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Lee sweats for nothing

LIM Theam Theow tried every trick in the book but still could not stop Penang from losing to Selangor in the men's team badminton semifinal at the SBA Hall yesterday.

Lim faced a do-or-die situation when he played the deciding singles, barely 30 minutes after losing a close doubles match against Selangor.

Selangor made a tactical change for the match when they partnered utility player Chan Chong Ming with Yap Wee Meng in the doubles while Yap's regular partner, Tang Soo Sen, was pushed to first singles.

Penang took a 1-0 lead when Khor Eng Chiun beat Tang 15-8, 15-10 but Selangor levelled the score when Chan and Yap upset the more established Khoo Kok Keng and Lim in three games.

Lim came in after the break against national back-up squad player Siew Yan Wai and the signs of fatigue was evident.

But he took the fight to Siew, using delaying tactics to break his opponent's rhythm.

However, his efforts were in vain as he lost the first set 15-12. By then, only strong willpower kept him in the game.

To everyone's surprise, Lim took a 14-9 lead to force the rubber but with the home crowd behind Siew, it was a matter of time before he caught up. He fought point for point to level the score and Lim took the risk by refusing deuce.

His smash went wide, giving Selangor a place in the final against Kuala Lumpur today.

KL had a scare in their semifinal tie against Perak when national junior Yeoh Kai Bin almost caused an upset against KL's Yap Yong Jyen.

Yap, ranked world No 49, was expected to win easily but Yeoh ran him to all corners of the court before winning 17-16, 17-15.

After that, there was no turning back for KL.

KL are fancied to win the gold as they have three national back-up players, Ramesh Nathan, Yap and Mahathir Mustafa, in their lineup.

(END)