

Zii Jia hopes Hendrawan will stay on after Chong Wei's retirement

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National shuttler Lee Zii Jia has made a plea for Hendrawan to stay on as the singles coach.

Words of wisdom: Lee Zii Jia (centre) and teammate Ng Tze Yong paying attention to what coach Hendrawan has to say at the end of the training session at Academy Badminton Malaysia in Bukit Kiara.

Petaling Jaya: National shuttler Lee Zii Jia has made a plea for Hendrawan to stay on as the singles coach.

The 46-year-old former world champion had earlier declared that he is "open to options" following the retirement of Lee Chong Wei.

The Indonesian, who personally handled the three-time Olympic silver medallist since 2015, is now deemed redundant.

Datuk Misbun Sidek is the head coach of the nine-member squad and is assisted by another Indonesian Indra Wijaya.

Zii Jia insists Hendrawan still has a big role to play and hopes for him to at least see out his current contract which will expire after the Tokyo Olympic Games in August next year.

The 21-year-old and his teammates are currently training under Hendrawan as Misbun and Indra are both away for the Malaysian International Series in Ipoh.

"There's news circulating that Hendrawan will head back to Indonesia, I hope they are just rumours," said Zii Jia.

"He has given a lot and still has so much to offer. I would like him to remain with us.

"He's undoubtedly a fantastic coach. There must be something special about him that even Chong Wei trusted him for years.

"Although I don't spend much time under him, we did enjoy great moments together. When I won the Taiwan Open last year, he was leading the team then.

"He's a world champion and there's so much I can learn from him.

"The best thing he taught us was how to embrace tough training without fear and turn it into a fun and enjoyable session."

Zii Jia, who climbed to his career-best No. 18 in the world rankings earlier this week, was quick to credit his three coaches for guiding him to where he is now.

"Although I train mostly under Misbun, both Indra and Hendrawan also played a pivotal role in my rise to the top 20," added Zii Jia.

"They care a lot about me and treat me like a son. I need all the help I can get from these three coaches to become a better player leading to the Olympics."

Zii Jia will continue to make his push towards his top-10 goal in three back-to-back tournaments next month.

He is due to compete at the Indonesian Open (July 16-21), Japan Open (July 23-28) and Thailand Open (July 30-Aug 4).

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