

Another world champ bows out as Lee Yang calls it quits

PETALING JAYA: First, it was long-serving head coach Yoong Thong Foong. His contract was not extended.

Now, experienced exponent Lee Yang has quit the national team. The 29-year-old is the second taiji world champion to quit the national team after two-time Asian Games gold medallist Chai Fong Ying, who retired from competitive action in 2013.

Lee Yang won the taijiquan event at the World Championships in Toronto in 2009 and was the bronze medallist in taijiquan and taijijian all-round at the World Games in Koahsiung the same year.

Perak-born Lee Yang took silver in taijiquan when the world meet was held in Kuala Lumpur in 2013 but he finished out of the medals at the Incheon Asian Games last year, placing fifth in the all-round discipline.

Thong Foong said Lee Yang has retired from the national team after graduating with a degree in accountancy from Universiti Putra Malaysia.

"If he wants to find employment outside, we cannot stop him. Lee Yang has been with the national team since 2003 and he has served us well.

"We wish him the best," said Thong Foong, whose tenure as head coach since 2003 will come to an end after the Chinese New Year.

Asked if Lee Yang's absence will leave a vacuum in the taiji department in the national team, Thong Foong says he doesn't think so.

"We have Loh Jack Chang. He has won medals at the world meet and will be a challenger for gold at the Singapore SEA Games in June," said Thong Foong.

"We also have junior taiji exponent Loh Choon How ... he is making good progress. He won bronze in the World Taijiquan Championships in China last November and is preparing for the SEA Games as well."

Lee Yang thanked the Wushu Federation of Malaysia and the coach for grooming him into a world champion.

"I finally completed my studies last year and I think I've committed enough to wushu. My only disappointment is that I'm retiring without winning an Asian Games medal," said Lee Yang.