

By JOSEPH G. LARIOS

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CHICAGO (*jGLi*) – If Miami Heat keeps on winning, it will not be surprising that Coach Erik Spoelstra will be including the Philippines in taking the Larry O'Brien Trophy as part of his victory lap.

Tim Donovan, spokesman of the Miami Heat, confirmed that the

trophy Mr. Spoelstra took with him to the Philippines is the real McCoy, not just a replica.

Before winning the NBA championship less than two months ago, Mr. Spoelstra drew up a plan that would motivate his players to win the Larry O'Brien trophy.

He sworn his players to secrecy in an effort to energize his players during the post season coming up with rubber molded into a trophy and black in color, signed by each player, promising to play together as a team to win the championship.

According to the *Miami Herald*, not even Miami Heat President Pat Riley knew the pact.

After each victory in the playoffs, Spoelstra and his players secretly marked a victory notch on the replica trophy.

“We had to see 16 of those notches before we could even get happy,” Dwayne Wade said. “In the locker room, we put that last notch on there, everybody started screaming and yelling.”

It was not explained how Mr. Spoelstra came up with the idea.

But it mirrored the superstition of basketball great Michael Jordan, who led the Chicago Bulls to six NBA championship, by wearing his University of North Carolina shorts under his uniform in every game, Jordan led the UNC to the NCAA championship in 1982 and the shorts was credited for bringing him luck. In order to cover his shorts, Jordan began wearing

longer shorts, which set the trend in the NBA.

When Mr. Spoelstra paid a call on President Aquino last Thursday, he spilled the beans how he became the first Asian and Filipino-American winner of the golden NBA championship trophy.

On his fourth consecutive visit to the Philippines, his fourth attempt at the NBA crown turned out to be a charm.

Spoelstra's mother hails from San Pablo City in the Philippines.

Written by

Thursday, 09 August 2012 10:44 -

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It is not sure if Mr. Spoelstra will include in his itinerary in the Philippines

a visit to the Philippine Congress, which paid tribute to his outstanding accomplishment.

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