

Softball pitching clinic over the weekend.

Softball X-games kick-off

THE Pan Oceanic Bank (POB) sponsored Xmas knockout games 2016 started on Sunday 18th December.

Reports reaching Star Sports said, about six (6) teams with more than 70 players registered for this competition.

Organisers said, the aim of this competition is get every player, whoever is interested in softball to the field.

There were many new players and many old players who turned up for the competition.

During day one of the competition about six games were played in a first robin.

This competition wasn't complete. So the next game will played on December 27th, Tuesday.

During the competition on Sunday, softball players were able meet two Japa-

nese guests.

One of them, Mr. Masataka Takeshima is an executive member of 'Japan Softball Association.'

The other was Mrs. Mayumi Kobayashi, who is the president of 'Sammy Japan.' Sammy Japan is the company of softball equipment.

During the brief meeting the two donated 23 gloves, 6 bats, 46 balls and umpire gear to softball from the

softball committee in Japan.

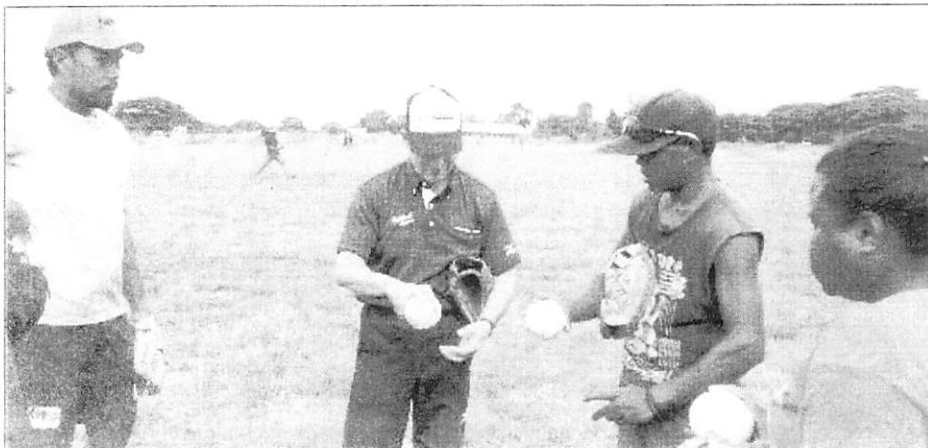
They also took time to share skills for umpiring and some basic skill of fielding on Sunday 18th and Monday 19th.

The batting coaching clinic was held on 20th Tuesday.

Meanwhile softball players got big X-mas gift from Pan Oceanic Bank (POB) and Japanese softball players.



Softball clinic early this week.



One of the Japanese during the pitching clinic.

Papua New Guinea players acknowledge time here

By CROFTON UTUKANA

THE four Hekari United FC and Papua New Guinea (PNG) national players playing for Marist FC have treasured their short stint in the 2016 Telekom S-League season.

Skipper and play-maker David Muta expressed this to the local media before flying back to PNG yesterday after they successfully accomplished their mission in the TSL.

"It's always interesting to play in Solomon Islands because the support here, the crowds here was so friendly," he said.

"Sometimes they have to beg you to play harder and to make you happy inside the field," the play maker said.

He also stressed that they really enjoyed their short stint with Marist FC both on and off the field.

"It's a very good experience for us."

"We will go back and

share with other Papua New Guineans if they are willing to come and play here," said Muta.

"Otherwise for all of us, we are so happy and privilege and honoured to come here and play with Marist FC."

"I think our brother Michael Foster was really happy to play with Malaita Kingz," he said.

He also stressed that they were treated very well while on their duty here.

"They looked after us very well and we would like to thank every one for this great support."

"I think one day will come back again and play here."

Meanwhile on the same note Muta thanked the Marist FC's major sponsor Y-Sato company and its associate sponsors.

He also acknowledged the PNG community in the country for supporting them while they were here.

31 countries for Asian Winter Games

SAPPORO, (INSIDE THE GAMES) ---Thirty-one National Olympic Committees (NOCs) will send teams to the eighth edition of the Asian Winter Games in Japanese city Sapporo next year, it has been confirmed.

The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) revealed the entry list with action taking place between February 19 and 26.

Eleven disciplines will be contested across five sports - Alpine skiing, cross-country skiing, ski jumping, freestyle skiing, snowboard, biathlon, speed skating, short track, figure skating, ice hockey and curling.

The sliding sports of bobsleigh, skeleton and luge are not on the schedule.

Hosts Japan will contest all 11 events, along with China, South Korea and Kazakhstan.

There will also be the added interest of athletes from Australia and New Zealand competing for the first time.

This follows an invitation to Oceania athletes by the OCA, after a request by Australian Olympic Committee (AOC) President John Coates.

Cooks U18s satisfied despite losses

RAROTONGA, (COOK ISLANDS NEWS/RNZI) ---Despite coming away winless, the coach of the Cook Islands Under-18 team says the inaugural World Schools Sevens has helped them prepare for next year's Youth Commonwealth Games.

Cam Kilgour's team lost comprehensively to the NZ Condors, NZ Fijians and NZ Maori teams in the tournament held in Auckland last week.

Kilgour said they performed admirably given the lack of resources at their disposal.

He said players were able to see the level they needed to get to.

"We don't have a high-performance programme and that is something we are in the process of planning with World Rugby and New Zealand Rugby, getting the Cook Islands level and the training that we need that other Pacific island nations have," Kilgour said.

"We did come into it as underdogs, but I think we

will go away with some really good ideas and the fact that we have to step up and we have to develop our programme."

The opportunity was also used to blood players with an eye to July's Games in Barbados.

"We will keep an eye on these guys, we've told them what to do over the summer and they all want to be a part of the programme," Kilgour said.

"They loved the tournament, even though the results didn't go our way, they had a fantastic time. They had a taste of international Sevens and they all want to be a part of it."

"From now until the Youth Commonwealth Games, we start planning and we start getting our players conditioned as much as we can do with nothing," he said.

Kilgour said the success of the sport at Olympic level has given players greater aspirations and dreams and one day it is hoped a Cook Islands team can participate at that level as well.