

SOCIAL & SPORTS

The Malaysia/Singapore Bench & Bar Games : A Firm Perspective

by Edward Kuruvilla

The Annual Malaysia/Singapore Bench and Bar Games 2014 between the Malaysian Bench and Bar, and the Singaporean Bench and Bar, were held in Kuala Lumpur from the 1st to 3rd of May 2014. At the end of the 3-day event, the Malaysian contingent emerged victorious, with an overall score of 12-3, winning the Badminton, Bowling, Cricket, Golf, Hockey, Netball, Premier Soccer, Squash, Table Tennis, Tennis, Veteran Soccer and Volleyball events respectively.

Shook Lin & Bok's presence was in the form of Senior Associate Jason Gopal, who was instrumental in the Malaysian Badminton Team's 3-2 win against the Singaporean lawyers. Jason, who won his match this year by straight sets, proudly conveyed, *"I have never not won any of my matches I've played in, and this is my 5th time representing the Malaysian contingent."* When Jason was asked how he first got involved in the Games, he attributed it to a mixture of chance and destiny, *"When I was a Pupil, I played for the Selangor Bar in the Inter-State Bar Games because I did not know who to approach from the KL Bar. It just so happened that my first match was against the KL Bar, and my opponent was the Malaysian Bar Badminton Team Captain, who recognised my talents. Upon finding out I was part of the KL Bar, he accused me of committing an act of betrayal! He told me the only way to redeem myself was to offer my services to the Malaysian contingent against Singapore. That's how I initially got involved."*



Not known to many however, is the silent contribution of Partner Steven Thiru to the Malaysian Badminton Team's success over the years. When Jason was asked what is the Team's secret to success, he delivered an unexpected answer, *"To be honest with you, I believe a big reason for the Team's success over the years is Mr. Steven."* When pressed further what he meant by it, Jason said, *"The Malaysian Badminton Team considers Mr. Steven our mascot, our good luck charm if you will. As far as I can recall, Mr. Steven has never failed to attend every match we've played in, even when the Games are held in Singapore. His tireless support has been instrumental in our success. In fact, whenever he is there, we win our matches against Singapore! He is very much part of the Team."* Jason added that Mr. Steven even participates in the preparation for the Games, and joins them in their traditional post-match banana-leaf session. He cheekily added that if Mr. Steven runs for President of the Bar Council in the coming year, the Team is hoping for an allocation to buy new jerseys. Mr. Steven could not be reached for comment.



As for how long Jason sees himself hoisting the Malaysian flag at the Games, Jason addresses the issue with much humility, *"As long as they need me, I'm always willing to offer my services. It's truly an honour to represent the Malaysian Bar, and it is my hope to someday captain the Team."* One thing is certain, whether it be Jason's shuttling skills, or Mr. Steven's endless commitment and unwavering support, Shook Lin & Bok is proud to have representatives from the firm contributing to the continued success of The Malaysia/Singapore Bench & Bar Games.