

## Blaze of glory

Written by Administrator  
Friday, 26 August 2011 20:33

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**Petron coach Ato Agustin (left photo) gets the traditional victory lift from assistant coach Pido Jarencio and Sunday Salvacion while (right photo) players, officials and supporters of the Boosters celebrate the team's victory in Game 7 of the PBA Governors Cup finals.**  
*(Photo by Jun Mendoza)*

MANILA — Petron's shattering win over Talk n Text Sunday night was not only a question of revenge but also redemption not only for the team but for a number of Boosters.

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The Boosters' resounding 85-73 triumph before a big crowd of 17,000 at the Smart Araneta Coliseum put to rest some of the personal demons that had hounded them and served as some sort of a breakthrough in their respective careers.

There is Arwind Santos coming in second to TnT's Kelly Williams in the rookie draft but outshining the 2006 top pick in the Philippine Basketball Association (PBA) Governors Cup title series to clinch the playoff's best player honors.

"They were saying there was a jinx (for me not being in a champion team). The curse is gone," said Santos in Filipino.

The Far Eastern University (FEU) alumnus was runner-up to Williams in the 2006-07 Rookie of the Year race and in the 2007-08 Most Valuable Player (MVP) derby.

There is import Anthony Grundy, who came in as third choice, nailing a first-ever championship with a swashbuckling performance in Game 7.

"This is what you dream of. I'm proud to get this for Arwind, Alex (Cabagnot) and myself," said Grundy.

There is Danny Idefonso, the former MVP who typified the Boosters' unwavering faith and desire as the vanguard of the scrappy, injury-laden squad — a role he played to the hilt only a few months after wondering whether he could ever run again.

And there is coach Ato Agustin, reaching a new milestone in a young coaching career with a major triumph in his rookie year only to lose some of its sheen by revisiting a sorry run-in with TnT coach Chot Reyes.

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“I’m sorry but please let me say this. I have no debt of gratitude to the guy (coach Chot Reyes). He’s saying he was the one who brought me here from the province, but it’s not true. He mentioned my salary. Yes, I was with him in Fuji team (in the old PABL) but I don’t even know why he’s there,” said Agustin in Filipino.

But Reyes cleared the issue and set the record straight.

“I never said I was the one who got him from Pampanga. I said as team manager of Fuji, one of the players we signed to a P3,000 salary a month was an unknown from Pampanga,” said Reyes.

“I never said he owes me a debt of gratitude. I don’t know what his beef is. I don’t want to stoop that low. It’s over. They won. Congrats to them.”

The triumph also took a new twist toward the end of the volatile playoff when Agustin said the feat prevented the Tropang Texters from joining the elite grand slam club where he belonged as member of the San Miguel Beer’s Triple Crown team in 1989.

“We’re really challenged. My teammates were urging me to defend our grand slam,” said Agustin, who rose to the challenge and foiled TnT from joining the ranks of grand slam champions that include only Crispa, San Miguel Beer and Alaska.

“*Nung binigyan kami ng pagkakataon maka-tsamba, tsinambahan namin sila apat na beses* (When we were given the chance to buck the odds, we did it to them four times),” said Agustin.

Setting aside the scathing remarks, Agustin did a tremendous job that netted the San Miguel Corp. franchise a 19th PBA championship.

The season-ending triumph also held its own against Talk n Text’s two championships with a remarkable .0723 winning percentage in the year — the most by any team since Great Taste

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notch .736 in 1984.

The victory was also a sweet revenge for the team, which lost to TnT in the Philippine Cup finals.