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MEDIA RELEASE

COACHING CHANGES FOR MEN'S, WOMEN'S TABLE TENNIS TEAM

The Singapore Table Tennis Association (STTA) has conducted a thorough investigation into the issues between player Yu Mengyu and Jing Junhong.

Investigation Panel

The investigation panel was led by Ms Ellen Lee PBM, STTA president together with Mr Soon Min Sin PBM, High Performance Committee Chairman and Ms Wong Hui Leng, STTA Chief Executive Officer.

Findings

The investigation panel conducted rounds of interviews with Yu, women's team coach Jing Junhong, team manager Ong Xiaoxian, Coach Liu Jiayi and Coach Hao Anlin whom were present at the coaching dispute.

The findings showed that the rotation of coaches has been the norm in all tournaments. As the head coach, Coach Jing has the prerogative to assign the coaching support to the players. On the day of the dispute, there were only 3 matches (2 singles and 1 doubles match). Coach Hao was visibly exhausted after coaching and sparring, so Jing made arrangements for the 3 coaches, including herself, to rotate around the given schedule.

Hao was assigned to coach Feng Tianwei while Deputy Coach Liu Jiayi would coach the doubles semi-finals match (Yu Mengyu/ Feng Tianwei vs Liu Shiwen/ Li Xiaoxia) and that would have left Jing to coach Yu's match.

Yu was told by Hao after Feng's match that Jing would be her coach. Yu refused the arrangement and insisted on Hao to coach her match. So Hao went to look for Jing to tell her on Yu's request.

While Hao left to find Jing, Jing appeared at the playing court. And the coaching dispute started between Jing and Yu. The team manager sensed something not right and proceeded to the court to investigate the commotion.

Yu refused to give in and finally, Jing relented at the match so as not to cause further embarrassment. Hao took over the coaching duties.

Discipline Procedures

Through the investigations, the STTA determined that the Jing and Yu were disrespectful and reprimanded both for having an open dispute at an international competition.

The STTA have stressed to the coaches and players alike that they should always keep in mind that they should always be at their best behaviour when representing Singapore.

During the investigations, the STTA investigation panel felt that Yu has failed to understand the severity of the issue and did not agree that the issue has caused embarrassment to Singapore and STTA. She felt that she was not in the wrong and placed the entire blame on the coach. Yu showed no remorse for her actions.

Coach Jing admitted her mistake and said "I deeply regret the impact of my actions and apologize for not having weighed my actions more carefully. If I could turn back the clock, I would have reacted

differently. As the head coach, I will accept any punishments imposed by the investigation panel and STTA.”

After careful consideration, the STTA decided that it is appropriate to serve Jing with a verbal reprimand. As for Yu, the STTA has served her with a letter of warning for being disrespectful and for causing embarrassment to Singapore and the STTA.

REVIEW OF COACHING SUPPORT

The STTA has also undertaken a serious review of its coaching support and will be making major changes to the women’s & men’s teams.

Women’s Team

A week before the Polish Open, Feng and Yu had requested for a change in the women’s team coach to help them improve their games.

The STTA heard their requests and had agreed to evaluate the situation seriously. And the STTA had explained to the players that it’s not that simple to make any immediate changes as it could disrupt the rhythm of the team.

In view of the relationship between the players and coach Jing, STTA has decided to appoint Liu Jiayi, Deputy Head coach as the new Women’s Team Head Coach.

Coach Liu was officially appointed as the Deputy Head Coach, Women’s Team, in March 2014 and is familiar with the women’s team dynamics.

He has vast experience in coaching international players. He had spent some time in the Middle East coaching players in the UAE Table Tennis Club. In 1994, Coach Liu was appointed to coach the English National Table Tennis Youth Team. In 1998, Coach Liu had a new appointment as the head coach of the English National Table Tennis men’s team. During this term, Coach Liu was instrumental in guiding Matthew Syed to winning the men’s singles and men’s doubles gold in the 2002 Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships.

At the 2010 Commonwealth Games, the English table tennis team won the men’s team silver and bronze in the men’s doubles and mixed doubles. The English men’s team also won the bronze in the men’s team and men’s doubles events at the Commonwealth Table Tennis Championships 2013.

Coach Liu said, “The focus will remain on the Olympics in 2016. As the newly appointed head coach, I will do my utmost to maintain the high standards of our women’s team. It is my hope that everyone works together towards bringing glory to the sport and Singapore.”

The women’s team will also be supported by Assistant Head coach Hao Anlin, a former sparring partner for the women’s team who was appointed as a coach in 2013.

Jing will be redeployed as the Chief Coach (Youth Development) within the STTA with immediate effect. Jing will be responsible for the development of the Junior Development Squad, Youth Training Squad (YTS) and School within the School (SWS) programme and its coaches. Jing will work closely with the coaches of JDS, YTS and SWS on the implementation of the annual training and competition plan.

Jing says, “I am looking forward to this new meaningful and exciting role and I will do my best to develop our younger generation of players to become the best they could be.”

Meanwhile, the STTA will source for additional coaching support for the Women’s Team.

Men's Team

STTA has terminated the services of Men's head coach, Yang Chuanning.

This decision comes after extensive consultation with the players of the men's team.

The decision is being made in the best interest of the players and in view of the upcoming Rio Olympics 2016.

Meanwhile, the two assistant coaches- Wang Xiang and Zhu Jiang will lead the men's team while the STTA finalises his replacement, which will be revealed in due course.

Ms Ellen Lee PBM, STTA President says, "The changes in the men's & women's teams come at a critical juncture as the STTA works toward the Rio Olympics 2016. We hope that the players and the coaches will rally around each other for the good of the country."

There will be no disruption to the national team's training and competition calendar. The national players will continue with their high level training and competition calendar, as scheduled.

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