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On a hunt for more men

Paralympic badminton team wants more shuttlers to beef up the guys' side

By **NG WEI LOON**
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THE Malaysian Paralympic badminton team are on the hunt for disabled shuttlers to beef up the men's side.

Long-serving coach Moe Chin Kiat is on a mission to trace a former teacher at a Chinese secondary school in Bukit Mertajam, Penang, for the purpose.

After receiving a tip-off from a Taiwanese Paralympic badminton coach three years ago that the player had returned to Malaysia, Moe has been searching to no avail.

Moe's counterpart had informed him that the man was a keen badminton player who had played briefly in Taiwan when he pursued his studies there.

"Based on the translation of the Chinese characters, his name is Lim Mok Kuai. However, we are not sure if this is the actual spelling. We reckon that he would be in his 40s now. He is eligible to feature in Class Five category (standing above the waist) because of his upper limb impairment," Moe said.

Recently, Malaysia returned home with 10 gold, two silver and six bronze medals from the Asean ParaGames held in Korat, Thailand.

"Usually, we will compete in up to 10 categories. But, the organisers made drastic changes in players' classifications and we took part in 16 of 24 events. The situation worked to our advantage. As a result, we clinched more medals," Moe said.

However, it was a painful defeat for Malaysia as they finished second behind Indonesia in the men's team event for badminton.

Hosts Thailand and Vietnam were the other two teams in the fray.

Each tie was decided over three matches - standing above waist singles (upper body disability), standing below waist singles (lower body disability) and combined doubles (upper and lower body disabilities).

In the opening tie, Indonesia defeated Malaysia by a narrow 2-1 margin.

Malaysia thumped Thailand and Vietnam with convincing 3-0 victories.

"We lost to Indonesia due to the luck of naming the line-up. We had to gamble on fielding our best player, Cheah Liek Hou, in either standing above the waist singles or



Still searching: Moe hopes to contact the player he was informed about.

combined doubles.

"The top Indonesian player eluded him because we went the wrong way. We can avoid such tricky situation by having another capable player in the squad," Moe said.

Currently, some 14 players from the Klang Valley, Perak and Malacca are training under Moe at the Kampung Pandan Sports Complex on Saturday and Sunday.

"We have another five more players based in Sabah and Sarawak. Over the past seven years, we have been monitoring their progress at the annual national championships," Moe said, adding that this season's National Paralympic badminton tournament is scheduled to be held at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) in May.

Meanwhile, they are also seeking the services of potential players to strengthen their chances to vie for honours at international meets.

"We need younger players to come through. Women shuttlers who are keen to have a go at it should also come forward. The national championships will be an avenue for them to display their talent," Moe, who was awarded the special coach award at the National Coaches Award in 2005, said.

Last year, Cheah won three gold medals - singles, doubles and mixed doubles - at the International Badminton Association for the Disabled (IBAD) World Championships held in Bangkok, Thailand.

Those with information about Lim can contact Moe at 012-979 7702 (Moe).