

World No 1 out of Malaysia Open

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THE Malaysia Open badminton championships, which begin next Tuesday, have been hit by a couple of high-profile withdrawals in the men's doubles.

Indonesia's World No 1 Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo-Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and reigning Asian champions Pramudya Kusumawardana-Yeremia Rambitan won't be competing due to injuries.

But some Malaysian fans probably won't mind as this has resulted in the host gaining more places in the 32-pair competition, with Tan Wee Kiong-Tan Kian Meng and Wan Arif Junaidi-Haikal Nazri in line to be promoted into the main draw at Monday's managers' meeting.

World No 64 Wee Kiong-Kian Meng and world No 85 Arif-Haikal are currently placed first and third in the reserve list.

With the expected addition of the two pairs, Malaysia would parade a sizeable eight pairs in total.

The other six pairs are world No 6 Aaron Chia-Soh Wooi Yik, No 10 Ong Yew Sin-Teo Ee Yi, No 12 Goh Sze Fei-Nur Izzuddin Rumsani, No 38 Man Wei Chong-Tee Kai

Wun, No 79 Goh V Shem-Low Juan Shen and No 110 Lim Khim Wah-Nur Mohd Azriyn Ayub.

But it remains to be seen if these numbers can be translated into a long-awaited victory in the men's doubles.

Since V Shem-Khim Wah last emerged champions in the 2014 edition, no Malaysian pair have entered the semi-finals in the subsequent years right until the last tournament in 2019.

The absence of Kevin-Marcus, the 2017 winners, will present an opportunity for Malaysian shuttlers to capitalise on.

Initially, Kevin-Marcus were drawn in the same quarter as Izuddin-Sze Fei and Wei Chong-Kai Wun, and the Indonesian duo could potentially meet Yew Sin-Ee Yi in the semi-finals.

Marcus is still struggling to regain his form following a second operation on his ankle while Yeremia is expected to be sidelined for up to six months with an anterior cruciate ligament injury sustained during their quarter-final clash with Aaron-Wooi Yik in last week's Indonesia Masters.

TAN MING WAI



Haikal Nazri (left) and Wan Arif Junaidi. PIC COURTESY OF BAM FACEBOOK