

This trophy was a hard-earned victory, as it was 20 years in the making!

When our Basketball Boys won the National School Games 'A' Division title in 2005, the victory was all the sweeter, as our previous success was in 1985. Similar to the final match in 1985, this finals was a nail-biter as well as we were up against a formidable opponent.

Lee Chun-Hsien (CG 34/04), former Center of this team, and now a Mother Tongue teacher back at TJC, recounts this memorable finals ...

"In 2004 when we were in JC1, we ended our season in 4th position and so in 2005, we were determined to maintain this, if not, perhaps go one better. We were considered by other schools to be the 'mysterious' team then, as we did not have any official basketball coach. Our 'coaches' were Mr Sim (Han Kwan) from the PE department and Mr Lim (Wee Seen) from the Mother Tongue department. As a result, we did not manage to play friendly games with other schools and so no one really knew who we were or what our standard was like.

On the day of the finals, the atmosphere in the Toa Payoh sports hall was electric. Our opponent was very confident as they had a few 'star players'. But we managed to hold the game and we truly

played our hearts out as we kept pace with them, point by point. In the last quarter, while our defence caused them to miss a few shots, we kept our nerves and sank the crucial baskets.

It was so intense in the final period – supporters from both schools were cheering and stomping their feet so loudly! When the final buzzer sounded, ‘all hell broke loose’ and to be honest, I can’t remember anything except being swarmed by teammates and friends! We as the underdogs had played an excellent game and we definitely outplayed our opponents and even ourselves.

For me, this victory was extra special. Two years before, I played in the ‘B’ division finals in the same sports hall and we lost. I was bitterly disappointed. This loss did pop up in my head again before the start of our match. However I urged myself on by leaning on a quote by Thomas Wayne: ‘Why do we fall? So we can get back up again.’ And I was really fortunate enough that I did get back up this time.

Now when I go for basketball training with our students, I want to teach and coach them to become better persons on and off the court. My motivation these days is: ‘I do not wish to wait another 20 years for TJC Basketball to win another championship title.’

Now, Chun-Hsien still finds time to play basketball for leisure and he even represented MOE teams for the Civil Service Cup before

the pandemic. This team from 2005 still keeps in constant contact through a 'TJ Bballers' WhatsApp group, where they share regular updates with one another. They are looking forward to having a game now that SMMs have been relaxed.