

## **Soong savours maiden international title in fifth attempt**

25/06/2019 20:55 by admin

Shuttler Soong Joo Ven declares heâ€™s in the best shape of his life after finally lifting his maiden international title at the Malaysian International Series.

**High time: Soong Joo Ven lets out a scream after nailing the menâ€™s singles title at the Malaysian International Series, beating compatriot Cheam June Wei 21-13, 22-20 yesterday. â€” Bernama**

**Petaling Jaya:** Shuttler Soong Joo Ven declares heâ€™s in the best shape of his life after finally lifting his maiden international title at the Malaysian International Series.

The 24-year-old top seed defeated compatriot Cheam June Wei 21-13, 22-20 in the menâ€™s singles final that lasted 47 minutes at the Arena Badminton Perak in Ipoh yesterday.

It has taken world No. 64 Joo Ven five finals to strike it right after having played the bridesmaid at the 2015 Malaysian International Challenge, 2017 Polish International Challenge, 2016 Scottish Open and last yearâ€™s Hyderabad Open.

Joo Ven was all smiles as he has persevered for almost five years to taste his first glory on the international stage.

â€œIt may be just a satellite tournament but to me, this victory means a lot â€” especially after losing in several finals previously,â€ said Joo Ven, who also won the national title for the first time at the same venue in February this year.

â€œIâ€™m extremely happy to have finally won an international title.â€

The victory is expected to move Joo Ven to a career-best No. 55 in the world rankings this week.

Joo Ven found himself lying low in No. 96 in February but two quarter-final outings at the German Open in March and Australian Open three weeks ago gave him the much-needed boost.

â€œIâ€™ve done quite well this year and Iâ€™m in the best shape of my life right now,â€ said Joo Ven, who joined the senior team in 2014.

â€œBut the most important thing is to sustain it. Hopefully, Iâ€™ll be able to build on this progress and break into the top 32 by the end of this year.

â€œIâ€™ve to be consistent in all the top events to stand a chance of qualifying for Tokyo Olympics,â€ added Joo Ven, who will next compete in the Thailand Open from July 30-Aug 4.

Pearly Tan Koong Le-M. Thinaah marked their first-time partnership in grand fashion by stunning top seeds Febriana Dwiipuji Kusuma-Ribka Sugiarto of Indonesia 21-16, 11-21, 21-18 in the womenâ€™s doubles final.

Pearly sees a bright future if her partnership with former singles player and best friend Thinaah, is made permanent.

â€œThis is my first stint with her, so playing without expectations certainly helped in a way.

â€œWinning a title is a great start for us!â€ said Pearly.

Indonesia flexed their muscles by winning the other three titles through Sri Fatmawati (womenâ€™s singles), Leo Rolly Carnando-Daniel Marthin (menâ€™s doubles) and Amri Syahnawi-Pia Zebadiah Bernadet (mixed doubles).

#### FINAL RESULTS

Menâ€™s singles: Soong Joo Ven (Mas) bt Cheam June Wei (Mas) 21-13, 22-20.

Menâ€™s doubles: Leo Rolly Carnando-Daniel Marthin (Ina) bt Low Hang Yee-Ng Eng Cheong (Mas) 17-21,21-17, 21-11.

Womenâ€™s singles: Sri Fatmawati (Ina) bt Eoon Qi Xuan (Mas) 21-19, 21-8.

Womenâ€™s doubles: Pearly Tan Koong Le-M. Thinaah (Mas) bt Febriana Dwipuji Kusuma-Ribka Sugiarto (Ina) 21-16, 11-21, 21-18.

Mixed doubles: Amri Syahnawi-Pia Zebadiah Bernadet (Ina) bt Andika Ramadiansyah-Bunga Fitriani Romadhini (Ina) 21-15, 21-17.

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