

I QUIT BADMINTON

BY NAZAMUDDIN YUSOF

I got to know Yee Khan when I was a 14 year-old schoolboy in Ipoh.

Being a badminton icon, he was well known to all the youngsters in Ipoh which was Yee Khan's hometown too.

Unlike others, I had the opportunity of being coached in badminton by him.

However after a few months under him, I quit his training sessions.

He was a task master and had some unique ways of training.

It was too tough for me. Just imagine one of his training methods was "serving" to the baseline and not with a badminton racket.

We had to hit the shuttlecock with a tennis racket and it had to drop into a basket at the baseline.

It was no easy task. He told us using the tennis racket would strengthen our wrists and arms. I just couldn't take the gruelling practice and opted out from his badminton sessions.

He was a great badminton player. One time he showed me a clip from his badminton days. I was astonished with his "smashes." His powerful smash saw the shuttlecock pierce through the net. He was amazing.

As a golfer he was capable of playing good rounds. He had a temper when he got frustrated with his shots.

There was this incident when we were practicing on the Tiger Lane course. His third shot hit a branch and he finished with a

bogey 6.

The next morning he went back to the par-5 hole and chopped off the branch that caused him to bogey.

He worked on his golf like nobody else in this country.

He certainly was one of the longest hitters but nowhere close to my older brother Zainal Abidin.

In the Putra Cup played in Manila (1974), we finished 4th. He was 34 years old and I was only 17.

When he became a scratch player (handicap zero) he turned professional but wasn't able to cope with the "Pro grind" of weekly competition.

Age was not on his side. He decided to give up professional golf and return to amateur status.

He was close to a few golfers on the pro circuit and I was one of them. We would travel together and after training we would go watch a movie.

He refrains from taking the afternoon naps.

He would tell me "If you sleep during the day you can't sleep at night as your mind will keep you awake."

On another occasion he asked me "How do you know you have improved on your game"?

My answer would be when you shoot under par.

He would correct me and say "When you are tired and you can still deliver a good score. That is an improvement."

What he meant here is that you may feel tired but if you are fit you will be able to keep going.

To this day I believe Yee Khan was one of the best sportsmen Malaysia has ever produced.

