No glitch off his hockey pitch

Schools are finding ways to give athletes and volunteers time to balance activities

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The Youth Olympic Games (YOG) hockey player was too exhausted to attend his morning classes.

So his school arranged personalised tutoring for him, by not one, but three lecturers.

Such measures are among the various arrangements taken by schools, polytechnics and universities to support the YOG.

When hockey training intensified a month ago, Samudra Ong (above, right), 16, started returning home only around midnight.

There just wasn’t time to get his work done, sleep, and get to his S/A4 classes at Ngee Ann Polytechnic, said the first-year aerospace engineering student.

He didn’t go to any of his four morning classes last week.

Personalised tutorials

Last Thursday, one of his lecturers, Mr Tan Sim Bee, warned him that his grades would suffer if he did not start attending morning classes.

The year-end exams are in September, a month after the YOG.

After Samudra talked about his difficulties, the poly arranged for three of his lecturers to give him personalised tutoring on Thursday and Friday afternoons.

He had his first session on Friday, and these sessions will continue after the YOG.

Mr Hang Kim Yam, director of the electronics and computer engineering division, said: “Whenever our students need any extra help, we will always doing our best to support them.”

“We are very proud of Samudra...and are more than happy to accommodate his training schedule,”

Samudra said he was “very touched” by this gesture and aims to get a 3.2 grade point average.

The issue of how schools are supporting the YOG was raised by two letters published in Today newspaper last week.

In a reply, Miss Sum Chee Wah, the Education Ministry’s director of education programmes, wrote: “In terms of school-based assessments or curriculum time, schools are better placed to make adjustments to allow students to participate in the various YOG programmes.

“This is because the involvement in YOG differs from school to school.”

More than 180,000 students will participate in the YOG and its related activities, together with 6,800 teachers and ministry staff.

Spectators

The Education Ministry and schools have purchased 87,000 tickets for students to watch the YOG competitions.

Singapore Polytechnic is also giving students a YOG break from Aug 7 to 29, so students can become involved with, or attend YOG activities without affecting their studies.

Support for athletes

Raffles Institution (RI) has allowed its athletes to choose if they want their July common test results to count as part of their promotional grade.

Hwa Chong Institution has arranged for all lectures to be recorded and made available to athletes and helpers on an online collaborative learning platform.

Both schools will also bring their athletes up to speed after the YOG – RI has developed an academic support programme, and Hwa Chong teachers will provide consultations for the athletes.

In addition, the national school games’ calendar this year was rescheduled so most competitions would have been completed in the first half of the year.

Athletes have also been exempted from inter-school competitions so they can concentrate on training for the YOG.

Volunteers

The Nanyang Technological University has pushed back the start of its academic year by two weeks. School will start only on Aug 30, after the YOG.

Special arrangements have been made for Singapore Management University volunteers for the classes they will miss.

National University of Singapore volunteers will be granted leave from classes when on duty. They can also access lectures they have missed via webcast.

RI volunteers, who will miss their science practical assessments due to their involvement, will have their assessments rescheduled.

The Temasek Poly term break has been scheduled to coincide with most of the YOG activities, so volunteers need not skip classes.