

Keen rivalry might extend to Rio 2016

By CHEN XIANGFENG
in London
chenxiangfeng@
chinadaily.com.cn

Chinese shuttler Lin Dan released his autobiography *Until the End of the World* on the same day he won the gold medal at the London Olympics, while Malaysian finalist Lee Chong Wei, whom Lin beat to take the gold, published his autobiography, *Dare to Be a Champion*, late last year.

The books' titles hint at the reality that the pair's rivalry will likely continue.

The recently-crowned Chinese champion "Super Dan" is ready to fight at the next Games in Rio, especially after he heard Lee will extend his quest to claim Olympic gold to 2016.

"If Lee plays (in Rio), I will too," the world No 1 told China Daily in London on Monday — one day after he repeated the victory he also claimed in Beijing in 2008.

The win extended Lin's record over Lee to 14-6.

Since Lin's Beijing victory, he also beat Lee in the finals of the 2010 Asian Games and the 2011 World Championships.

Lee's major win over Lin was at the 2011 All-England Championship final.

"Lin is the greatest badminton player in the world," Lee said after his defeat.

"I just can't beat him when we meet. The good thing is that there's only one Lin Dan in the world."

But one would be enough to

derail Lee's gold aspirations if the pair clashes again in a major final.

Lin's response could be bad news for Malaysian badminton fans, who believe their icon could win gold in Rio.

They have been hoping the media reports that London would be Lin's last Olympics were true.

"There's always a period of reflection after the Olympics," said Lin, who will be 33 in 2016.

"I'm a responsible man. I will not rush to a decision (to retire from the Games). I'll think about it. But once I make the decision (to keep playing through 2016), I'll do my best, as I always have."

Lin believes that even if he is too old to play in 2016, other young Chinese shuttlers won't let Lee take the gold.

"If I don't do it, then young players like Chen Long won't let him claim the gold," Lin said.

Lee, who ended Malaysia's Olympic medal drought — which had lasted since the 1996 Games — with the silver in Beijing, will be 34 years old in 2016. He had been struggling with an injury before London.

But his coach and mentor, Misbun Sidek, believes Lee can make the final in 2016, as long as he keeps fighting.

"He overcame lots of difficulties before London and made it into the final," Sidek said.

"He is a great man. I would not be surprised to see him in the final in 2016 if he sustains his motivation and focuses on training."

While they're fiercely competitive rivals on the court, Lin and Lee are good friends off it.

Lin invited Lee to his wedding.



Zhao Yunlei (left), Cai Yun (center) and Fu Haifeng pose with young fans at the Red Bull Badminton Super Final on Monday in London.

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Amateur shuttlers play 'another kind of badminton'

By Han Yu in London
sports@chinadaily.com.cn

China's national badminton team captured global attention by sweeping all five gold medals at the London Olympics.

Now, it is sharing the spotlight with local and Chinese amateur players who competed in the Red Bull Badminton Super Final near the Games' badminton venue on Monday. The event was intended to remind people that the Olympics doesn't exclusively belong to the world's top athletes — it's for everyone.

In something of a role reversal, China's national badminton team took to the stands to cheer for the amateurs. They snapped photos and asked for amateur players' autographs.

Even head coach Li Yongbo expressed envy.

"I really wish my players and

I didn't have to take all the burden during the competitions and just enjoyed the sport like (the amateur players)," Li said.

Li and his team were under enormous pressure after the team's game-throwing strategy in group match led to the disqualification of the doubles' top pair.

"We had to fight for the top place at the Games," Li said.

"The sport means something different to these amateur players. While they don't have professional training, this activity is something that to them is fun, and improves their physical and mental health."

China is known for producing full-time players under its State-run system.

Since the 2008 Beijing Olympics, it has placed more attention on the development of amateur sports in communities.

About 500,000 enthusiasts from 129 cities participated in the 2011 Red Bull Badminton amateur tournament.

The winners, respectively from North and South China, came to London to fight for the Super Final and joined exchange programs with local clubs and players.

"People make different efforts for different goals," said Wu Liang, who played in the men's doubles at the Red Bull Badminton Super Final.

"Since the Chinese selection system requires professional players for professional matches, the one who wants to reach a higher level must devote himself to his badminton career."

"We're another kind of badminton. We're here to tell foreign players that China has more athletes than its full-time professional competitors."



@Denghuade

"Thank you to the greatest basketball fans in the world! Sorry we couldn't get a win — but we gave our all. This level was just too much for us."

Chinese men's basketball coach Bob Donewald on China losing five games in a row at the Olympics

@Xie Xingfang

"Windsor is the first stop for my family's holiday."

Lin Dan's wife, Xie Xinfang, on spending a holiday with family after the Olympics

@Li Nan

"Today, we finished the last game in the Olympics. A difficult journey and a great pity! We lost all five games. But we still want to thank our coach Bob Donewald for having helped Chinese men's basketball for three years! Thank u!"

Chinese men's basketball player Li Nan on losing all his team's games at the Olympics

@Liu Xuan

"Yi Bing is still a great gymnast! His calmness and tolerance is so appreciated. Judges might have been so eager to spend a holiday in Brazil! How evident the flattery is!"

Chinese former gymnastic Olympic winner Liu Xuan on Chen Yibing losing the gold

@Cheng Fei

"He Kexin, no one will blame you, because this is the best of you."

Chinese gymnast Cheng Fei on He's performance in the women's uneven bars

@He Wenna

"When I was in the Olympics, it was i Partment3 that accompanied me and made me relaxed. I am a good man, I am ... Zeng Xiaoxian! I am back in Beijing now and will take a good rest. I will still watch Zeng Xiaoxian's show later."

Chinese gymnast He Wenna after returning home

@sydneyleroux

"Never give up."

US women's soccer team striker Sydney Leroux on the team's difficult win against Canada in the semifinals

@paugasol

"Today we couldn't finish the 1st phase with a victory. The only thing we should concentrate on is our opponent in the quarters. #Team"

Spanish basketball player Pau Gasol on his team's 82-88 defeat by Brazil

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