United Cambodian Association of Minnesota (UCAM) sponsored the event and provided buses to allow the elderly and people who would otherwise not be able to attend, an opportunity to join the community.

Six soccer and five volleyball teams provided excitement as they competed for a trophy and prize money. The Khmer Minnesota Soccer Club (KMSC) won the three-game round robin tournament, defeating Team Cobra from Rochester 2-0 in the final match.

Soccer Tournament Coordinator Thavrak Hay, an ESL Instructor with UCAM, said

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