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SRAM sacks Glanfield

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THE SRA of Malaysia (SRAM) doesn't want Richard Glanfield to coach three-time Asian champion Nicol David anymore.

And that, as far as the National Sports Council (NSC) is concerned, is the current status of the Englishman.

Breaking his silence for the first time since this issue first surfaced, SRAM acting president Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir, told Timesport yesterday that the decision to terminate Glanfield was made after he had weighed all the factors and listened to the views of all parties concerned.

"I have been on this issue since March this year, and have spoken at great lengths with all parties concerned - the player, the coach and the family. And the views of the family are very, very important to me," said Mokhzani when contacted yesterday.

"We had spoken about the technical merits of their relationship, and after taking into consideration all the relevant factors and views by all parties, SRAM offered to reassign Glanfield as a development coach to the regional centre of excellence in Kuantan," said Mokhzani.

"But he (Glanfield) turned down the offer, leaving SRAM with no choice but to terminate his services as Nicol's coach."

Mokhzani said he didn't want to delve into the details of the case, as he wanted to protect the integrity of all the parties concerned.

But while SRAM has parted company with Glanfield, NSC however have no plans to terminate the services of the coach, and will be meeting him soon to discuss his coaching future in the country.

"We (NSC) received a letter from SRAM stating they don't need Glanfield's services to coach Nicol any longer," said NSC director of international preparations Ahmad Shapawi Ismail yesterday.

"However, SRAM also specifically stated the decision to do away with Glanfield's services was for Nicol only."

And according to Shapawi, SRAM did not furnish NSC of the reason or reasons behind its decision to terminate the services of Glanfield as Nicol's coach.

"As such, based on SRAM's letter, we take it that Glanfield is not needed to coach Nicol anymore."

Nicol's loss in the Asian Games women's singles final to Hong Kong's Rebecca Chiu prompted several parties, including the media, to question whether Nicol should follow in Ong Beng Hee's footsteps to train under famed squash guru Neil Harvey in Chingford, England.

In a press conference on Tuesday, Nicol said that she was sad to part ways with Glanfield but was willing to look at other options available to her to realise her dream of becoming the world champion.

Also questioned was whether Nicol needs a new coach to raise her game to the next level to compete, and more importantly win, against the best in the world. But according to SRAM secretary Col(Rtd) Wong Ah Jit, Glanfield's status was for NSC to clarify as the coach was on its payroll.

"But since SRAM don't want Glanfield to coach Nicol any longer, we will arrange a meeting with him to discuss his future and how to utilise him in our training programmes," said Shapawi.

"His (Glanfield) contract ends at the end of next year, hence the need to discuss with him on his future role."

On the directive for Glanfield to report to SRAM's regional centre in Kuantan, Shapawi refuted claims that it was a NSC decision.

"That directive came from SRAM, and NSC has nothing to do with it. Glanfield is in our payroll, but he was seconded to SRAM.

"As such, it is up to SRAM to utilise him as they deem fit."

A decision, however, is expected once the joint working committee between NSC and SRAM meet to discuss training proposals for the 2006 Asian Games programme.

The programme will also include Nicol and the priority is to ensure her preparations to improve on her world rankings, and ultimately, win the world title.

They will also decide whether Nicol should be sent to England to join Ong and Mohamed Azlan Iskandar.

But until then, one thing is certain, Glanfield will not coach Nicol anymore.