Goodbye Indonesian Bridge Maestro, Henky Lasut

By: Bert Toar Poli

The sad news struck the Indonesian bridge community when it was reported, the national bridge athlete, Henky Lasut, breathed his last in Kandouw General Hospital, Manado, North Sulawesi, on Friday (June 12, 2020). Henky Lasut, an athlete born in North Sulawesia on August 6, 1947, is indeed difficult to separate from the Indonesian bridge sport which he has practiced for decades.

He who was nicknamed the Indonesian bridge maestro initially began his bridge career in the international world in 1972 at the Far East Bridge Federation Championship in Singapore. Partnered up with Max Aguw they immediately won. Since then, the name has been inseparable from the Indonesian national bridge team. Then in 1973 followed the 19th World Open Team Championship in Guaruja Brazil and won 5th place. In the early 1980s, Henky Lasut exchanged partners to play with his brother-in-law Freddy Eddy Manoppo and continued to pair up. Freddy Eddy Manoppo is the brother of his wife, Corry Manoppo. Both of these players have carved various achievements that it seems difficult to pass. It can be imagined, they had partnership for approximately 40 years and almost never stopped representing Indonesia in various international championships. Their top achievement was in 2014 in Sanya, China when they participated in The 14th Redbull World Bridge Series. In addition to being ranked 5th in the senior team number, they also won the World Senior Pair Championships. With this result, these two players are entitled to the highest title in the bridge world, Grand Master Senior. This title is the only one in the Asia Pacific region and is currently ranked as the 26th highest master point winner in the world.

Besides that in the general group, they also won the title of World Life Master, the second highest title after the World Grand Master. In addition he also became a gold medalist at PON (The Indonesian National Sports Games) despite losing slightly to his partner Freddy Eddy Manoppo. Henky Lasut has represented North Sulawesi 12 times the PON and almost always won the gold medal while Freddy Eddy Manoppo 13 times. In addition to pursuing the bridge as an athlete, he also took part in ICBA (Indonesian Contract Bridge Association) and North Sumatera ICBA. Besides that, he was also last listed as the North Sulawesi KONI (Indonesian National Sport Council) Administrator. Henky Lasut was also a member of the Manado City DPRD (People’s Representative Council) for the 2009-2014 period from the Hanura Party. Lasut also served as Chairperson of the Manado City Hanura Party DPC before then retreating and focusing again to nurture young seedlings of Bridge sports. As a close friend, especially since we were a team in the senior national team starting in 2013, I was quite surprised when I received the news that Henky had died as I had been continuously monitoring Henky's health for about a month after being treated at the Kandouw General Hospital, Manado. A day before his death, I was informed by his daughter, Elvita Lasut who was also a bridge athlete, that his health had improved and would be moved from the ICU to a regular room. However, apparently that was the last good news for the family because thus Henky could still hear about the graduation of his grandson Hiero Lasut who is also a bridge player at Sam Ratulangi University, Manado. Henky has two grandchildren, one is Kimberly who is now in middle school and has not been involved into the bridge. Henky is arguably a bridge maniac who almost devotes his entire life to bridges. He has two children and both of them are bridge players. Unfortunately, Fabian, his eldest son, who was named the legendary bridge player from Italy, Belladona, who is also a bridge athlete, had already died. His second daughter Elvita also worked on bridge and finally won a bronze medal in the mixed teams at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta. In 2013, he partnered with Henky, who was familiarly called "pi" (a short way of saying father in Indonesia), following the Yeh Bros Mixed Team Championship in Kaoshiung with me and his wife. One of Henky's strengths so that he was hard to be forgotten is his smile. His athletic body and trendy-looking being always with a smile make him to be much loved by many people. A Japanese female player, Akiko Yanagisawa wrote on her FB page where I was tagged as: Mr. Henky Lasut, the great bridge player and very charming gentleman, has passed away. He’s always given me a smile in the international competition where he played as a member of the very competitive Indonesian senior team. I met him last in Wuhan in September 2019 and he gave me a big hug for celebrating our good performance. I shall miss him a lot! Thank you Henky for everything and RIP.

Aside from his hospitality, there are things that are hard for me to forget when we participated the APBF Championship in Seoul 2017 where I was assigned to be a room with him, which was indeed his request since our participation in the senior national team 2013. He was rather whiny and spoiled. At that time he did not really fit his condition so he did not want to leave the hotel even for food. Automatically, I had to prepare, luckily Vita, her daughter's close call also participated so we took turns in taking care of him. But in terms of competition, he did not want to rest unless forced to. This is indeed the tenacity that needs to be followed by our young players.

Back to being spoiled and whiny, when he measured his blood pressure (he always carried a whipped tool) and it turned out high then I was not allowed to sleep before he slept. So I had to wait even though I was sleepy until he slept, then I slept.

There is one of his dream and hopefully can be realized by the Chairman of North Sulawesi ICBA, Joune Ganda. On one occasion, he told about his collection which is more than a room. Since he joined the Bridge Championship, he had been collecting knick-knacks from all the Championships that he participated. In addition to the bridge bag, there are cards, bulletins, pins, books, and others.

On that occasion he wanted all of the collections to be moved to the Henky / Eddy Bridge Center at the Manado Klabat Stadium, which was built when Wiranto became the Chairman of ICBA and Mangindaan became the Governor of North Sulawesi.

Achievements:

Asia Pacific

1972 PABFC Open Team Champion in Singapore

1973 PABFC Open Team Champion in Hong Kong

1974 PABFC Open Team Champion in Manila - Philippines

1979 PABFC Open Team Champion in Tokyo - Japan

1982 PABFC Open Team Champion in Bangkok - Thailand

1983 PABFC Open Team Champion in Hong Kong

1984 PABFC Open Team Champion in Macau

1993 PABFC Open Team Champion in Singapore

1999 PABFC Open Team Champion in Hang Zhou - China

2003 PABFC Open Team Champion in Manila - Philippines

2007 PABFC Senior Team Champion in Bandung - Indonesia

2009 PABF Senior Team Champion in Macau-China Macau

2011 APBF Senior Team Champion in Kuala Lumpur – Malaysia

2013 Second Place in Senior Team, APBF Hongkong

2015 Winner of the APBF Senior Team in Bangkok – Thailand

2017 2nd Place in South Korean APBF Senior Team

2018 Bronze Medal for the 2019 Asian Games Men's Pairs

2019 Singapore APBF Senior Champion

World Championships

1996 Finalists of the Olympiad Bridge on Rhodes Island - Greece

2002 IOC Grand Prix in Lausanne - Switzerland

2002 Finalist of the Rosenblum Cup in Montreal Canada

2003 4th Senior Bowl in Montecarlo - Monaco

2005 Senior Bowl Finalist at Estoril Portugal

2007 Senior Bowl Finalist in Shanghai - China

2008 Third Place: Senior World Mind Sports Games in Beijing - China

2009 Third Place: Senior Bowl at the 2009 World Bridge Championships in Sao Paolo – Brazil

2010 Third Place: Senior Team in the World Bridge Series in Philadelphia – United States

2014 Winner in Senior Pairs (Henky Lasut – Eddy Manoppo),

International

1980 World Champion Amsterdam Invitation

1980 World Champion Invitation in Calcuta

1987 Runner Up Hong Kong Intercity

1994 Runner Up American Albuquerque Cup

1995 Champion in the Australian Open in Canberra

1995 Third Place: Volmac Cup in The Hague

1995 Third Place: Invitations Merdeka Cup

1996 I won Four Star, Brighton - England

1997 Champion in NEC Cup Japan

1998 Runner Up Tolani Invitational Grand Prix in Mumbai

1999 Tolani Invitational Grand Prix in Mumbai

1999 World Invitational Pairs in Mumbai

2005 Runner Up for the BI Invitational Cup Governor

2017 Champion of Thailand Bridge Festival Bangkok

Asia Cup Championship

2010 1st place in the 2010 1st Asian Cup Open Cup Team in Nan Jing, China

2014 Winner in the Senior Team at the 2nd Asian Cup 2014 in Wu Yi,

Award obtained: Satyalancana Dharma Olahraga (Sport Medal) Thx Deddy Wirata