

Tajuk : SO CLOSE

:No clean sweep for Malaysia

: more upcoming tourneys for S'wak, says association chief

: Second seed Lydia all set for macau and Korea open GPs

So close

As stoic as he was, Hafiz Hashim had to give in to his ankle injury, which cost him the men's singles title at the Maybank Malaysia International Challenge finals in Samarahan yesterday. The former All England champion won the first set comfortably before conceding to Indonesia's Wisnu Yulki Prasetyo in the second and third sets. >S15



No clean sweep for Malaysia

Hafiz loses to Indonesian in nail-biting Maybank M'sia International final

By **KERNI PUAH**
sarawakstar@thestar.com.my

KOTA SAMARAHAN: Malaysia failed to make a clean sweep at the final of the Maybank Malaysia International Challenge 2012 here when Muhammad Hafiz Hashim lost 21-3, 19-21, 18-21 to Indonesia's Wisnu Yulki Prasetyo in the men's singles final.

Hafiz, a former All England champion who was the top seed in the tournament, played brilliantly in the first set winning 21-3 over 9th seed Wisnu.

The rhythm of his game, however, drastically changed in the second set which saw him creating too many unforced errors and lost the second set 19-21.

The match was dragged to the rubber set and Wisnu won by 21-18 points.

Hafiz, when met after the match, said it was bad luck for him after winning the first set comfortably.

He said his movement was affected by his swollen ankle.

"Wisnu played better in the second and third sets while I slowed down due to my injury. He got the points to win the match," he said.

Hafiz also admitted that he committed too many mistakes in the second and third sets to give easy points to Wisnu.

Meanwhile, Wisnu said he lost the first set because he was nervous, but picked up his confidence in the set and the rubber set.

Wisnu played better in the second and third sets while I slowed down due to my injury. He got the points to win the match.

— MUHAMMAD HAFIZ HASHIM

"I also collected points as Hafiz made too many mistakes in the second and third games," he added.

Although Hafiz did not finish top in the men's singles, his fellow Malaysians managed to bag the women's singles, men's doubles, women's doubles and mixed doubles titles.

Malaysian second seed Lydia Cheah Li Ya grabbed the women's singles title, winning 21-17, 21-12 over Singaporean seventh seed Liang Xiaoyu.

Malaysian fifth seed Teo Ee Ti and Goh V. Shem grabbed the men's doubles title when they defeated another Malaysian pair of Shen Low Juan and Tan Jiun Yip 21-14, 21-12.

Meanwhile, Malaysians seventh seed Ong Jian Guo and Woon Wei Khe beat Indonesian third seed Lukhi Apri Nugroho and Annisa Saufika 21-11, 21-14 to win the mixed doubles title.

Social Development Minister Tan Sri William Mawan presented the prizes to the winners at the Unimas Indoor Stadium.



Top guy: Wisnu in the men's singles final of the Maybank Malaysia International Challenge 2012 at Unimas Indoor Stadium in Samarahan.



Champion and runner-up: Wisnu (right) and Hafiz on the podium with their prizes.

More upcoming tourneys for S'wak, says association chief

THE Sarawak Badminton Association (SBA) will make efforts to bring in a few high level championships including the Pre-Gold tournament, to the state.

SBA secretary Abdul Hadi Abdul Kadir said while the Pre-Gold tournament was of lower standard than the Super Series, it was higher than the Maybank Malaysia International Challenge which concluded yesterday.

Sarawak should have hosted tournament in May this year but due to technical reasons, SBA had to forgo the plan.

"But SBA will definitely bid for it in the near future," he said.

On the Maybank outing which SBA organised together with Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (Unimas), Hadi said everything had gone very smoothly with no last minute withdrawal.

He said the game standard was also high with involvement of several elite players from countries including hosts Malaysia in the tournament.

A total of 228 players from 15 countries participated in the tournament which kicked off on Nov 13.



Leading lady: Lydia in action against Liang in the women's singles final.

Second seed Lydia all set for Macau and Korea open GPs

THE women's singles event champion of the just concluded Maybank Malaysia Challenge 2012, Lydia Cheah, will participate in the Macau Open Grand Prix (GP) Gold and Korea Open GP Gold tournaments next month.

The Macau outing will be held from Nov 27 to Dec 9, while the Korea one from Dec 4 to 9.

"I will be going to both tournaments in search of more titles," she said after winning the women's singles title at the Maybank Malaysia International Tournament here yesterday.

Second seed Cheah edged Singaporean seventh seed Liang Xiaoyu 21-17, 21-12.

Commenting on her victory over Liang, the national shuttler said she was delighted.

She said it was a great morale booster in the face of her Macau and Korea endeavours.