



Bowling

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Star bowlers to grace Malaysian Open

Story and picture by TAN MING WAI



Datuk Dr. P.S. Nathan (sixth from left) with the Malaysian International Open Bowling Championship sponsors at this afternoon's event.

NOT even a change of date and having no title sponsor for the first time since 2005 can rattle the Malaysian International Open Bowling Championship, as its 36th edition – one of the most lucrative in Asia – is making a return this year just as strong as ever.

The RM362,500 tournament, which was rescheduled to Nov 15-23 due to the General Election in May, has attracted participations of more than 400 bowlers from 16 countries, featuring a strong field of top international stars.

Among those who have confirmed their appearances are world champion couple Cho Young Seon and Son Yun Hee, who will be leading a big contingent of 35 South Koreans, England's Hall of Famer Dominic Barrett, Swedish star Robert Andersson, and 2012 World Cup winner Shayna Ng of Singapore.

Defending champions Zulmazran Zulkifli and Zandra Aziela Ibrahim Hakimi will be leading the local assault.

"With a world class field competing here next week, whoever wins this year are true champions," said Malaysian Tenpin Bowling Congress (MTBC) president Datuk Dr. P.S. Nathan at the event's press conference this afternoon.

"We would like to welcome a big South Korean team this year, about 35 of them, and we all know they are all world class players.

"The Koreans are among the undisputed world champions, particularly in team events, and they have beaten the Americans in the past five or six years.

“A national squad only needs a team of six but they have a pool of 200 good players who are about the same standard.

“The tournament will be more interesting as we are still waiting for American PBA stars Tommy Jones and Kelly Kullick to reply. We also invited Sean Rash, Chris Barnes and Shannon O’Keefe but they won’t be coming due to other commitments.”

Nathan, meanwhile, confirmed the Canon Cup, which is a side team event comprising the best local performers and the rest of the world at the tournament – ala Weber Cup, has been scrapped due to lack of sponsorships.

“Canon have decided to pull out and we will be looking for title sponsor for the upcoming years, but at the moment we are still going strong with other current partners,” he explained.

The winner of Men’s Open is set to take home a whopping RM40,000 while RM15,000 is up for grabs in the Women’s Open.

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