



**Acting Prime Minister Speech, Afioga Tuala Tevaga Iosefo Ponifasio| Team Samoa Farewell
Public March - Pacific Games 2023 | Matagalalua, Friday 10th November 2023**

May I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Honorable Prime Minister of Samoa, to firstly greet our distinguished guests here today. Thank you Reverend Minister Poasa Lusi Toaiivao, for your blessings this morning.

I acknowledge the presence of our Government dignitaries, our Diplomatic Corp, Partners, and the people of Samoa.

We take this moment to bear witness of our Team Samoa, as it prepares to depart from our shores, and travel to the Solomon Islands, to represent Samoa, at the XVII (Seventeenth) Pacific Games.

The theme of the 2023 Pacific Games is to CHALLENGE, CELEBRATE and UNITE.

Four years ago in 2019, Samoa hosted the Pacific Games in what was a truly international event, which brought celebrations and excitement to our shores. It was an event that promoted Samoa as a visitor destination and as a nation of sporting prowess.

Since 2019, there have been many achievements by our national athletes at the Pacific Mini Games, the Commonwealth Games, World Cups and Championships, and now the Pacific Games.

TEAM MAKEUP

A total of 433 Samoans will travel to Honiara.

I am told that we have 332 Athletes and 101 Team Officials and Management, across 24 sports, whom are prepared and ready to fly the flag for Samoa. Of the 332 athletes, 55% are male, 45% are females.

This highlights the importance of gender equality through sport, as we continue to provide equal opportunities for all.

DURATION

The Pacific Games will be contested over 17 days of competition between the 24 Nations in the Pacific that includes New Zealand and Australia. This inclusion represents the highest standards of sporting competition in our region. Many sports competing at the Pacific Games, will contest for qualifications for the 2024 Paris Olympics.

TRAVEL

Team Samoa will depart Samoa from 15th, 19th and 25th November using chartered flights, due to the large numbers of the travel party.

EXPECTATIONS

The Samoan pride needs no explanation.

Look at the recent achievement last week by our young female local Golfer, Faith Vui!

Winning the prestigious New Zealand Women's Golf Open in New Zealand. The very first Samoan to do so. Congratulations Faith. This demonstrates that dreams can be realized, just as you Team Samoa are about to achieve your dreams.

Opportunity. For any young aspiring athlete, coach or team management member, the 2023 Pacific Games is a big milestone to gauge your ability, your endurance, your determination and your desire to be the best.

But above all, it is a life time opportunity to travel, experience new shores, make new friends, and enjoy representing your country of Samoa.

ANNOUNCING TEAM SAMOA

And in closing, let us salute you Team Samoa, the 24 sports here today, whom will represent our country, at the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, Solomon Islands.

Let us **Challenge, Unite and Celebrate** as proud Samoans.

Go well Team Samoa and God Bless.