



Beyond the Bronze: Ethan Nepomuceno's IBO-dyssey

by Arwin Ajero

After months of grueling preparation with the assistance of Ma'am Maricel T. Gubat and numerous professors from Qatar University, Ethan Joel P. Nepomuceno reigned victorious as the Bronze Medalist in the International Biology Olympiad—an *incredible feat as Philippine School Doha's first-ever winsome showcase on the world stage*. With such an astonishing achievement won by PSD's very own, questions arose regarding the training behind the win during The Link's dedicated news conference. Through the event's revelations, Nepomuceno showed that though the finish line is easy to appreciate, the journey to it is what makes it truly meaningful.

Nepomuceno graduated from PSD in May 2026, but right after his graduation, he headed to Vilnius, Lithuania in July as Qatar's representative amid the clash of candidates for the competition. Nepomuceno was originally a fan of physics rather than biology, aspiring to become a future aerospace engineer. Still, he felt intrigued by the competition, eventually

leading him to advise, ***“Step outside your comfort zone and explore the things you thought you weren’t capable of doing in the past.”*** Nevertheless, he stated that his main reason for taking on the challenge was his biology teacher, who personally set aside time to train him for the olympiad. Mrs. Gubat herself mentioned, ***“even with my resources and guidance, Ethan’s success wouldn’t have been possible without the utmost dedication he extended towards his work,”*** truly showing Nepomuceno’s dedication to mastering his craft.

Nepomuceno went through months of training, learning various biology concepts with the help of Mrs. Gubat while also practicing practical skills through Qatar University’s facilities. Even after being chosen, Nepomuceno decided to continue learning to enhance and sharpen his knowledge. Despite the countless challenges, he reminded his fellow aspirants that a significant factor in reaching the international stage is ***one’s inner ability to believe in oneself.***

Seeing as he was competing against almost 300 students from around the globe, Nepomuceno felt a palpable pressure. However, the pressure he felt did not negatively affect him, rather—it drove him to compete to the best of his abilities. ***“I used it as motivation to perform well and study more,”*** he stated. Ethan’s persistence and optimism should remind everyone that pressure should be taken positively and used as an inspiration to work even harder.

As PSDians flooded the gymnasium in awe and excitement to meet the successful alumna, Nepomuceno began his speech by mentioning ***“it wasn’t that long ago since I was sitting where you are at this moment.”*** highlighting his connection to his juniors. Afterwards, Ethan gave some pieces of advice to some curious students on how he prepared for the tournament. One of his tips included ***“Do your best, it’s not just about studying or memorization.”*** displaying the additional effort he put into his huge accomplishment. He also extended his help to those who struggle with balancing academics and their personal lives by stating, ***“Allocate a lot of time and effort to working.”*** This quote outlines Nepomuceno’s journey as he managed to balance his Grade 12 studies and his preparation for the competition, earning him the salutatorian status that makes his subsequent international success all the more impressive.

The conference truly showed how Nepomuceno’s achievement did not just make the school and his family proud, but the students of PSD as well. During the event, Nepomuceno’s old peers expressed their admiration for the exhilarating milestone he was able to achieve, saying, ***“He gave me inspiration to get better grades,”*** while another student expressed how his success ***“filled her PSDian heart with pride.”***

Nepomuceno’s success is a monumental moment for PSD. His strong perseverance and willingness to learn earnestly displayed the values that Philippine School Doha engraved in him ever since he was a young student, while his determination to endure through the pressure and hardships is a true testament to the strong-willed mind of a PSDian. Nepomuceno even acknowledged, ***“My achievements today were shaped by the opportunities presented to me and the people that surrounded me in PSD.”***

As we take the time to reflect on his journey, all the sacrifices he had to make, alongside all the people he devoted his efforts to, Nepomuceno reminds us that we should carry on with the journey even when the challenges look tough, or when the walls seem too high to climb. As Nepomuceno left the stage in finality, he decided to leave the sea of Senior High students with a moving motto that helped him surpass every obstacle in his way, every roadblock he faced, and every hurdle he jumped through—“***Never give up!***”