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Sports-Sepaktakraw (drugs)

A TWO-YEAR SUSPENSION FOR THREE PLAYERS FOR TAKING BANNED COUGH MIXTURE

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 24 (Bernama) -- Three national sepaktakraw players, Hanif Azman, Firdaus Abdul Ghani and Aznan Raslan have been suspended for two years from competition after they were found guilty of taking a cough mixture containing morphine during the Asian Games in Busan, South Korea last month.

The Malaysian Sepaktakraw Association (PSM) Council slapped the suspension on the trio today after a three-and-half-hour meeting, chaired by acting president Tengku Muhammad Sultan Abu Bakar here.

"After studying the report of the investigating committee, we find them guilty of breaching the IOC (International Olympic Committee) doping code," Tengku Muhammad told reporters later.

He said the suspension would take effect from today and the council would not entertain appeal to reduce the suspension period.

"Upon expiry of the suspension period, they will be kept under observation for a year and if they repeat the offence, we will not hesitate to impose life suspension on them," he said.

Tengku Muhammad said the three players had failed to provide reasonable answers as to how and where they had obtained the banned cough mixture.

He said the Sports Commissioner would also be informed of the decision.

Hanif, Firdaus and Aznan who were in Busan were sent home after a random dope test on their urine samples, collected prior to their departure, was found positive and contained morphine.

The PSM subsequently set up a committee chaired by vice-president Zainal Abidin Mohd Zain to investigate the matter.

The three players were later summoned before the committee which had also heard testimonies from National Sports Institute (ISN) Director Dr Ramlan Abdul Aziz, National Sports Council (MSN) coordinating officer for sepaktakraw Hazani Hashim, team manager Tengku Adnan Tengku Burhanuddin and coach Ismail Ahmad.

Besides Zainal, the other committee members were Sports and Occupational Medicine expert Dr Gurcharan Singh, Bukit Aman narcotics branch officer ASP Azman Mat Jan, PSM competition committee member Mahathir Mohamad and deputy president of Malaysian Tenpin Bowling Congress, George Heng.

-- BERNAMA

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