

# S'wak athletes for Special Olympics winter games

BY NORDIN MOHD DIAH

**KUCHING:** Malaysia's challenge in next year's Special Olympics winter games floor hockey event will be spearheaded by 13 athletes from Sarawak.

The Special Olympics is the world's largest sports organisation for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. The organisation also provides year-round training and events to over 4 million athletes in 170 countries including Malaysia.

Next year's event will be held at

Pyeongchang, South Korea from Jan 29 to Feb 5 next year.

The selected athletes are from Kuching, Bau and Miri, including students from special education classes (PKKI) of SMK Demak Baru in Jalan Diplomatik.

The selected athletes were those who took part in the recent national selection held in Miri.

According to SMK Demak Baru special athletes' chief coach, Badrulisham Ameran, the local athletes had performed well and whitewashed other teams including those from host Miri and Sabah during the national team selection.

He said the athletes who represented Kuching during the recent selection are aged between 15 and 41 with 10 of them are PKKI students.

Malaysia's head of delegation to the coming Special Olympics is Liza Chai from Miri while the panel of coaches who will be accompanying the athletes are Sanfa Guel, Pang Lee Ying and Siew Yong Hock.

Siew from SMB St Joseph Miri was formerly Malaysia's representative in the 2009 Special Olympics summer games.

"The athletes are really excited with the prospect of spearheading

Malaysia's challenge in the floor hockey event even though this is the first time we are competing," said Badrulhisham, the 27-year-old coach who has been coaching at SMK Demak Baru since 2009.

He said the athletes will be attending a centralised training camp at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) starting today where the athletes will be undergoing friendly matches with other teams.

"The camp will serve as a good avenue for the athletes to come together and play as a team," he said while expressing hope for the athletes to gain good experience



**EXCITING:** One of the games' highlights during the national team selection for the Special Olympics winter games floor hockey event held in Miri where Kuching athletes were selected after they whitewashed teams from host Miri and Sabah. Kuching athletes will spearhead Malaysia's challenge in Special Olympics floor hockey event to be held at Pyeongchang, South Korea from Jan 29 to Feb 5 2013.