

= Lyo and Merly =

Lyo and Merly were the official mascots of the 2010 Summer Youth Olympics held in Singapore . Lyo is a red male lion whose name stands for " Lion of the Youth Olympics " , while Merly is a blue female Merlion whose name combines " mer " (meaning " sea ") with " liveliness " and " youthfulness " . The duo represent several Olympic values (such as excellence) and traits of Singapore (known as the Lion City) . Cubix International designed the mascots , while another local company , Mascots and Puppets Specialists , developed their costumes . Before and during the Youth Olympics , Lyo and Merly appeared in school events , launches and roadshows . They also participated in pre @-@ National Day Parade activities , were displayed at competition venues and were featured in Youth Olympics memorabilia .

= = Background = =

The first official Olympics mascot was Waldi , introduced at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich , Germany . Games mascots have varied between being animals native to the area where the Games take place , humans , and imaginary creatures . They often reflect the culture and history of the hosting region , and have traits chosen to embody the ideals of Olympism and the Paralympic movement . The introduction of a mascot or mascots is often highlighted in the lead @-@ up to the Games , to help build event anticipation , with a focus placed on them in contemporary Olympics . The first ever Summer Youth Olympics , Singapore 's organizing committee extended the tradition of having mascots to this new event .

= = Development = =

In early 2009 , seven shortlisted mascot design proposals were submitted to the Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee (SYOGOC) . Amongst the seven , the proposal of Cubix International , a company specialising in branding , animation and character development , was eventually selected . Cubix initially sought to develop robot mascots , intending to showcase Singapore as a " technologically advanced country " . However , research on Olympic mascots prompted them to move away from the robot theme and focus on animal mascots . The company stated it wanted to develop a pair of mascots " who had contrasting yet complementary personalities " . Mascots and Puppets Specialists , led by creative director Frankie Malachi Yeo , was hired to transform the mascots from designs to actual three dimensional forms .

Designing the mascots took about six months . There were issues over the materials used to build the mascot suits . Eventually , foam was selected as the main material . The mascot suits are heavy , with Lyo 's head weighing 8 kilograms (18 lb) and Merly 's weighing 6 kilograms (13 lb) . The heads are strapped on to a harness donned by the mascot wearer . To minimize overheating , costumes included a built @-@ in fan , and optional cooling vests were made available . Parts of the mascot production process were captured in the documentary , Beyond Gold : The Journey to the first Youth Olympic Games , which was commissioned by the Singapore Youth Olympic Games Organising Committee (SYOGOC) .

= = Mascots = =

The mascots ' designers created elaborate descriptions of Lyo and Merly , which are summarised below :

Lyo 's name is the initials (L.Y.O.) of " Lion of the Youth Olympics " , while Merly 's name is a combination of mer , which means the sea , and the letters L and Y which stand for liveliness and youthfulness . The two characters allude to the " Lion City " label of Singapore , and the Merlion , a national symbol of Singapore , respectively . Lyo 's mane resembles the Flame of Passion of the Spirit of Youth , the emblem of the Games . It is also a reference to the Singapore 2010 bid tagline " Blazing the Trail " . The pad on his paw is shaped like the island of Singapore . Merly is vegetarian

due to " a deep respect for all living creatures " , and her paw pad is shaped like a heart .

= = Outreach = =

The two mascots were officially introduced by Minister for Community Development , Youth and Sports Dr. Vivian Balakrishnan on 21 November 2009 at Suntec City . He commented that the duo are " an interesting play on fire and water " . He added that " there are aspects of [the mascots] we clearly can identify with as Singaporeans , but really what we hope is these mascots will be embraced by Singaporeans as well as the visitors who come " . Before and throughout the Youth Olympics , the mascots appeared in various activities and programmes , including events in schools , launches and roadshows . The Olympic theme featured in Singapore 's 2010 National Day Parade , also held in the month of August , and Lyo and Merly participated in pre @-@ parade activities .

Lyo and Merly were also widely featured in Games memorabilia sold at the official Youth Olympic Games Superstore in front of Ngee Ann City shopping centre on Orchard Road , Singapore 's main shopping street , and at competition venues . Male medal winners at the Games are presented with a Lyo plush toy during victory ceremonies , and female winners receive a Merly toy . Four postage stamps depicting the mascots in poses featuring the Games ' Culture and Education Programme (CEP) and Olympic sports were also launched by the SYOGOC and Singapore Post . In addition , a limited @-@ edition Singapore 2010 Youth Olympic Games Commemorative Pack , which depicted the journey taken by the country since it won the bid to host the Games , featured an exclusive MyStamp Sheet of the mascots in all 26 sport poses . Lyo and Merly also appeared on three coins released by the Monetary Authority of Singapore to commemorate the Games . A mural of the duo made by artist Charlene Tenio was showcased at a party held at the official hotel partner , Fairmont Singapore , to commemorate the 150 @-@ day countdown to the Games .