

Lee Chong Wei, Malaysia's gift to world sport

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Badminton king Lee Chong Wei announced his retirement from the sport.

Lee Chong Wei

Badminton great Lee Chong Wei on Thursday (June 13) announced his retirement from the sport.

With 69 titles against his name, including 2 All England, Lee is just Malaysia's most successful badminton player ever. But sadly, his career has always been entwined with that of another badminton great – Lin Dan of China.

Lee finished second best in three Olympics (2008 Beijing, 2012 London and 2016 Rio), in 3 World Championships (2011 London, 2013 Guangzhou, 2015 Jakarta) in one Asian Games (2010 Guangzhou). Lee lost to Lin Dan in all those finals save for Rio and Jakarta (Chen Long). Badminton fans were simply blessed to have two of the best players of all time playing at the same time.

His emotional farewell thus involved an apology: "I'm sorry I didn't deliver an Olympic gold. But I know I've no regrets as I've tried my best. My very best," he said on Twitter. But that shouldn't diminish one of the most glittering sporting careers.

A comparison of Lee's win ratio against the greats of other individual sports:

Lee's retirement was not surprising as he has not played competitively since last July, when he was diagnosed with nose cancer. But even as he walks away, the Malaysian icon holds the record for the world's fastest smash in badminton (417 km/h) and an incredible run of 348 straight weeks as the World No.1. Thanks for the memories, Lee!

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