

Umpire's Report

Event:	Aviva Open Singapore 2007
BWF Ranking:	Super Series
Dates of Play:	1 – 6 May 2007
Country / City / Hall:	Singapore / Singapore National Stadium
Referee:	Dennis Li (Hong Kong)
Deputy Referee(s):	Junichiro Yamada (Japan) Phillip Lee (Singapore)
Date of Report:	26 September 2008
Umpire's Name:	Mike Wright
Umpire's Qualification:	Oceania Certificated
Umpire's Signature:	

Pre-Tournament Planning & Preparation

I previously attended the Yonex-Sunrise Singapore Open in 2003, so was not initially expecting to go to this tournament again in 2007 since we (the Badminton New Zealand Technical Officials Committee) were hoping that Trish Gubb would be able to attend in 2007. As it turned out, due to the change in status of the Singapore Open to one of the Super Series tournaments, the minimum requirement for foreign umpires changed from Confederation Accredited to Confederation Certificated. As Trish was now ineligible from their viewpoint, and as our other high-performance umpires (Lynne Nixey and Richard Bramley) had attended this tournament in the previous two years, I was selected to attend again.

Having been awarded a Prime Minister's Scholarship by SPARC, this paid for the return airfare to Singapore, which was booked on my behalf by Badminton New Zealand. This award was most welcome since, being self-employed, I find it very difficult to find the money to pay for my travel to and from international tournaments, especially since I am also not earning any money while I am away from work!

Travel

I flew to Singapore on Singapore Airlines, direct from Auckland, on 29 April 2007. I returned from Singapore on Singapore Airlines, direct to Auckland, on 7 May 2007. Transport to and from Singapore airport was provided by the tournament organisers.

Accommodation

The official tournament hotel was the Pan Pacific Hotel in Raffles Boulevard, Marina Square. This is the same hotel that I stayed at in 2003 when I attended the Yonex-Sunrise Singapore Open 2003, so it was nice to return to somewhere familiar. Accommodation was twin-share (I shared with David Turner, a BWF Accredited umpire from Australia) with breakfast provided.

Being very central in Singapore, the Pan Pacific served as a perfect base for shopping and sight-seeing when the umpires had free sessions. A number of very large shopping malls are within a couple of minute's walk of the hotel, as is the nearest underground station. David Turner and I even took the opportunity of visiting the famous Raffles Hotel, which was only a block away!

Transport

Players and officials were bussed to and from the tournament venue each day, with the trip taking approximately 20 minutes.

Matches Officiated

Date	Event	Round	Duty	Match	Notes
1 May		Qualifying			1.
2 May	Mixed Doubles	Round of 32	Service Judge	STOYANOV, Svetoslav & EYMARD, Elodie (FRA) versus ZHANG, Jun & ZHAO, Tingting (CHN)	
2 May	Mixed Doubles	Round of 32	Umpire	ASUNCION, Kennevic & ASUNCION, Kennie (PHI) versus ANUGRITAYAWON, Songphon & VORAVICHITCHAIKUL, Kunchala (THA)	2.
2 May	Women's Singles	Round of 32	Service Judge	YAO, Jie (Ned) versus YIP, Pui Yin (HKG)	3.
2 May	Men's Singles	Round of 32	Service Judge	LIN, Dan (CHN) versus CHAN, Yan Kit (HKG)	4.
2 May	Men's Singles	Round of 32	Umpire	PANG, Eric (NED) versus JONASSEN, Kenneth (DEN)	5.
2 May	Women's Doubles	Round of 32	Service Judge	LEE, Kyung Won & LEE, Hyo Jung (KOR) versus AKAO, Aki & MATSUDA, Tomomi (JPN)	6.
2 May	Men's Singles	Round of 32	Umpire	CHEN, Hong (CHN) versus DWI KUNCORO, Sony (INA)	7.
2 May	Men's Doubles	Round of 32	Service Judge	HWANG, Ji Man & HAN, Sang Hoon (KOR) versus HOPP, Kristof & KINDERVATER, Ingo (GER)	
2 May	Men's Doubles	Round of 32	Umpire	CHAN, Chong Ming & HOON, Thien How (MAS) versus CHOONG, Tan Fook & LEE, Wan Wah (MAS)	8.

Date	Event	Round	Duty	Match	Notes
3 May	Mixed Doubles	Round of 16	Service Judge	ANUGRITAYAWON, Songphon & VORAVICHITCHAIKUL, Kunchala (THA) versus XIE, Zhongbo & ZHANG, Yawen (CHN)	9.
3 May	Women's Singles	Round of 16	Umpire	YULIANTI, Maria Kristin (INA) versus WANG, Chen (HKG)	10.
3 May	Men's Singles	Round of 16	Service Judge	WONG, Choong Hann (MAS) versus SATO, Shoji (JPN)	
3 May	Women's Doubles	Round of 16	Umpire	LEE, Kyung Won & LEE, Hyo Jung (KOR) versus CHOU, Chia-Chi & Ku, Pei-Ting (TPE)	6.
3 May	Men's Doubles	Round of 16	Service Judge	OHTSUKA, Tadashi & MASUDA, Keita (JPN) versus CHOONG, Tan Fook & LEE, Wan Wah (MAS)	8.
4 May	Mixed Doubles	Quarter-final	Umpire	WIDIANTO, Nova & NATSIR, Lilyana (INA) versus ZHENG, Bo & GAO, Ling (CHN)	11.
4 May	Women's Singles	Quarter-final	Service Judge	XU, Huaiwen (GER) versus CHENG, Shao-Chieh (TPE)	12.
4 May	Men's Singles	Quarter-final	Umpire	CHEN, Yu (CHN) versus WONG, Choong Hann (MAS)	13.
4 May	Men's Singles	Quarter-final	Umpire	LIN, Dan (CHN) versus PONSANA, Boonsak (THA)	4. & 14.
5 May	Women's Singles	Semi-final	Umpire	XIE, Xingfang (CHN) versus Xu, Huaiwen (GER)	15.
5 May	Men's Doubles	Semi-final	Service Judge	KIDO, Markis & SETIAWAN, Hendra (INA) versus CHOONG, Tan Fook & LEE, Wan Wah (MAS)	8. & 16.
6 May	Mixed Doubles	Final	Service Judge	LIMPELE, Flandy & MARISSA, Vita (INA) versus PRAPAKAMOL, Sudket & THOUNGTHONGKAM, Saralee (THA)	17.

Notes on the Matches

1. All of the international umpires who had travelled to Singapore from outside of Asia were given the entire first day off, presumably to allow us to recover from jetlag!
2. My first time in the umpire's chair in the tournament and I have to say, "Ladies and Gentlemen, on my right, Songphan Anugritayawon and Kunchala Voravichitchaikul, Thailand, and on my left..." What kind of luck is that! The players needed another warm up by the time I'd finished announcing the game!
3. Yao Jie was the 7th seed in the women's singles draw.
4. Lin Dan was the 1st seed in the men's singles draw.
5. Kenneth Jonassen was the 8th seed in the men's singles draw.

6. Lee Kyung Won and Lee Hyo Jung were the 3rd seed in the women's doubles draw.
7. Chen Hong was the 5th seed in the men's singles draw.
8. Choong Tan Fook and Lee Wan Wah were the 6th seed in the men's doubles draw.
9. Xie Zhongbo and Zhang Yawen were the 2nd seed in the mixed doubles draw.
10. Wang Chen was the 8th seed in the women's singles draw.
11. Nova Widianto and Lilyana Natsir were the 1st seed in the mixed draw, and Zheng Bo and Gao Ling were the 5th seed in the mixed draw.
12. Xu Huaiwen was the 4th seed in the women's singles draw.
13. Chen Yu was the 7th seed in the men's singles draw.
14. This was the match of the tournament for me, and quite possibly **the** match of the tournament! Lin Dan, world number 1 from China, taking on unseeded Boonsak Ponsana from Thailand – most would have considered it an easy pick, and most money would have been on Lin Dan to win. However, in an epic struggle, going to extended game in the third, Boonsak prevailed. In his delight, he ran off the back of the court and spent a couple of minutes hugging his coach and supporters in the crowd before finally returning to court to shake Lin Dan's hand and mine!
15. Xie Xingfang was the 1st seed in the women's singles draw.
16. Markis Kido and Hendra Setiawan were the 3rd seed in the men's doubles draw.
17. Flandy Limpele and Vita Marissa were the 8th seed in the mixed draw, and Sudket Prapakamol and Saralee Thongthongkam were the 3rd seed in the mixed draw.

Other Notes & Comments

The Venue – The Singapore Indoor Stadium was most definitely not designed with badminton in mind! However, due to the sheer size of the building, the effects of the air conditioning were limited to a slight drift towards the north. Players warming up would tend to spend some of the time warming up from one side of the court, and then swap ends to get a feel for the effects of the drift. Given that the umpires had been instructed by the referee to limit warm ups to 2 minutes, this didn't allow for much practice, and less able players struggled to adapt. Security at the venue was relatively tight, with door searches of all bags being carried out every day. Lunches and dinners were served in one of the many meeting rooms at the venue. Due to the size and capacity of the stadium, most seats were empty, even though there were anything between 2,000 and 8,000 spectators in attendance.

The Courts – The venue is a general purpose indoor stadium. A sprung floor was installed in the centre of the stadium and 4 court mats were laid out for the early rounds, reducing to 2 courts for the semi-finals and one court for the finals.

Scoring – All scoring was done using the computerised touch panels sanctioned by the BWF for use at all Super Series tournaments. This was my first experience with these devices, and I can certainly say that if this was the only learning experience of this tournament for me, then it was definitely worthwhile! Scoresheets were still issued to the umpires prior to going on court, and these were used by the umpires for recording the outcome of the toss prior to climbing into the umpires seat and recording the start of play information on the touch panel. The scoresheets were also used for recording notes regarding, for example, yellow/red card offences, etc. The touch panels were interfaced to a central server, which kept an ongoing record of the status of the matches, displayed the match scores on large screens at the backs of the courts, and published the scores live to the Internet. At the end of the match, by the

time the umpire returned to the referee's table, a printed score sheet was completed and ready to be checked and signed off. Certainly the way of the future!

Referee's Meeting – Each day started with a meeting of the Court Officials in one of the many small meeting rooms at the venue. All meetings were chaired by either the referee, Dennis Li, or one of his deputies.

Umpires – In total there were 21 umpires in attendance at the tournament, including 3 BWF Certificated umpires, 2 BWF Accredited umpires, 7 BAC Certificated umpires, 6 BAC Accredited umpires, 1 BEC Certificated umpire, 1 OBC Certificated umpire (me!) and 1 Singapore National umpire. All umpires were required to wear the official tournament uniform – supplied olive green shirts with black pants and shoes.

Line Judges – There was a large contingent of local line judges. All matches had a minimum of 4 line judges, with more being utilised later in the tournament and a full complement of 10 on each of the finals matches. They were well trained and generally competent. I only doubted a few calls, and overruled one.

Social Interaction – The group of umpires were, as usual, a close-knit group. Apart from spending time at the tournament together, there were many out-of-tournament meetings and get-togethers in hotel rooms and nearby restaurants. On the Saturday evening, local umpire Yoon Lay Beng and her husband Dr. Yoon Kok Thean (KT) invited all the umpires and referees to their house for a wonderful dinner. David Turner, Brian Casey and I took turns playing guitar while everyone either listened or joined in!

Conclusion

As usual, a very well run and enjoyable tournament! I always appreciate the opportunity to participate in these large international tournaments as they provide for extension of my umpiring skills far beyond what we can hope to gain within New Zealand alone, primarily due to the fact that these large tournaments attract the world's top players. I thank Badminton New Zealand for allowing me the opportunity to attend this tournament once again, and SPARC for granting me a Prime Minister's Scholarship to alleviate the financial burden of travelling to this tournament.