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Badminton-Open

DONG JIONG WITHDRAWS FROM MALAYSIAN OPEN

By: Hamdan Saaid

KUALA LUMPUR, July 4 (Bernama) -- Olympic silver medalist and world number one Dong Jiong of China has withdrawn from the US\$180,000 (RM450,000) Malaysian Open badminton championships in Kota Kinabalu from July 9 to 13.

The Chinese Badminton Association has informed the organisers that Dong, who had also pulled out from the World Championships in Glasgow due to high fever, was unable to compete due to injury.

It was another set back for the championships which had earlier seen the withdrawal of reigning world champion Peter Rasmussen of Denmark while Malaysia's top doubles champ Yap Kim Hock pulled out due to shoulder injury, forcing his partner Cheah Soon Kit to find a new partner.

In Dong's absence, former world champion Joko Suprianto of Indonesia has been seeded first in the six-star tournament while defending champion Ong Ewe Hock has been drawn to meet Joko in the final.

According to the seedings released by the International Badminton Federation (IBF), Ewe Hock is in the same half with third seed Peter-Gade Christensen of Denmark.

Christensen, who became the first European since Morten Frost Hansen to win a title in Asia when he won the Taiwan Open this year, is expected to clash with the Malaysian in the semifinal.

Three-time champion Rashid Sidek has been seeded fourth and is likely to come up with Joko in the last four. Rashid beat him in the quarterfinals in the Olympic Games in Atlanta.

Three more Malaysian players have also been seeded in the men's singles. Yong Hock Kin is seeded 11th while Wong Choong Hann and Jason Wong seeded 13th and 15th respectively.

Ewe Hock, who defeated Indra Wijaya in the final last year, has an easy opening match against Brunei's Mohammad Junid. In the next round, he meets either teammate Mahathir Mustassa or Liu Kwok Wa of Hong Kong before taking on Holland's Jeroen Van Dijk, the joint ninth seed.

The Nusa Mahsuri discard is expected to meet Indonesia's Budi Santoso, the joint fifth seed, in the quarterfinals.

Like Ewe Hock, Rashid also has an easy opening encounter against Japan's Fumihiko Machida but Rashid, who will play the winner of England's Peter Knowles and South Korean Kim Hyung Joon match in the second round, faces a tougher third round tie.

The 29-year-old Rashid will be up against last year's Indonesian Open finalist Salim. He is then expected to meet reigning world grand prix champion Fung Permadi of Taiwan in the quarterfinals.

In the men's doubles, Olympic champion Rexy Mainaky and Ricky Subagja are drawn to meet teammate Denny Kantono/Antonius in the final.

Malaysia's highest seeded pair are last year's losing finalists Choong Tan Fook and Lee Wan Wah. The fourth seed have been drawn to meet the top seeded Rexy and Ricky in the last four.

Soon Kit and his stand-in partner Chew Chun Eng, the seventh seed, have been drawn to meet World Cup champion Denny and Antonius in the last eight.

Three-time women's champion, Susi Susanti of Indonesia is seeded second, behind two-time world champion Ye Zhaoying of China.

World championships quarterfinalist Lim Pek Siah and Chor Hooi Yee have been seeded seventh in the women's doubles. The Asian Junior silver medalists have an unfortunate draw as they are drawn to meet top seed and

world champion Ge Fei and Gu Jun in the last eight.

THE SEEDINGS

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Men's singles: 1. Joko Suprianto (INA), 2. Ong Ewe Hock (MAS), 3. Peter Gade Christensen (DEN), 4. Rashid Sidek (MAS), 5. Budi Santoso (INA), 6. Fung Permadi (TAI), 7. Alan Budi Kusuma (INA), 8. Luo Yigang (CHN), 9. Hermawan Susanto (INA), 10. Salim (INA), 11. Yong Hock Kin (MAS), 12. Jeroen Van Dijk (HOL), 13. Wong Choon Hann (MAS), 14. Hwang Sun Ho (KOR), 15. Jason Wong (MAS), 16. Thomas Sogaard (DEN).

Women's singles: 1. Ye Zhaoying (CHN), 2. Susi Susanti (INA), 3. Kim Ji Hyun (KOR), 4. Dai Yun (CHN), 5. Lee Joo Hyun (KOR), 6. Meiluawati (INA), 7. Yasuko Mizui (JPN), 8. Julia Mann (ENG).

Men's doubles: 1. Ricky Subagja/Rexy Mainaky (INA), 2. Denny Kantono/Antonius (INA), 3. Lee Dong Soo/Yoo Yong Sung (KOR), 4. Choong Tan Fook/Lee Wan Wah (MAS), 5. Liu Yong/Zhang Wei (CHN), 6. Jens Eriksen/Jesper Larsen (DEN), 7. Cheah Soon Kit/Chew Chun Eng (MAS), 8. Seng Kok Kiong/Rudy Wijaya (INA).

Women's doubles: 1. Ge Fei/Gu Jun (CHN), 2. Helene Kirkegaard/Rikke Olsen (DEN), 3. Lisbet Stuer-Lauridsen/Marlene Thomsen (DEN), 4. Qiang Hong/Liu Lu (CHN), 5. ETTY Tantri/Cynthia (INA), 6. Nonong Zanati/Carmelita (INA), 7. Lim Pek Siah/Chor Hooi Yee (MAS), 8. Liu Zhong/Huang Nanyan (CHN).

Mixed doubles: 1. Liu Yong/Ge Fei (CHN), 2. Jens Eriksen/Marlene Thomsen (DEN), 3. Trikus Heryanto/Minarti Timur (INA), 4. Imam Tohari/Ema Ermawati (INA), 5. Sandiarto/Finarsih (INA), 6. Lee Dong Soo/Yim Kyung Jin (KOR), 7. Chris Hunt/Donna Kellogg (ENG), 8. Nick Ponting/Rikke Olsen (ENG/DEN). -- BERNAMA

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