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Badminton-Incentives

WE DIDN'T ASK FOR INCENTIVES, SAYS RASHID SIDEK

KUALA LUMPUR, July 5 (Bernama) -- National athletes in particular badminton players did not ask for incentives from the government or the private sector for winning any championships, said Rashid Sidek.

"We've never asked for incentives after winning a championship. What we received before this was appreciation from the government for our services and contributions to enhance the country's image," he said.

Rashid said it is not fair to regard that all players are only concerned with incentives because this is a professional era and to some sports is their livelihood.

"It is natural that whoever wins will get the prize money ... this is normal in tennis, badminton and many other sports. If you win, you get if you lose, you don't," he said when met during training here today.

The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had expressed concern over what too much material incentives could do to athletes.

Rashid said the concern by the Prime Minister should receive the support of all for the sake of improving the quality of sports in Malaysia.

However, he felt disappointed that society viewed them as the lot interested only in incentives rather than giving their best in competitions.

"We can't get the incentives when we don't win. In the Olympics 1992, we were promised RM1 million if we won the gold ... we lost, so we didn't get," said Rashid who is also bound for the Atlanta Olympics this month.

Badminton is the target of criticisms, mainly because of Malaysia's declining performance after winning the Thomas Cup in 1992.

The players were given land each by the Selangor government while four years earlier a car each for making it to the final.

Rashid said, as fulltime players they have also to consider their future, savings for their retirement since a career as a badminton player is short compared to others.

"It's different of course if one has degree qualification, then much easier to get a permanent job. Just look what happen to players under BAM (Badminton Association of Malaysia) ... unsure future awaits those who are retired prematurely," he said.

"If money is everything, I would've stay put in BAM. I don't get fixed salary in Nusa Mahsuri, in fact no more millions of ringgit of contract with Carlton as before."

On his participation in the Atlanta Olympics, Rashid said he would fight all out to bring a medal for the country and it could probably be his last Olympic appearance.

"It will my mission for the country, with all sincerity and purity. I also want to restore my image after the Thomas Cup failure (in Hong Kong)," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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