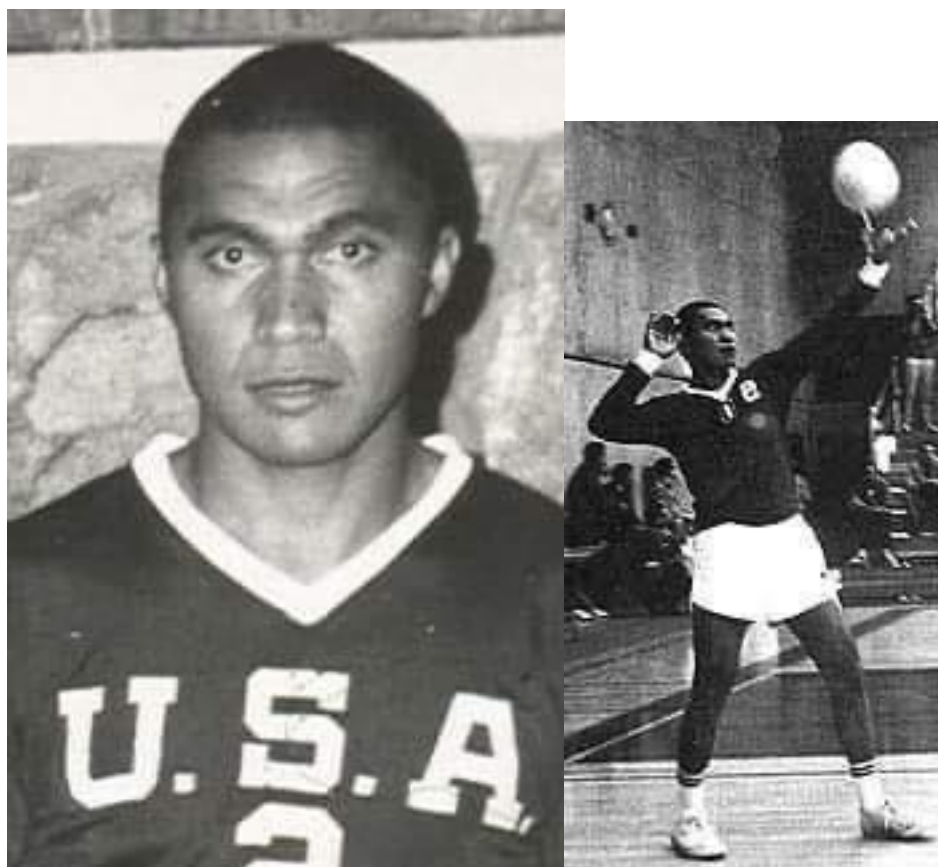


# Pinoy US Volleyball Hall of Famer Pedro “Pete” Velasco

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(The Philippine Star)



A Hawaiian of Filipino descent is a US volleyball Hall of Famer, a two-time Olympian and the star of the US squad that took the gold medal at the Pan-Am Games in Winnipeg in 1967. Pedro Velasco, 82, is known as Mister P, the father of the Lokahi Volleyball Club which he established in Hawaii in 1970.

At Lokahi, Velasco teaches the “6-0” system where players learn a specialized set of floor skills and ball-handling techniques to be able to execute all positions. The floor skills are dives and rolls while the ball-handling skills are serving, passing, setting, spiking, blocking and digging.

The club is open to players of all skill levels from eight to adults. “Specific concepts, training and techniques have been cultivated and handed down by Mister P to give players a better understanding of how each skill can be executed,” explained a Lokahi flyer. “Calisthenics are the basics of Lokahi’s floor skills and used to help players strengthen their core muscles. Each skill is broken down into a maximum of eight steps that make them accessible to all competency levels.”

Velasco recently reached out to The Star through a common friend, Filipino priest Fr. John Molina, and offered to assist the Philippine volleyball program in any way. “If

accepted, I'd like to help develop the game in the Philippines," he said in an e-mail. "At my present age, I teach PE to students from K-12 in Physical and Mental athletics. My wife (Adelaide) and I have seven children, the oldest is 61 and the youngest is 55, all with respectable careers. My children are consultants to my grandchildren who now run the volleyball program."

Velasco said the lesson he'd like to impart to Filipino volleyball players aspiring to get ahead is simple. "Should they commit, dedicate and sacrifice to their life's goals and they'll succeed," he said. "They must be open-minded in learning from other people. Then, they'll achieve greatness for themselves and for the Philippines. At the moment, I am not in contact with any Filipino volleyball official."

Velasco said he's not familiar with Fil-Hawaiians Alohi Robins-Hardy and Kalei Mau who now play here but he knows their fathers. He said the last Philippine volleyball games he watched were against Thailand and Vietnam in 1995. Velasco has a lot of catching up to do.

Velasco's father was from Manila. "My father came to Hawaii in the 1930s," he said. "I never knew him. All I know was he was a territorial champion in boxing. I was mentored in volleyball at seven. I loved the game because my community where I grew up was very active in sports. Herbert Sukanuma was my first coach. My other coaches included 1963 US Pan-Am coach Harry Wilson, 1964 US Olympic coach Dr. Jim Coleman and 1968 US Olympic assistant coach and Brigham Young University-Hawaii athletic director Dr. John Lowell. The Lokahi club is still active and has developed champion teams and national players."

Velasco attended the University of Denver and played for Denver YMCA at the 1956 US Championships. He was an Amateur Athletic Union All-American from 1962 to 1972. In 1965, Velasco was the MVP of the US Championships and in 1970, was named by the US Volleyball Association as one of the All-Time Greatest Players. In 1978, he was the first volleyball player inducted into the Hawaii Sports Hall of Fame and in 1997, was enshrined in the US Volleyball Hall of Fame.

In his prime, the 5-10 Velasco had a playing weight of 187 pounds. In 1964, he was named captain of the US team when volleyball was introduced in the Olympics. Velasco returned for another Olympic stint in 1968. In two Olympics, Velasco played on US teams that recorded a combined 6-12 record.

With his long years of experience and know-how, Velasco could be a valuable mentor to coaches now calling the shots in the men's and women's divisions of Philippine volleyball. Whether he's tuned in to the nuances of the game today is something to explore. It's not often a US volleyball Hall of Famer offers to help out the Philippine team but this is a special case because Velasco is, after all, a Filipino by blood.

**Read more at <https://www.philstar.com/sports/2019/10/29/1964247/pinoy-us-volley-hall-famer#62uJDVHE4HjLFpSu.99>**