

Thais rule supreme

KUANTAN, Sun: Thailand extended their sepaktakraw superiority over Malaysia after winning the Perilly's World Cup Regu Championship here today.

In the final played at the Sukpa Stadium, they whipped Malaysia B 15-14, 15-2.

In the semifinals played earlier, the Thais demolished Malaysia A 15-14, 15-5.

In the final, Thailand defied the 5,000 strong home crowd to win a closely fought first game 15-14 in 40 minutes.

In a repeat of what happened in the semifinal against Malaysia A, the Thais displayed their excellent skills to crush a gutless Malaysia B 15-2 in the second game which lasted only 20 minutes.

With the win, the Thais took home the Prime Minister Cup and RM15,000 in prize money. Malaysia B received RM12,000 for being runners-up.

Malaysia B had earlier strolled into the final with a 15-2, 15-3 win over Singapore.

Thai tekong Prawase Sae Jang was sharp with his execution of the service which contributed the bulk of

points won by the Thais.

And the bewildered Malaysians showed that no one had the answer to neutralise the ace services delivered by the Thai tekong.

In the first game of the final, Thailand led 5-1 before the Malaysia B regu of tekong Ahmad Ezzat Mohd Zaki, killer Firdaus Abdul Ghani and feeder Khairulnizam Mohd Jidin recovered to level the score at 7-7.

Backed by a vociferous crowd who failed to unsettle the Thais, Malaysia B stormed into the lead at 11-9 at one stage before the Thais squared at 11-11 and from there onwards, it was a point-for-point battle.

Prawase, killer Poonsak Permsub and feeder Suriyan Pae Chang disputed several of umpire Parasuram Lal's decision to award points for the home team.

Prawase, who is making his third international appearance, reeled in eight points from his service in the opening game and perfected his mastery with 10 points in the second.

"My players' focus was disturbed by the umpire

when he awarded three points against us in the first set.

"The umpire did not check with the linesmen when he ruled that the ball was in," said Thai coach Kamol Tankimhong.

He said Prawase could not concentrate in the first set and felt pressured following the umpire's decisions on three occasions.

"Prawase came back to his true form in the second set and the match was ours," said the jubilant Thai coach.

Malaysian coach Zainuddin Kamaruddin admitted that the Thais were superb with their service while his players' defence was poor.

"The players could not make proper blocks and their mental strength was weak. We have a lot to learn," he said.

Besides Malaysia, 13 other countries competed in the three-day championship which offered total prize money of RM95,000.

Semifinals: Malaysia B bt Singapore 15-2, 15-3; Thailand bt Malaysia A 15-14, 15-5. Final: Thailand bt Malaysia B 15-14, 15-2. - Bernama



Malaysia B killer Mohd Firdaus Abdul Ghani and Ahmad Ezzat Mohd Zaki fail to stop Thai killer Poonsak Permsub's superb smash. The Rhais tamed the home regu 15-14, 15-2 to win the Perilly's World Cup title yesterday. - BERNAMAPIX