

# HARD WORK BEATS TALENT: THE STA. MARIA STAMP OF HUMILITY



By Isabel Peralta

**“D**ahil sa basketball, nakapag-aral ako ng libre. Higit sa lahat, nakapag-aral ako sa magandang school.” These words were uttered with humbleness and gratitude by former PBA player and De La Salle University (DLSU) basketball legend, Adonis Sta. Maria.

A simple man with high hopes, Sta. Maria was recruited from a school in Manila and offered a scholarship to DLSU. With much gratefulness to his alma mater, he played his heart out every single game. “Mas matagal ako naglaro sa PBA pero yung greatest game ko talaga ay sa La Salle dahil yung time na nag-champion kami, kasali ako sa four-peat. Every finals talaga iba yung laro namin especially pag Ateneo yung kalaban namin, talagang matira-matibay. Lalaro talaga kami na ‘di pwedeng matalo,” he recalls.



Sta. Maria's most memorable experience was during a La Salle-Ate- neo game where a player from the rival school hit him hard on his neck, causing him to fall hard and vomit. He desperately wanted to hit back, but Bro. Bernie Oca (now DLSU President) pleaded him to calm down with the words, "Please Adonis, don't hit him back. Pag ginawa mo yan, magbababaan yung crowd, magsusuntukan na yan." Heeding to Bro. Bernie's plea was an act of true sportsmanship and exuded Lasallian virtues of patience, reserve and gentleness.

These virtues are what Adonis Sta. Maria imparts onto his son Daniel, a budding superstar in the same field (or court for this matter).

Daniel Sta. Maria is a force stronger than his father. At age 14, he is now part of the UAAP Juniors Basketball Team of De La Salle Santiago Zobel School (DLSZ).

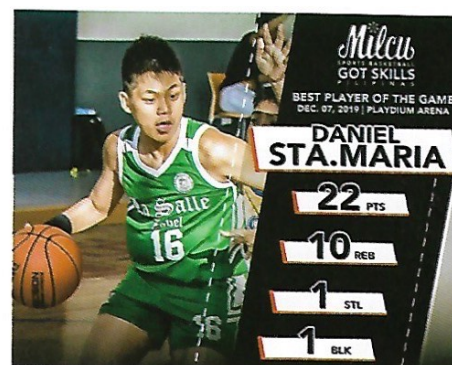
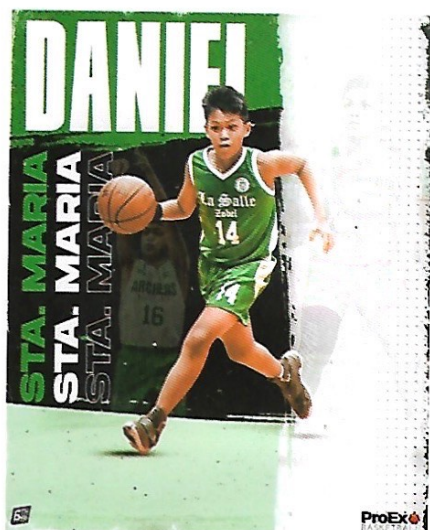
Adonis shares with pride that Daniel plays much stronger and so much better than he did. He sees Daniel's basketball skills at a young age equaling his during his college years.

Both acknowledge that Daniel's nat-

ural skills and height, towering at 6-feet and 3-inches, is a blessing and definitely advantageous in the world of basketball. However, for them, talent and physique is simply just a fraction of the key to success. Hard work, dedication, discipline and attitude is far more important.

It was during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic that the will and determination of the senior Sta. Maria to keep training his son, Daniel was tested.

With all basketball practices and games suddenly at a halt, it took a lot more effort on the part of Adonis to



keep Daniel's grit intact amidst challenging circumstances. "Lahat ng sulok ng bahay, napagtrainingan namin. We did not stop. We have a goal. Daniel has a goal," Sta. Maria revealed. That goal is to keep Daniel fit and in top condition when the pandemic ends.

Now that basketball games have returned and with his dad by his side to show him the ropes and cheer him on, Daniel is more than ready to face what

lies ahead and play stronger.

For Daniel, who dreams of playing internationally to represent the Philippines, he takes to heart his dad's advice that hard work beats talent.

Adonis' constant advice for Daniel is to never waste the opportunity to practice. He often reiterates to his son that come game time, playing becomes easier if he is serious in his practices and training.

With all the success Adonis has achieved on and off court, and Daniel continuing to zoom through a soaring basketball career, both father and son duo exude much humility in words and actions.

With a smile, Daniel shyly claimed, "I haven't proven anything yet, but if my dreams and goals do come true, I know it is because my dad was, is, and will be with me every step of the way." **A**