

Email Newsletter from Mayor of Okayama (88) July 25, 2017 Issue

【See you at the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games】

Hello, I'm Masao Omori, Mayor of Okayama.

On 22 July (Saturday), I watched the exhibition match between our Okayama Seagulls and Philippines Women's National Volleyball Team, which stayed in Okayama City for their training camp.

When I met the representatives of the national team beforehand, unlike a usual formal courtesy visit, they brightened a mood with their cheeriness. But once the match started, their expression was very serious and they boldly spiked balls one after another.

According to Mr. Kawamoto, a coach of Okayama Seagulls, the Philippine National Team is high-level although they are still developing as a team. And each of the players has a supple mind and is enthusiastic about training. So they may become a great team five or six years later. Regarding the Tokyo 2020 berth, probably situation will be favorable for Asian teams as it is highly possible that Japan as a host country and China as a world-leading team will earn a place separately. And the Philippine team may aim this opportunity.

On the day of this exhibition match, I had a nice talk over volleyball with Mr. Cayetano, Chairman of the organizing committee of the Philippine volleyball (Secretary of Foreign Affairs) and his wife (Mayor of Taguig City*).

During the conversation, he told me that the Philippine National Team was seriously aiming for a ticket to the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. So I sounded him out about having a pre-Olympic training camp in Okayama if that is the case, and his response was positive.

I sensed very enthusiastic atmosphere in the whole Philippines National Team at the courtesy visit and the exhibition game. I hope some Japan national team members will be selected from Okayama Seagulls so that we can watch a dream match between the two countries at the Tokyo Olympics in 2020.

*Taguig City, Philippines is a fast-growing city with a population of about 800,000, and which has an easy access to Manila Airport. Many Japanese companies such as Toyota have expanded their businesses in Taguig.