



IInd Issue April-June 2012

Badminton India



Jwala Gutta
Deadly on court



Ashwini Ponappa
Living her dream



Super Saina
Looking for a
Podium Finish

Gearing up for Olympics



P. Kashyap
Fortune favors the brave



V. Diju
Silent yet
Dangerous

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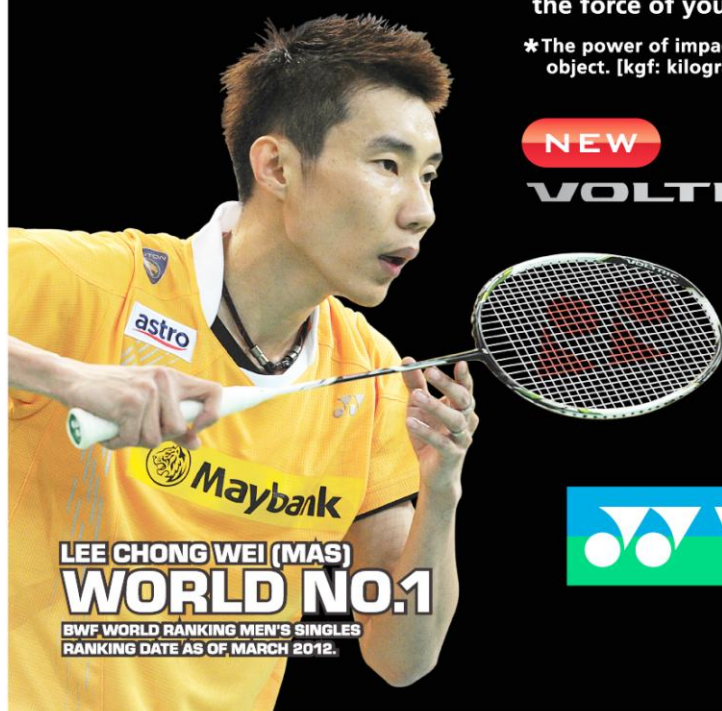
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Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta
President
Badminton Association of India

Dear Badminton friends, what a great Yonex India Open event we had in Delhi this April. And what wonderful news came during the event which filled our hearts with pride. India will not have just one or two players participating at the forthcoming London Olympics, but a record five players ensured qualification. And the inimical Jwala Gutta went on to create history of sorts by becoming the first Indian player to qualify for two events. I am personally so happy about the way our players have been performing abroad at the BWF circuit. And I am sure that Indian players will end up with medals at the Games. Our fervent hope and prayer is that we win gold medals, as we bid bon voyage to the "panch ratna" of Indian badminton, namely Saina Nehwal, Jwala Gutta, Ashwini Ponappa, V.Diju and P.Kashyap.

The Olympic qualification and performance of our players at the Yonex India open/ BWF Superseries event, where we had 4 entries in quarterfinals and Kashyap making it to the semifinals, with P V V Sindhu and Ajay Jairam taking games off world beaters in their quarters, speaks volumes of how far Indian badminton has progressed in terms of our standards at world levels. I can assure you all, that this is just the beginning.

My association and our officials will leave no stone unturned in ensuring

that the game goes from strength to strength. Our results in Thailand and Indonesian opens last month, specially by Saina and Kashyap, again showcase our increasing clout in global badminton.

And speaking of the India Open at Delhi, I must congratulate the organizing committee of the Event for the difficult yet a wonderful job they did. It was a championship of huge magnitude-and the last event for Olympic qualification, ensuring we got top rated entries in all events. Yes, there were small problems here and there, but nothing that the BAI team could not solve. We have come far and we now have the capability and experience of managing big events. The BAI will keep on organizing major international events in future. It will help our players get the exposure required. This issue of Badminton India carries an in depth review of all that happened on the courts of Siri Fort.

But let us now not dwell on what has happened since I am eager to bring to you news of some great things happening in near future. Events that befit the popularity and stature of Badminton in India.

Badminton is not just a family or an all weather sport, one that has millions of addicts who cannot do without their daily dose of the game. It is also a sport that is helping national integration in every way. It is with great Pride the BAI announces that the 2012 Senior National championships will be held in Srinagar in end of September. All our top players will be present to bring to the citizens of the Valley, the mesmerising magic of Badminton. In all probability we will be the biggest national sporting event happening there in a long time. Badminton will endeavour to bring smiles on faces of our Kashmiri brothers.

That is not all. The BAI is also excited to announce the first edition of the "Indian Badminton League" which will be held in Mumbai in August. This mega event will be organised by Maharashtra Badminton Association and is based on the interesting concept that is taking place already under the name of Maharashtra Badminton league--held by Pune District association for last two years.

Lastly, you must have by now seen the first issue of "Badminton India" the official magazine of our association. And though you may have found some shortcomings, I hope you may have liked, overall, what was presented. Of course our team will make every endeavor to ensure that the magazine gets better and better with each issue, and becomes worthy, of class readers like you. But the success of the magazine lies in your hands. All State bodies have received numerous copies and I appeal to you that they should reach each and every district under your organization and through them to all players of the country. We look forward to subscriptions from all and also to your comments on the first issue.

Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta

The first issue of Badminton India, the official magazine of our association was released in front of “live TV” at the Yonex India open in Delhi's Siri Fort where Indian contingent put up a great display, led by heroics of P.Kashyap who reached the semi-finals of his event. And the week was capped by the fantastic news of a record five Indian players qualifying for London Olympics, led by the irresistible doubles genius Jwala Gutta who went on to create history and wrote her own mile-stone by qualifying for two events.

country. Maharashtra has successfully conducted its second Maharashtra Badminton League-the MBL and by media reports, it was a great success. We carry a report on the league as well as a report from the summer camp held at Thane where former national champion Abhinav Shyam Gupta was present. Abhinav has also been selected by BAI as the new National junior coach. Badminton India wishes his great success in this very crucial role.

For our senior readers, we will carry, from

this issue onwards, a column highlighting our glorious past. Acclaimed badminton writer and badminton addict Shirish Nadkarni has written on the great Suresh Goel, who unfortunately is not with us any more. The column “Blast from the Past” will bring former legends alive in our magazine. Dr Dilip Nadkarni highlights “Shoulder Injuries” while Resident Editor Shachi Sharma writes on diets for the under-12 kids. We are also proud to carry an interview of Padmashree

and Dronacharya S.M.Arif, coach extraordinary.

I have written to all state affiliates of the BAI and I hope we start getting news from various parts of India. I repeat again that we are all stakeholders in the magazine and its success depends a lot on involvement of entire Indian Badminton Family. I look forward to healthy subscriptions from all players, officials and coaches. And we hope the 2nd issue is also liked by the readers and we get your feedback on same.

Sanjay Sharma
Editor



The Dronacharya with three of our Olympians

There is no doubt that the policies of our President Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta are helping ensure rising standards internationally of Indian Badminton.

We hope you liked the first issue and eagerly await your feedback, critical or not, as your views will lead us to ensure better coverage of the sport in the country.

This issue, therefore, obviously carries major reporting on the super-series event and carries interviews of Jwala and Ashwini Ponappa and write-ups on Kashyap, Saina and Diyu and I am sure every sports fan in the country wishes them the very best and we bid them bon-voyage with great hope and prayers that they return triumphant.

Other exciting things are happening in the

Without any doubts, the Yonex Sunrise India Open 2012, or the BWF Super series as the event is widely known, was a roaring success. True there were some initial glitches, mainly in press and player's accreditation, but once the BAI officials led by President Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta got their act together, the things went on smoothly indeed.

BAI President Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta was present for long hours each day to ensure success of the event. And the Delhi crowd too was out in full force enjoying the fantastic matches that took place. One thought that after Indian queen Saina Nehwal lost on the second day, the fans will lose interest, but much to delight of the BAI, the crowd went from strength to strength, right up to the finals, to take home cherished memories from display of some of the biggest names in the world who had assembled at Siri Fort stadium. Players like Taufique Hidayat, Peter Gade, Lee Chong Wei and others were cheered and applauded as if they were home heroes. Gade in fact told us, "It sure feels like home. This crowd support is great--."

And any Indian name announced for matches was met by huge roar of approval by all and sundry. It was indeed a very carnival like atmosphere, showcasing Indian Badminton at its very best. And as reported in our other cover story, the display of most of the Indian contingent was something to be really proud of.

As Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta told the assembled press on finals day, "I am very proud of our players. They have performed extremely well. This was the last chance for Olympic qualification and I am sure when the list is officially announced by BWF next week, we will break all records."

Indeed, by very next week came the fantastic news that not only Saina Nehwal was confirmed for London as expected, but a total of 5 Indian players will be jetting for the 2012 Olympics. These include V.Diju, P.Kashyap, Ashwini Ponappa and of course the inimitable Jwala Gutta who did the country proud by

all over to retrieve impossible looking shots that even the legendary Lee Chong Wei had to applaud from the other side of the net.

This was an epic 69 minutes encounter that went the Korean's way 21-18/14-21/21-19. As Times of India reported on April 30th, "It was a Herculean effort for Shon to achieve his first super series title.

He had defeated another former All England Champion Peter Gade of Denmark in the quarters to seal his Olympic berth and had all the answers to what the Malaysian world number one was throwing up."

True, Chong Wei was carrying a shoulder injury before the event, but his display during the event

and the fact that he reached the finals, obviously cleared all doubts about lack of fitness as far as he was concerned. In fact the world number one was magnanimous in his praise for the 17th world ranked Korean. After the finals, Chong Wei said, "He was very very good today. He covered the court with great speed and his defense was good, difficult to penetrate. I am sure he will go very far in the game--."

Chong Wei was always trailing in the first game. Half smashes of Shon did great damage. Though the Malaysian equaled at 16-16, the canny Korean moved on to 18-16 and again to game point 20-18 before wrapping up the game.

In the second game, from the start,



BAI President Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta with Shuttling Queens

qualifying in both of her events, the ladies doubles and the Mixed.

There were upsets galore at the championships, but the true giant killer in every way in men's singles, emerged in the form of Wan Ho Shon, the amiable Korean who came into the draw without any seeding and walked away with the men's singles crown handing out a rare defeat to world No one Lee Chong Wei of Malaysia, the hot favourite for the title. The final showdown was worth walking miles in blazing sun to witness. A classic thriller, where lead changed hands every other point and huge rallies played at dizzying pace ensured the fans chewing their finger nails in sheer excitement. Such was the court coverage of Wan Ho Shon, who dived



"Gritty Jwala created history"

Chong Wei had a voice like grip on the proceedings. Taking a 7-4 lead he never looked back. There were the classic net deceptions, the cross court overhead smashes which made holes on the other side of the net. Chong Wei reined supreme, scoring a fluent 21-14 score-line. And the crowd roared its approval at every good stroke, at every blazing smash. In fact, it heartened hearts of BAI officials who were amazed that a near packed stadium witnessed the finals even though Saina Nehwal had lost on the second day itself and there was no Indian playing the finals.

The decider saw a ding-dong battle from the start. But the writing was clear on the wall as long rallies, played at fast speed saw the Korean first take a 17-13 lead. He made some dazzling dives all over to make impossible looking retrieves which had the opponent also applauding. It

was a do or die effort from Shon who clung on to his lead from 18-17 onwards to finally run out as a winner at 21-19, giving Korean badminton a top rate singles crown after a long time in the circuit.

In fact the unseeded Shon was brilliant through-out the championships. By defeating Peter Gade in pre-quarterfinals, he did a favour to Indian ace P.Kashyap who was to face World number 4 and second seeded here, Chen Jin of China in quarters. With Peter's defeat, Chen ensured he qualified for London as he retained his 4th spot rank. Therefore he saw no merit in facing Kashyap next. The tournament officials were appalled as the Chinese cried out of the match citing swollen

wrist and Kashyap was gifted a berth to London, much to the chagrin of Ajay Jairam, who had played extremely well but finally had to bow down to Lee Chong Wei in the quarter finals. Kashap's entry in semis, thanks to the walkover from Chen Jin was a boon he had never anticipated.

He said later, very sportingly and correctly, "I am happy that I qualified. But I would have preferred to win against Chen Jin and then qualify. I feel sorry for Ajay, but then this walkover was a bolt out of the blue, even for me. I can understand his feelings. I wish him very best always in future--."

Kashyap played his best in his match against Shon in the semis. But he finally caved in after a tough three game affair 14-21/21-19/16-21, which brought out the best from both shuttlers. Earlier on, the Hyderabad

based shuttler had put in another rip roaring display when he played all out to subdue the very experienced and dangerous Thailand player Boonsak Ponsana in a pulsating three setter which went the distance. Kashyap saved two match points to hammer Bonsana into submission. In the semis against Shon, Kashyap was tentative at start and early leads saw the witty Korean surge ahead and clinch the first game without much sweat. In fact Kashyap was always trailing in the opening game.

In the second too, till 10-10 and again at 16-16, the proceedings saw Kashyap basically trying to play catch-up, as Shon hit some dazzling down the line hits. But four quick points from 14-16 to 18-16 in one serve, saw the Indian finally zooming ahead to win 21-19. At start of the third too, he was nicely catching Shon on the net and getting his openings to smash down hard. But after the scores were equalized at 10-10, Shon went into overdrive, never looking back to triumph 21-16. And though Kashyap lost the match, he won the hearts of all badminton fans present, like Ajay Jairam before him.

In the other semifinals Lee Chong Wei went along in his typical unhurried style to beat JEN HAO HSU of Chinese Taipei 21-13/21-7 in just 26 minutes of power show. In fact right through Lee did not show any signs of his shoulder injury. He defeated Taufique Hidayat, the former world and Olympic champion from Indonesia, and real crowd favourite at Delhi, with ease in the quarters. The Malaysian star had hurt his shoulder in the epic All England finals in March at Birmingham, when he fought for his third successive title. He said after the semis here at Siri Fort, "--today my shoulder responded well. My smashes were good and I moved well and I am keen to retain this title."

Of course he played a spoil sport for the Indian contingent when he destroyed Jairam's quest for

Olympics, winning a memorable battle 21-16/15-21/21-5. To some extent Jairam has to blame himself as he squandered away a 13-9 and 15-10 lead in first game, to allow the wily Malaysian equalize at 16-16 and then power his way ahead.

But the second game saw a resurgent Jairam striking hard with some lovely crosscourt smashes and quick forays to the net, which had Chong Wei guessing all the time. Building up on an early lead of 5-1, the tall Indian raced to a mindboggling 19-10 scoreline and finally made Chong Wei bow down at 15-21."I was moving well and I was not afraid of playing him as I had done well against him in past also,"said Jairam of this second game after the match.

The Indian however had simply no answer to the furious pace unleashed by Chong Wei, right from start of the decider. There were some delectable net flicks, catching Jairam napping and lovely net dribbles ensured that he got easy openings to smash with venom. The Malaysian was in his elements and showed the crowd why he is world number one. It was a treat to watch him play. He took just 18 minutes to register a 21-5 drubbing of the Indian shuttler.

Jairam had a good first round showing against National champion Sourabh Verma, winning 21-15/17-21/21-11, with Verma caving in inexplicably in the decider. While Kashyap had got the better of Yuhuan Tan of Belgium 21-11/21-14 easily in his first round showing.

It was not just the showing in singles with two boys reaching quarters and Kashyap making it to the semis that gladdened the hearts of Badminton officials and Coach Gopi Chand, but Rupesh Kumar/Sanave

Thomas did the country proud by making it to their first ever quarterfinal stage entry in a superseries event. The top notch Indian combination for almost a decade or so, were lucky to get walkover from top seeds Jae Sung Jung/Yong Dae Lee of Korea. But the Indians combined effectively to stop another Korean pair of Ki Jung Kim/Sa Rang Kim 21-18/18-21/21-19 in a nail biting, tension filled match which had the crowd on its feet.

The Indians however caved in without much of a fight in the

good junior players in mens doubles," said Chief National Coach Gopi Chand.

Gopi of course had more reasons to be pleased as his 17 year old protégé and current National champion PV Sindhu also put in a brilliant display, almost knocking of 4th seeded Chinese star Yanjiao Jiang in the quarterfinals. That the Chinese could win after a marathon battle, 18-21/21-12/21-18 only shows the grit and resilience that Sindhu showed through the match. Prior to this match against the 4th seeded Chinese, Sindhu had two good victories. She beat Tzu Ying Tai of Chinese Taipei 21-17/21-19 and in second round she got the better of experienced Korean, the 8th seeded Ju Hyung Sung 21-17/22-20.

"Sindhu has one great quality. She is never afraid to face any opponent across the court and this was proved here. She was so close to defeating Jiang, who has been a top ranked world player for sometime and is dangerous on any given

day. But Sindhu, even against the 8th seeded Korean and now against Jiang, was simply not bothered who she is up against. This quality will take her far,"opined Gopi.

However there was heartbreak for the Indian contingent when the 3rd seeded and former world number two Saina Nehwal lost out rather tamely to Korean south paw Young Joo Bae 19-21/10-21. In her own words at the emotional press conference after the match, Saina said, as published in Hindustan Times of Delhi, "I just do not know what went wrong. I did not play well—I am sorry. I played well enough in the first but in the second I was just not in the game--."

Saina in fact was expected to



"Will be playing her second Olympics"

quarterfinals when they were shunted out by Thailand combination of Bodin Issara/ Maneepong Jongit 12-21/12-21.

There is no doubt that this Indian contingent gave a good display in a tournament of such magnitude. "I am very happy with the overall showing of my team. In the qualifying singles matches also three boys lost very close matches to players more experienced. This display has been an eye opener of sorts and is a base on which we can now build up the future. All the mens singles players are young and therefore it is nice to see them play so well. Sanave and Rupesh have done a great job for the country, but we have to ensure we get

romp all over the short, stocky Korean. In her previous match against old nemesis Pui Yin Yip of HongKong, Saina was flawless and impeccably ruthless. She walked on to the court confidently, and with a sense of purpose, and then proceeded to demolish Yip 21-14/21-6 in a little over 34 minutes. This was a memorable performance and the Indian ace looked very much the world beater that she has been. But her totally off form display against Bae Joo, took everyone, including the almost packed stadium by surprise. Siri Fort, barring the CWG in October 2010, seemingly is not a happy hunting ground for her.

With three Chinese stars amongst the top four seeds in Ladies singles, it was but natural, and expected that as usual they will snatch away the title. Which eventually they did, thanks to a determined effort from Li Xuerui. But though she won the title, the ladies singles in a way belonged to the veteran giant killer from

Germany; the 6th seeded Juliane Schenk, who had the time of her life, defeating three Chinese stars including the top seeded Shixian Wang.

Schenk, 30 years old and a veteran on the circuit, may not look very pleasing on the court as she labours with her movements and messes with her footwork, but she more than makes up for all this by having the grit and guts to go for every shuttle, indulge in long rallies and somehow keep a good length in her tosses and lifts. She worked really hard in every match and in the finals too she lost a three game, though the last game was an easy 21-8 win for the Chinese. The finals scoreline was 14-21/21-17/21-8 in favour of Li Xuerui.

"I think I will remember this trip to India for a long time. Everything here was good for me. I liked the ambience, the way things were organized and more importantly I beat Shixian Wang and almost beat Xuerui.

As per Indian Express report of the finals Schenk started off well but lost steam in the end. The German engaged her opponent in long rallies and forced the Chinese to commit errors, led 11-7 at the break and kept up the pressure to lead 1-0. But there was an inexplicable collapse at start of the second game as a spate of unforced errors allowed LI to race ahead to 8-0. A late fight-back saw the German come as close as 16-17, but she lost out in stamina and caved in 17-21.

Wrote the Express," In the decider, Li led 11-5 at the break to leave Schenk frustrated and imbalanced. After the break, the Chinese got six straight points to race



"will showcase her talent in London"

of to a 17-5 lead and by this time the writing was

clear on the wall. Li Xuerui recorded her fourth straight victory over the German."

"I showed that I have the skills and strength and mentality to reach the top. But yes there were some errors in the third game on my net play and defense, and this is something on which I will now have to work harder on," said Juliana Schenk, who otherwise was very pleased with her overall performance at the Superseries event.

OTHER RESULTS—ALL FINALS

Women's doubles. Kyung Eun Jung/Ha Na Kim (KOR) defeated Yixin Bao/Qianxin Zhong (CHN) 21-17/21-18

Mixed Doubles Tantowi Ahmed/Liliyana Natsir (INA) defeated Prapakamol/Saralee Thongthongkam (THA) 21-16/12-21/21-14

Men's Doubles Bodin Issara/Maneepong Jongit (THA) defeated Sung Hyun Ko/Yeon Song Yoo (KOR) 21-17/14-21/21-14



'Had a superb tournament'



by Scorio

Jwala comes from the Sanskrit word which means fire. True to her name, Jwala Gutta has earned the reputation of a fire brand player. This 28-year-old hopes to set ablaze in the forthcoming London Olympics. The Hyderabad-based player made history by becoming the first Indian to qualify in two events in badminton in Olympics. This feisty left-handed player will be seen in action in mixed doubles (with V Diyu) and women's doubles (Ashwini Ponnappa). "Every sports person dreams of playing in Olympics. I can't believe that I'm in two events of the Olympic event. I feel proud of my achievement. It is indeed a special occasion and the high point of my career. We hope to surprise many. We hope to win gold. Well, eventually even if I settle for any other medal that too would be a memorable for Olympics is so special for any athlete," says Jwala, who owes her success to her parents (Kranti and Yelen) and coach Syed Mohammad Arif.

Did you expect to qualify in two events for London Olympics?

I was always confident that I would make it to the Olympics this time. I missed the bus last time for various reasons. So, I was determined to prove a point and we had good results both in mixed and women's doubles. In the end, we could make it to London. I have always believed in hard work and discipline. It will be a tough competition and Olympics

bring the best out of players. But we are ready for the challenge.

There will be lot of pressure and stiff challenges in Olympics?

The pressure will be there but I have confidence in my game and in my partners' game (Diyu and Aswhini). We relish pressure. We played against the best players of the



“Qualification will bring out the best in this great pair”

world and even won few of them. It is all about playing the right game on a particular day. Our training is good and we are on the right track. I will play my natural game. As a top player and when you are playing for country, there is always pressure. It is how you absorb the pressure. That is the key for success.

Where will the main challenge come from in Olympics?

The Chinese have always a good combination in all the doubles events (men, women and mixed doubles). The Malaysians, the Koreans, the Danes and Indonesians are good. But we are equally good and strong. We have beaten quite a few top players. In fact, in the women's doubles, we have beat everyone except the world number one.

Her success in Commonwealth Games gold and World Championship bronze

Both Ashwini and myself proved a point in these two tournaments. I would place bronze medal in World championship a notch higher than CWG gold for simple reason that the world best players play in the world championship. The CWG gold made us believe that we had the game to challenge the best in the world and the bronze in world championship showed we are one of the best in the world. These two achievements makes me confident that Olympic medal is within our reach.

On winning bronze in World championship

It is as good as winning an Olympic medal. World Championship is the biggest tournament of the year and to win a medal is a huge achievement and I'm more happy that Ashwini and myself became the first Indian women to win a World medal that too in doubles. It is incredible.

You gave new meaning to doubles competition in India.

I always believed that I had the game to be the best doubles player. Unfortunately, the doubles was never given due prominence. I wanted to prove everybody wrong. Doubles is more exciting than singles. It is a wholesome entertainer as there is a lot of drama. There are smashes. The



“CWG gold medallists--Can create history in London also”

game is played at a fast pace. Speed, endurance and perfect understanding with the partner are vital ingredients for success in doubles.

On doubles pair in the country

I see the emergence of doubles players in the country. It is becoming popular. It is a good sign. Hopefully, the doubles players will be taken seriously. If given proper encouragement, instead of one medal, we can expect a minimum of two or three medals in any big tournaments like the Olympics or World Championship. For information, there are three doubles events and two single events. 70 percent results depend on doubles players only. It is up to the association to make the right moves.

Her preparation for Olympics

It is a big event. I know a medal in Olympics will be a dream come true for any sports person. Playing and representing your country and a medal will be a perfect icing on the cake. But the road to a medal in Olympics will be full of obstacles.

There is a lot of hard work and lot of motivational exercises to do. We are working on our fitness, which is the key, and on our game. Doubles game revolves around speed and fitness. I'm working on my diet. I hope to reduce my weight by a few kilograms before the Olympics for a better mobility on the court. I'm confident that I will stand up to the challenge in playing in both the events. I'm working with Arif sir and also with the Indonesian coach.

Playing with Ashwini

We gel very well as doubles. She is an aggressive player and she has one of the hardest smashes in the world. My job at the net would be to create the openings and Ashwini would do the rest at the rear. She is a very fit player. She has a good range of strokes. She is also mentally very strong.

On splitting with Shruti Kurien

When I split with Shruti, there was a lot of criticism. We had won good number of national titles. I had good memories. But I had to take the

hard decision because I knew if I had to move forward, I had to look for a young player. In Ashwini I found an ideal partner. Today, I think I had made a right decision in my life.

V Diju as doubles partner in mixed event

Diju is one of the best all-round players. He is very reliable and very consistent. He is very intelligent and his court movement at the rear is very good. I have excellent rapport with Diju. When I forged my partnership with Diju, we immediately gelled as very good doubles partner. Being a left-hander, has helped in both mixed and women's doubles events.

Whether doubles is getting the due recognition?

I do feel sometimes when doubles doesn't get the due recognition in our country. When

I won the doubles bronze at world championship, the AP badminton association was indifferent to my achievement. At the same time, when Saina Nehwal wins, it is a different scenario. I have nothing against Saina. My relations with Saina is cordial. But I have an issue with the way other players have been treated. Saina has been given all the importance. But there are quite a few players who are equally doing well. I don't know whether it is discrimination. Other players need the same type of encouragement and motivation as it is given to Saina.

On controversies and Jwala

I have got used to controversies. There have been off-court controversies. Initially, I was very upset. Sometimes, the media indulges too much into my personal life. That is wrong. But I'm a more mature Jwala now. I'm a more focussed player and my immediate priority is to win a medal in Olympics. It is one of the biggest dreams I'm chasing.

Profile

Name : Ashwini Ponappa
Date of Birth : 18th September, 1989
Height : 5 Ft, 5 Inches (1.65 m)
Country : India
Handedness : Right
Highest World Ranking :
 13 (25th June 2010)
Current Ranking :
 18 (at the time of going to press)
Country : India

In 2001, when Ashwini Ponappa won the Indian Junior Championships, she knew then that Badminton was not just a game, but also a profession. After completing her schooling in Bangalore, Ashwini moved to Hyderabad in the hope of becoming a true blue international player of repute. She turned this into reality when she won the gold medal at the South Asian Games in 2006. Together with Jwala, Ashwini won the gold medal at the coveted Commonwealth Games 2010. She also won silver at the mixed team event at the Commonwealth games, 2010. To add her to her credit, she won a bronze medal at the 2011 World Championships.

Despite all this, one of her goals remained unfulfilled.

It was only at the India Open Super Series, 2012, when Ashwini's dream turned into reality. At the ripe age of 22, the girl with one of the hardest smashes in the world will represent India in the women's doubles event at the London Olympics. Today, as her dream comes true, Ashwini spoke to your magazine on her journey from the beginning to Olympics 2012

Q. Ashwini, When and how did you start playing Badminton?

A. I started playing badminton at a local badminton academy at Bangalore. I understood very soon that I loved playing the sport. As a kid, even in school, I was always more

inclined towards sports than studies.

Q. When did you realize that Badminton was a career option for you?

A. When I won the nationals at the young age of 15, I realized I had potential and this is a career path for me.

Q. What about support from home?

A. My parents have always been extremely supportive of all my

her doubles partner because she is just so much more experienced. It always helps. When the offer to pair up Jwala came my way, I was very excited by the prospect. She likes to play aggressively and so do I. We gel well. I have learnt so much from her because of her experience and I am happy that we are playing well together as a team. As a doubles combination we worked our way to

the top really fast. The commonwealth gold was a big achievement but the bronze at World championships was more special because it was against the world best players.

Q. Finally you made your way to the Olympics. How has the journey been?

A. Playing the Olympics was a dream for me. As a 17 yr old when I used to first represent India at junior tournaments, the Olympics was only a distant dream. I'm so glad that I have been successful at covering that distance. It required a lot of hard work and hours of training to reach here. But finally, here I am, with a chance to play at the

Olympics. I had only dreamt of it before. But it feels nice when dreams turn into reality. When that happens it feels really good

Q. How are you preparing for the D Day?

A. I am glad we have coaches like SM Arif, Pullela Gopi Chand and Indonesian Coach Edwin Irwan. We are working very hard and we are hopeful of winning a medal. It is a golden opportunity and we will give our best.

As we can see, a medal in the 2012 Olympic Games seems to be Ashwini's current obsession. We at Badminton India salute her efforts and wish her all the success.

Shachi S Sharma



On the eve of the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2012-OSIM BWF World Superseries, P Kashyap himself was not willing to give himself a concrete chance of making the London Olympic cut. Four days later, the 25-year-old was fending off questions about what are his realistic goals at the London Olympics to be held in June and the Gopi Chand Academy trainee was once again at a loss for words.

Going into the final Superseries meet before the end of the Olympic qualification period, Kashyap was trailing compatriot Ajay Jayaram by over 1000 points and three spots in world ranking and knew that he would have to come up with a stupendous performance to have any chances of upstaging Ajay.

But just like his fledgling career, the exuberant youngsters rose from the dumps on the back of an exceptional victory and some luck to book his ticket on the flight to London.

Kashyap's career graph has also followed a similar trajectory since he joined the S M Arif academy at the Lal Bahadur Shastri Stadium in Hyderabad for a summer camp as an 11-year-old. His father's transferable job meant that the boy had to change coaches after coming to Bangalore.

Though Kashyap's parents were keen on him making a career in badminton, not many gave him a chance to survive in this gruelling sports given that the scrawny child was perennially sick and struggled to go through an entire week of a tournament without breaking down.

"It used to be very bad," is how Kashyap puts it after so many years. His condition was diagnosed to be asthmatic and once again raised doubts about his future in the sport.

But Kashyap has not only overcome that hurdle with proper medication – he has to get a special exemption for it from WADA -- and disciplined lifestyle, team physio Kiran Challagunda's assessment that the 25-year-old in one of the fittest player on the international circuit speaks volumes of his work ethics and commitment.

Kashyap's upward graph began in 2005 after he joined the Gopi Chand academy and despite a series of up and downs in his career he has been able to cement his place as one of the leading men's singles shuttler in the country in the

last two years.

The Commonwealth Games bronze medallist began his march with the junior



**Kashyap
Has proved
to be a world beater**

national crown the same year and went on to break into the top-100 in the world ranking in his very first full year in the senior circuit.

The second youngest Indian after Prakash Padukone to win a senior national ranking tournament, Kashyap got the better of Chetan Anand in the 2008 National Games final and it looked like the affable youngster had turned a new leaf in his career.

However, a serious knee injury followed and despite the rigorous training regime Kashyap's progress at the international circuit has been far from consistent due to injury problems. He, however, still managed to reach three

finals -- the Smiling Fish International at Thailand in May, the Spanish Open, and the French Open in June -- in 2008.

"Basically, asthmatics have to keep on working on endurance. You can't build it up and stop working on it for a while, like the others. My endurance goes down if I don't work on it. So I do endurance workouts even during tournaments, when other players don't," he says.

It was yet another injury that jeopardise Kashyap's chances of making the Olympic grade despite being head and shoulders above the competition till December last year.

"I got injured during the Syed Modi tournament last December and missed few tournaments and when I came back I played too many tournaments," Kashyap said.

In fact, both Kashyap and Ajay carried injuries in the last three months of the Olympic qualifying period and that meant that the person having a decent run in any of the major tournament before April 30, 2012 would have the best chance to qualify.

But that run eluded Kashyap till the Yonex India Super Series, the last tournament before the end of the qualifying tournament. He came up with a sensational performance to defeat the experienced Boonsak Ponsana of Thailand in the second round in a battle of attrition and a stroke of luck that gave him a pass into his second Super Series semifinal and also a berth in the London Olympics.

Kashyap will now participate in two Super Series as part of his preparations for the Olympic Games. Though the Indian Oil employee has the odds stacked against him at the quadrennial event, one thing is sure – Kashyap is not the one to give in easily. And if the rub of the green goes his way, who knows destiny may write yet another successful chapter in his fledgling badminton career.



by Abhijeet Kulkarni



"A great competitor--Tine Baun"

The Yonex Sunrise India Open Super Series 2012 was super successful. Apart from the success of Indian players on court, we get you some happenings off the court. Let's take a sneak peak beyond the sidelines People Power

Despite the presence of several top names in action at last year's inaugural India Open Super Series badminton, fans had given the event a miss. This year, therefore, the organisers decided to make entry free to attract the crowds to the Siri Fort Sports Complex for the April 24-29 event.

"Last year there were a lot of empty seats at the venue. While part of the reason would be the fact that Saina lost in the first round itself, it was very disappointing because it was the first time a Super Series event was being played in India" admitted Selvamresh Supramaniam, Super Series marketing manager for BWF. But this year, despite the fact that Saina lost in the early rounds, the crowd support didn't diminish. All the badminton lovers were still present at the venue to cheer Kashyap who reached semi-finals and to see spectacular matches unfolding on the final day

TPS Puri, vice president of Badminton Federation of India and secretary of the organising committee added that seating would be allotted on a first-come-first-serve basis. "Last

time, we lost money even on the printing of tickets, so it made no sense to do the same again. This year people only had to pass a security check and were then allotted a seat at the venue. It was quite a success to see that happen" he said.

Spectators Himanshu Vaidya and Shiv Iyer were quite ecstatic too. "We are absolute badminton fanatics. We have come all the way from Mumbai to attend this event. And thanks to BAI, this year's free entry was a boon for us. I could get my wife and kids along too. It's great to see players like Lee Chong Wei and others. Where else would we ever get to see players of such repute? I think most people in the crowd would share my viewpoint" Well, we at BAI certainly do From the Far East

Second year in succession, Park Joo Bong, the coach of the Japanese Doubles team, was very happy to be in Delhi. According to him, "The super Series is a very big tournament. I am here for the second time. Indians have started doing very well in the sport. Your country now has 5 Olympic qualifiers. Although Saina lost in the early rounds I think she can still defeat top class players. She is physically very strong. Also, your men's

singles Player Kashyap has improved a lot since last year. So this is definitely a good time for India."

However the grass is not always green. Although Park seemed to be happy with the overall tournament, he definitely noted down one thing we could improve on. According to him, "one thing you should definitely improve on is things like schedules for training time, etc. of course when we ask for it; they do give us the information. But they have been slow in doing so. Also, my team is from Japan and sometimes the spicy



Peter Gade
"Very popular with Indian crowds"

Indian curry doesn't suit the players. So information should be given in our rooms regarding Japanese restaurants nearby with a map from the hotel. When we go to other countries, they are prompt with these things. This time, my players couldn't eat the hotel food, so I had to get a tuk tuk and ask the tuk tuk man and he took me to a restaurant. Also, we are here the whole day long, so the players lounge should be equipped with more food not just cheese bread and fruit, its not enough for players. This is the only thing I feel they should improve on. Otherwise, it's a fantastic tournament"

Well, point taken and we are sure these things will definitely be taken care of.

Similarly Park's good old doubles partner, and currently the coach of the Korean doubles team Kim Moon-Soo was all praise for India. Through an interpreter (the manager of the Korean Team), he cited, "This is an amazing time for India. This is the second year in row this tournament is being held. Our team likes playing this tournament. Indian players are also doing well. But through your magazine, we would like to point out that the tournament committee could certainly improve on a few things. For example, we missed the last bus to the hotel the other day since we were



"PARK JOO BONG
This legend enjoyed his
Delhi sojourn"



"BAI President Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta at prize distribution"

ten minutes late as our match got over a little late. So we waited for over an hour before getting another bus. Our players had to play the next day and missed that one hour of rest. These things do not happen in other countries. But at the end of the day what matters is despite all this our players did extremely well during the tournament. Our men's singles player defeated world no 1 Lee Chong Wei, our men's doubles also did well. We are very happy"

When questioned about the training methods and what makes Korean players different, Kim added "We in Korea are known for doubles. Our history boasts of champions in doubles. Now our singles players have also started doing well." He also added jokingly, "Our training is a secret. If you want to know what we do, simply come to Korea and we shall tell you"

Competitors Corner

The fiery and friendly Tine Baun from Demark, standing tall at World No. 6 said, "This is my second time here. We come with a very small team. But I am happy to play in India. Peter seems to be very famous here and the girls are always swooning over him. We somehow always have the crowd support to play here, so we feel good when we play here in India" Tine won the coveted All England Championship not once, but twice in 2008 and 2010. She holds a record On her on court rivalry with Saina Nehwal, the Dane added, "Saina is

always good to play against. But for some reason she has not been able to perform well in this tournament. However, otherwise I see her play very well in the rest of the tournaments. She has had some amazing wins. She is very physically strong and seems to be working very hard on her fitness. It is a very good time for India. The other players too have improved. I wish them all the best"

For your support and encouragement, we wish you all the best too

Guests of Honour

President Akhilesh Das Gupta made sure not only Badminton Celebrities, but others like honourable sports Minister of India Ajay Maken, Honourable MOS Parliamentary Affairs Rajiv Shukla and famous actor Amol Palekar attended the event.

Amol Palekar who attended the event all the way from Pune for three consecutive days said, "I haven't missed a single match in so many days. It is my honour and my pleasure to be a part of an event of such magnitude. I am so happy to see this. I am a Badminton fanatic myself. I used to see Prakash Padukone and Sanjay Sharma play in India. But now, I can also see the world No. 1 play in an international event. It is absolutely awesome"

We hope this continues for each year to come!

Shachi S Sharma



by Abhijeet Kulkarni

The beaming face of chief national coach Pullela Gopi Chand while replying to a query over the overall performance of his wards in the Yonex-Sunrise India Open 2012-OSIM BWF World Superseries was enough to sum up the atmosphere in the Indian camp after a week long competition in which the hosts came out with flying colours.

And this despite the overwhelming favourite, Saina Nehwal, was knocked out early.

However, unlike the first edition there were enough players to put their hands up and take the responsibility of keeping the tri-colour flying in the business end of the tournament as the hosts had two quarterfinalists, one semifinal appearance to show for their effort.

The Indian contingent entered the tournament with at least three Olympic spots at stake and came up with a special

performance to ensure that India will send their biggest ever squad to the quadrennial Games.

"If not for Saina's loss, we had a perfect tournament," said Gopi Chand after Kashyap's semifinal loss against eventual champion Wan Ho Shon ended India's campaign in the second edition of the tournament.

But by then Kashyap had achieved his goal of qualifying for the Olympics and though the Hyderabad-based shuttler would have liked to reach the last four stage and book his maiden Olympic berth with a thumping victory he would none the less be proud of his achievements.

The overwhelming image for any Indian badminton fan from the tournament would be the gleaming face of P Kashyap after he learnt that former world champion Chen Jin has conceded his quarterfinal match against him.



"Creditable performance by PV Sindhu"

That walkover helped him leapfrog compatriot Ajay Jayaram in the May 3 ranking list that would decide the eventual qualifiers.

The timing of the withdrawal did leave quite a few tongues wagging but that should not take away anything from the Indian contingent, which emphatically proved that there is more to Indian badminton than Saina Nehwal.

And despite the Chen Jin episode, Kashyap deserved a shot at Olympic glory for the way he overcame the challenge of Thailand veteran Boonsak

"Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta and family enjoying the proceedings at Superseries"



Ponsana in the pre-quarterfinals. The second round encounter was more a battle of attrition with both players focused on playing a percentage game and waiting for other to falter.

The one hour three minute encounter swung like a pendulum before the Indian saved two match points and then kept his nerves to send his more illustrious opponent packing. "I wasn't even tired (physically) at the end of the match. But it was mentally draining and I was just happy that the match was over," said Kashyap who was also keeping an eye on the adjacent court where Ajay Jayaram was facing world number one Lee Chong Wei.

Ajay fought valiantly and even managed to take a game out of Chong Wei but the Malaysian was just too strong for the Indian hopeful, who had to only match Kashyap's performance in the tournament to ensure an Olympic berth.

A maiden final would have been an icing on the cake for Kashyap but it looked like the

Doubles glory

While Ajay and Kashyap were engulfed in their personal tussle, the women's doubles pair of Jwala Gutta/Ashwini Ponnappa were on the brink of history with their Olympic chances depending on whether they manage to reach the quarterfinals of the India Open.

The world championship bronze medallist were lucky to receive a first round bye from seventh seeds Lok Yan Poon and Ying Suet Tse of Hong Kong. The Indian combination now needed to avenge their first round loss in the Badminton Asia Championship a week ago and did that in style to upset the Indonesian pair of Vita Marris and Nadya Melati.

Jwala and Ashwini looked vulnerable in defense but once they began controlling the rallies they ensured that they had enough firepower in their attacks to decimate the opposition.

Later speaking to the media, Jwala admitted that she needed to work harder for the Olympics. "I will be focusing on more off court training till the Olympics," said the multiple-time national champion, who will also be playing mixed doubles with Diju in London.

While the focus was mostly on the Olympic contenders, the men's doubles pair of Rupesh Kumar and Sanave Thomas enthralled the audience with their audacity and never-say-die attitude against Asian champions Ki Jung Kim and Sa Rang Kim of Korea in the second round.

"That victory would give us a lot of confidence," said Rupesh, who along with Sanave is the second reserve on the Olympic list.

Sindhu shines, juniors flatter

If Jwala and Ashwini managed to attract more eyeballs than Saina, a lanky P V Sindhu stood tall among her peers and announced to the world that she would be the next big thing from India's stable.

The reigning national champion first ended her losing run against the highly talented Tsu Ying Tai and then came up with a near perfect show to upset eighth seed Ji Hyun Sung of Korea to reach her maiden Super Series quarterfinal.

Though the 16-year-old fell at the last eight stage, she went down with her head held high against Chinese Jiang Yangjiao – an opponent whom even Saina hasn't been able to master in their five meetings.

Sindhu teased her opponent with her half smashes and used her height



"Kashyap was the toast of the championships for India"

effectively, but the experience of Jiang saw her through on the day. However, not without reminding the Chinese contingent that they would do well to henceforth prepare for two Indians rather than one.

Even among the second line of Indian shuttlers, Neha Pandit managed to reach the second round after coming through qualifying while the likes of junior national champion Sameer Verma and B Sai Praneeth were a point away from making the main draw but their inexperience proved to be their undoing.

Saina disappoints again

While there were many positives from the tournament, the major cause of worry was the way Saina faltered for the second successive time in front of the home crowd.

And it was not the loss but the manner in which the world number five surrendered against Korea's Youn Joo Bae would have been alarming to the coaching staff.

After going neck-and-neck with Bae in the first game, Saina suddenly lost her rhythm and the strength in her legs to chase down shuttles and stage a come back.

It looked like the pressure of playing in front of the home crowd had got to her and she froze when her opponent showed the resilience to fight back.

Badminton lovers and the coaching staff would be hoping that it was just an abrasion and the Commonwealth Games gold medallist would be the toast of the tournament next year.



Sanave Thomas/Rupesh Kumar "the veterans were in great form"

Hubli-Karnatka

MMBA, Hubli – A noteworthy upcoming academy

Hubli, though the second largest city in Karnataka, is almost a quaint little town with its own charm. Amongst people who are extremely enthusiastic about sports, activities do flourish and from time to time Hubli has been producing striking

still is, almost a non-profit organization which charges fees mostly to cover costs and for funding developmental activities. The academy has been blessed with guidance and support from many veterans of badminton in and around Hubli, Bangalore region. Indian Railways, a major patron of sports in their own right, have also supported

Apart from being a sportsperson herself, Manjiri is a KBA (Karnataka Badminton Association) recognised coach. She believes that children of Hubli can do wonders in the field of Badminton with proper training, support and guidance. To put this strong belief in practice, she runs MMBA, which helps children pick up proper techniques of badminton. Her students have performed consistently well in various tournaments for past 2 years at district level and have won several trophies. She herself has been awarded the trophy for the Best Coach in a tournament organised by Rotary club and Hubli Gymkhana club. She has also been felicitated by KBA recently for her achievements in 36th Senior Nationals. Her student Akhilesh had a state level seeding in U17 category and has represented Kendriya Vidyalaya in School Game Federation of India National level games for 2 years. One of her past students has represented Karnataka in School nationals in the girls badminton events.



Manjiri Moktali with her wards--great show.

sportspersons - but lack of infrastructure and organized technical coaching have always plagued Hubli sports scene. Lack of good courts, lack of multiple court complexes, lack of qualified coaches and a multitude of constraints exist including conservative behavior of parents who are unwilling to send their children (especially if it is a girl child) for regular training or for outstation tournaments...

Undeterred by these constraints, an upstart academy run by a lady with resolve is battling to spread the love of sports and facilitate children to show their spark in Badminton. MMBA, short for Manjiri Moktali Badminton Academy, was established in 2009 and started with a mere summer camp. Without major funding or support, the academy started as, and

the academy's activities on a regular basis.

The academy is run by a true sportsperson at heart – Mrs. Manjiri Moktali. Manjiri is a borne athlete. While working as a guest lecturer in the fields of communication and management, Manjiri has maintained her interest in sports. Changing strides from her original field of athletics, she has focused her attention on badminton and has recently represented Karnataka in ladies Doubles, Singles and Mixed doubles events in the 36th veteran's national Badminton championship at Haridwar. Manjiri and her partner, secured runners up trophy for Karnataka in ladies doubles event and also managed to reach semi finals in the other two events of the competition.

The efforts of MMBA to promote badminton at a nominal cost, while winning trust of parents, are laudable. While several veterans of supported the efforts by helping in conducting summer camps and by providing helpful tips, a lot more support is needed from the sports community to help this budding academy blossom...

Thane-Maharashtra

The Khandu Ranganekar Badminton Hall, with 5 well maintained wooden flooring courts & newly fitted ultra modern non glare insta light system at Dadojee Konddev Stadium in Thane has indeed become a hub of Badminton over last 2 decades! The continuous efforts of a team of dedicated Thane Based coaches under able leadership & guidance of their chief coach Shrikant Vad & ably assisted by former national players Mayur Ghatnekar, Prashant Bahatare



“Abhin Shyam Gupta--with trainees of Thane academy”

among others have indeed brought Thane not only to the top in their state of Maharashtra but also in the country! Akshay Dewalkar, Jishnu Sanyal, Eshan Naqvi, Sayali Rane, & Subhankar Dey are some of the Thane Academy's recent players who brought many laurels to their state & country! These are also followed by another bunch of very talented upcoming youngsters such as Vighnesh Devlekar, Abhishek Kulkarni, Ameya Pawar, Kabir Kanzarkar among several others!

This year summer camp was conducted jointly by the Syed Modi Badminton Academy of Thane Municipal Corporation & The Thane City & District Badminton Association! It was well supported by Yonex & Sunrise Sports India! There were 3 venues & 300 trainees & a team of 20 competent coaches! The special camps were conducted between 17th April to 2nd June! The conduction was at 3 levels namely Basic, Intermediate & Elite!

The trainees from all over Thane District & around had joined the camp which had residential arrangements for outstation players! Players from the remotest parts of Maharashtra such as Ichalkaranji, Chandrapur,

Nagpur, Karmala, Dhule, Vardha, & even from out of state had joined! Mr Shrikant Vad was particularly happy to mention that these players were very talented & hard working & have great potential for future! Mr Vad who is Qualified coach of Badminton Asia & Best Coach of Maharashtra Government Awardee in the year 2003 is also running a very special scheme of training 13 players of Adivasi & Tribal Origin in collaboration with the state Govt! He added that these players after providing them with equipments & expose to competitions are certainly prospects of becoming future champions of our state & country!

In this coaching camp in addition to rigorous physical training & every day on court practice sessions of about 4 to 5 hours, special counselling was done by eminent faculties in fields such as sports psychology & mental training (Dr Anand Nadkarni & Dr Subhangi Datar), Diet & Nutrition & strength Training (Dr Dhananjay More), Sports Injuries & Sports Medicine (Dr Hartika Kapadia)! Former top international players Abhin Shyam Gupta who was a former trainee at Thane Academy & Sanjay Sharma

gave special lectures during the camp, shared their invaluable experiences with the trainees & interacted at length with players & coaches!

This Academy was founded by Mr Shrikant Vad in the year 1988 in collaboration with Thane Municipal Corporation! Just prior to its launching, one of the greatest players of our country late Syed Modi

was assassinated! Mr Prakash Paranjape the then president of Thane Badminton proposed that the Academy should be named after him! Thus the Syed Modi Academy was named! This was the 24th edition of this greatly successful summer camp which basically is an extension of the round the year coaching scheme which undoubtedly is one of the oldest running & most active academies in our country! It has till date produced 24 international players & several state & national champions! Mr Shrikant Vad who is the chief architect behind this success story gives credit to his colleagues, coaches & his entire team as the main factors backing this system which is running well over 2 decades!

गुरुदेव हस्त अ॥ श्री गुरुदेव स्तुति अथ गुरुदेव प्रशस्तिका अथ गुरुदेव स्तुति

“Lala Ram Rattan Trust For Public Welfare” had organized **'23rd Pt. Tirath Ram Banarsi Dass Gupta Memorial Badminton Tournament in Thyag Raj Stadium under the aegis of Delhi Badminton Association from 15-22 June, 2012**. The total prize money for the Tournament was Rs.2.,50,000/-. As per BAI norms, Yonex Shuttle Cocks were used throughout the Tournament. All the leading players of Delhi participated in this Tournament.

Shri N.L. Kalsi, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs was the Chief Guest of this Tournament. Apart from this, Shri Aniruddha Kumar, Commissioner (Income Tax), Ms.Manjusha Kanwar former National Champion graced the occasion. The tournament got substantial coverage in the Print Media.

For the first time in the history of Delhi Badminton Championship, free drinking water and cold drinks were arranged by “Lala Ram Rattan Trust For Public Welfare” for the players and parents. Snacks were also arranged at a subsidised rates to all the participants and parents. Medical Aid was provided by Jaipur Golden Hospital, Rohini. We have received about 1000 entries, conducted tournament in 25 events in all age categories which is also the record in the history of Delhi Badminton Championship. About 1000 matches were played during eight hectic days.

A grand opening and closing ceremony was organized where high tea was arranged by the “Lala Ram Rattan Trust For Public Welfare”.

The list of Winners/Runners-up is given below:

BS U13 A. Khushboo Kumar B. Ria Sachan	GD U13 A. Khushboo Kamur Ria Sachan B. Arunima Kavya	BS U13 A.Kartikry Gulshan B.Akash Yadav	BD U13 A. Anmol Khosla Kartikry Gulshan B. Akash Yadav Vikas Yadav	GS U15 A. Kanika Kaneal B. Bhavya Rishi
GD U15 A.Bhavya Rishi Kamika Kanwal B.Ishita Solanki Anamika Kashyap	BS U15 A.Kartikey Gulshan B.Arinjay Bishit	BD U15 A.Arinjay Bisht Kartikry Gulshan B.Anmol Prannay Aggarwal	GS U17 A.Guari Asija B.Akanshi Baliyan	GD U17 A.Akanshi Baliyan Kanika Kanwal B.Gaura Asija Noor Chaewal
BS U17 A.Rohan Kapoor B.Ankitv Chiara	BD U17 A.Rishabh Sahdev Uttkarsh Arora B.Arush Setia Rohan Kapoor	GS U19 A.Rashmit Kaur B.Kanika Kanwal	GD U19 A.Noor Charwal Sanskriti B.Rajni Shambhavi Bajaj	BS U19 A.Rohan Kapoor B.Rishabh Sahdev
BD U19 A.Abhilash Sharma Tushar Aggarwal B.Ankit Chikara Yash Nain	WS A.Shreya Aggarwal B.Sanskriti Chhabra	WD A. Nidhi Tiwari Shreya Aggarwal B. Shraddha Srivastava Yamini Sharma	MS A.Sachin Rawat B.Bhaskar Chakrobart	MD A.Himanshu Korbanda Tanvir Gill B. Nitin Mahiwal Srikant Bakshi
XD A. Abhilash Aggarwal Sanskriti Chhabra B. Ashish Sharma Shraddha Srivastava	MS A.Vijay Sharma B.Satyavrat Bhrgava	MD 35 A.Ajay Kanwar Gajender Singh B.Arun Parminder	MS 45 A. Kulwinder Pal Singh B.Kanwaljeet Singh	MD 45 A.Anil Jain Dr. Neeraj Gupta B.Kanwaljeet Singh Pawan Ratan



Kartikay Gulshan Winner of boys under 13 & Under 15 Singles & Doubles.



Shreya Aggarwal winner of women singles & doubles



Organizers:
Jitender, Arun, Rajeev , Pervinder



by Rajeev Ganpule

With the success of Indian Premier League in Cricket, other sports have taken an initiative for forming such leagues in order to popularize and support their respective sport.

Badminton was no different, hence when the idea to start the Maharashtra Badminton League came to Uday Sane – Hon. Secretary of Haveli Taluka Badminton Association, he promptly involved Mr. Anirudha Deshpande – President of Haveli Taluka Badminton Association for implementation of the same.

The first ever Maharashtra Badminton League was started by Haveli Taluka Badminton Association along with support from Poona District Metropolitan Badminton Association and under the aegis of Maharashtra Badminton Association at Pune last year between 7th to 22nd May 2011 which was to be played on Weekends (Saturdays and Sundays).

The first edition of Maharashtra Badminton League consisted of 6 teams and each team comprised of minimum 7 players (including 5 men and 2 women) in it.

Anirudha Deshpande, President of the Haveli Taluka Badminton Association (HTBA) and the Chairman of the Organizing Committee of the Maharashtra Badminton League announced during the first Press Conference that the sanction for conducting this event

was given by Maharashtra Badminton Association for a period of 2-3 years.

Former International Player & Ex. President of Maharashtra Badminton Association Shri Nandu Natekar unveiled the official Logo of the 'Maharashtra Badminton League' during the press conference at Pune.

The organizers have chosen the names of the teams of Maharashtra Badminton League, based on birds. Uday Sane - Organizing Secretary said that "as Badminton being a game played with shuttlecock which is made of feathers of birds, each team has been given the name of a group of birds like Sensational Skylarks, Fabulous Falcons, Daring Doves, Gorgeous Gannets, Inspiring Eagles, Flamboyant Flamingos.

During the first edition of Maharashtra Badminton League, in order to add glamour and make the event more exciting the organizers assigned popular actresses from Marathi Cinema as each Team's Brand Ambassadors.

The format of the league is similar to the Sudirman Cup (Mixed Team Event) except that instead of Women Doubles Event, they have included an additional Mens Singles.

Hence the format consists of 5 Matches which includes : 2 Mens Singles, 1 Women Singles, 1 Mens Doubles and 1 Mixed Doubles.

The Following Teams were

auctioned to respective Owners:

- Fabulous Falcons Team to Jain Irrigation, Jalgaon.
- Sensational Skylarks Team to Builders Combine & Radiant Sports Management, Pune.
- Inspiring Eagles Team to Jairaj Group, Pune.
- Daring Doves Team to Pratham Motors, Pune.
- Gorgeous Gannets Team to Indraprastha Group of Textiles, Islampur, Sangli.
- Flamboyant Flamingos Team to Firodia Group, Ahmednagar.

The Player's Auction for Maharashtra Badminton League was held on Sunday, 30th March 2011 at the O Hotel, Koregaon Park, Pune.

Total players available for auction – 79 (53 Men and 27 women),

Men: A Category – 5 players, B Category – 9 players, C Category – 39 players were available for auction.

Women: A Category – 14 players, B Category – 7 players, C Category – 6 players were available for auction.

Base Price - for A Category Rs.30,000/-, for B Category Rs.25,000/-, for C Category – Rs.15000/- (Base price same for both Men and Women category)

Maximum spending limit for each team at the players' auction was Rs.2.5 Lacs.

In the Mens Section, Jishnu Sanyal from Thane got the highest price at a whopping Rs.81000/- by Fabulous Falcons owned by Jain

Irrigation, Jalgaon.

While in the Women's section Aditi Mutatkar from Pune & Arundhati Pantawane from Nagpur got the highest price of Rs.55000/- each.

Aditi Mutatkar was bought by Sensational Skylarks Team owned by Builders Combine & Radiant Sports Management, Pune and on the other hand Arundhati Pantawane was bought by Inspiring Eagles owned by Jairaj Group, Pune.

Since Pune City has more than 100 Badminton Courts and many people including the young and old follow and play badminton in Pune on regular basis, the public response for the Maharashtra Badminton League was overwhelming and many spectators and badminton enthusiasts were present during the opening as well as the closing ceremonies of the event.

During the 2011 edition of Maharashtra Badminton League, the team of Sensational Skylarks won the Title by defeating Inspiring Eagles by a 3-2 Margin.

Last year, the Prize Money for the event was of Rs.5 lakh. This year, it has gone up to Rs 6.44 lakh.

The team winning the final will get Rs.5 lakh, while Rs.1.44 lakh will be distributed amongst the players. Maharashtra Badminton League 2012 This year the 2nd edition of the Maharashtra Badminton League was more

prepared as most of the lacunae's of last year were cleared and we could see a lot of enthusiasm amongst the players, coaches and organizers of the Maharashtra Badminton League before the start of the event.

As 4 of the 6 six team owner's from last year withdrew, their teams were sold to new team owners and 1 more additional team was introduced totaling it to 7 Teams.

The Following Teams were auctioned to respective Owners:

- Fiery Falcons Team to Cache Technologies Pvt.Ltd., Soft-Aid Computers Pvt.Ltd.- Suresh Joshi & John Thomas.
- Sensational Skylarks Team to Dajikaka Gadgil Developers Pvt.Ltd. – Mandar Gadgil & Kedar Vanjape.
- Inspiring Eagles Team to Jairaj Group, Jain Irrigation Systems, RBS Sportsethix, Anuron Infrastructures, Leisure Sports Management Systems- Dhaval Shah, Siddharth Mayur, Narendra Firodia.
- Daring Doves Team to Pratham Motors, Pune – Rajiv Bhale.
- Gorgeous Gannets Team to Pinnacle Group – Gajendra Pawar.
- Graceful Gulls Team to Gracelands – Shekhar Jadhao.
- Lifetime Linnets Team to Lifetime Premium Realty Solutions – Alok Mantri.

The Player's Auction for Maharashtra Badminton League 2012 was held on Sunday, 6th May 2012 at

the PYC Gymkhana, Pune.

Total players available for auction – 54

Maximum spending limit for each team at the players' auction was increased to 3 Lacs.

In the Mens Section, Jishnu Sanyal representing Inspiring Eagles & Akshay Dewalkar representing Gorgeous Gannets got the highest price of Rs.90000/- each.

While in the Women's section Junior National Champion Tanvi Lad representing Sensational Skylarks got the highest price of Rs.81000/-.

Maharashtra Badminton League has definitely helped the players from many districts of Maharashtra financially on annual basis.

Although the players from only 7 districts of Maharashtra are involved, the organizers feel that many junior players of other districts also would be benefitted in years to come.

Total 54 Players representing 7 Districts are involved with Maharashtra Badminton League 2012:

Pune - 25 Players, Mumbai Suburban – 13 Players, Thane – 9 Players, Nagpur – 4 Players, 1 Each from Nashik, Kolhapur and Greater Mumbai.



Ashwini Ponappa being felicitated at first MBL by Anirudha Deshpande



“Officials at the MBL”

Badminton India –1. What is new or different between the 1st edition of the Maharashtra Badminton League and the second?

U. Sane: There is no difference in structure of MBL. It is the same of last year. 7 minimum players per team to be managed in a fixed kitty. 2 min women and 5 men. The base as same as Sudirman cup except women doubles replaced by additional men's Singles. Team owner to pay the franchisee fee and also to take care of players L & B and travel exp. The team owner is expected to take care of players and his team support staff. **BI –2. What is reason for last year's 4 team owner's withdrawal from MBL?**

U. Sane: Out of 4 team owners 2 team owners combined together in third team.



**“Organising Secretary
Uday Sane
addressing the Press”**

One team owner shifted himself to other country for his lively-hood but kept the minimal share and new partner was brought in. Only one team owner released his team due to financial crisis. So factually only 2 team owner really left the league but we could bring in more 5 business enterprises in our family.

BI –3. Is it not a commercial venture for Team Owners – are they losing money?

U.Sane: Sport is not a commercial activity in India nor a business. so profit and loss are not the headings in the participant team owners mind. They are looking forward to contribute for the welfare of the sport & society. To make this event feasible commercially one has to create win-win situation out of the event over a long period of time. It's not a short term venture. Many avenues are

untapped and can be brought in to make the event more successful.

BI –4. Publicity this year for the event is on the rise as compared to last year, what are new tools for publicity used?

U. Sane: Yes, Coverage was good, definitely this year we could touch new areas of mass media coverage. News print was not only the focus but this year we tried live streaming on our own web-site which it self was a new concept. I am happy to share the statistics that 31,000+ viewers across the world could see the live streaming of the matches. We also could cover

the event with Radio, Road shows, Face-book, Hoardings and posters. I feel we need to really gear up for the media coverage which becomes prime necessity of the time now.

BI –5. There were some controversies reported in the press and media about poor line calls, team owners and players abusing officials and players of other teams? Is it necessary to adopt more stringent code of conduct for team owners and players?

U.Sane: When it's team event, every player tries his best for the team. He feels more responsible for his performance. There are more individuals to support or depress you.

As the involvement goes up the atmosphere is charged up. During such a charged atmosphere a small error becomes a huge problem. To keep the vigil over the entire field and happenings it's a big responsibility on the shoulders of officials. The sport must be taken in a right spirit. To control over the emotions it's necessary to apply some code of conduct. The person or persons violating such norms or codes need to be penalised. The action should be sufficient to control and make the offender realise. Mistakes do happen. While going towards excellence we need not forget that we are also humans.

BI –6. How do you plan to involve players of other districts in the league, out of 28 districts, players from only 7 districts are involved?



**“A section of teams
at the 2nd MBL”**

U. Sane: The standard of the game is not same with all districts. We have never controlled the participant players entries. Players recommended by the district association were also included in the auction process. The team owner will always look for the best players. They don't see the district but they study the performance of players. This year I am happy that players from some remote districts were preferred by team owners. The event is becoming most popular in the state. It will become a pride for player to be the part of this event. The teams are less and number of players participation is also very controlled. This will rise the standard of the tournament. The event is for the cream of players available. Involving other districts needs a separate plan. Every state association has been running the show with Inter-District Team events. They can modify the structure and can bring in a new look to the event. To make the sport more popular or spectators friendly even BWF has made many changes in recent times. There shall be a resistance for a change. But if it clicks then you and sport are the beneficiary.

BI –7. Do you feel that Events like MBL should be played more than once in a year?

U.Sane: Repetitions after regular annual interval will increase the event's stature. frequent repetitions will make event stale after some period. To keep the event shining you have to keep a good interval.

BRIEF REPORT OF THE ACTIVITIES IN WEST BENGAL FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH – 2012



“West Bengal Secretary Sekhar Biswas giving away prizes”

In the last few years, people in the Badminton fraternity of West Bengal have noticed considerable changes in Badminton activities in the State. In order to ensure that the discipline of the Badminton is evenly extended everywhere, WBBA undertaken its best and sincere efforts to spread the game in the Districts and have succeeded to a large extent, by motivating the District Bodies and successfully organizing Major Events in the Districts. While between July, 2011 and March, 2012 WBBA conducted Seven (7) Ranking Tournaments – Three (3) Senior Ranking Tournaments and Four (4) Jr. Ranking Tournaments apart from Jr. State / Sr. State Championships, Three (3) Jr. State Ranking Tournaments were held in Districts, whereas Two (2) Sr. Ranking Tournaments were also held in the Districts. Even the 74th Senior & Junior State Championships were held in the Districts only.

Apart from the Ranking / State Championships, numbers of Badminton Tournaments were conducted by WBBA for the Universities/ Colleges / Corporate Sectors. A few of them are : LIC Eastern Zonal Level Badminton Tournament, Inter College Badminton Tournament (Men & Women), All India IIT Sports Meet, Inter Govt. Training Institute Badminton championship (Women), All

India Central Revenue Sports Meet, Inter Govt. College Sports Competition. In addition, selection of the players for University Nationals. Selection Trial for recruitment of the players for Income Tax, Office of the Principal Director of Audit (Eastern Railway) & Indian Audit & Accounts Department were also undertaken by WBBA.

In order to increase the numbers of the qualified Umpires in the State, WBBA has held Umpires examinations and already recruited Nine (9) Umpires through rigorous examinations and tests. WBBA proposes to recommend names of a few duly qualified and deserving Umpires for being selected at the National Level.

Performance of numbers of Players from the State of West Bengal at National level are also notable and encouraging. It needs no mention that Ms. Rituparna Das is one of the most upcoming and promising Girls in the Country having already earned the distinction of being Jr. National Champion in Under-17 Girls Event at Jaipur in February, 2012 and being selected to represent the Country as part of the Jr. India team for Japan, Russia, Dutch & Germany. Sri Arintap Dasgupta from Bengal has earned 3rd position in the Sub-Jr. Nationals (Under-13) Event at New Delhi in December, 2011. Ms. Sheshadri Sanyal & Sri

Trinankur Nag also represented the Indian Squad in Mauritius in July, 2011.

While numbers of other Players from the State have developed notable skills and grooming, having bright and promising future ahead, it is sincerely expected that in very near future these upcoming Players of the State would not merely put their footmarks at National level, but also bring glories and laurels, apart from due acclamations from all.

The lack of having own Academy so as to provide uninterrupted coaching of the Players with all modern amenities, infrastructures and facilities and to hold All India Major Events is one of the major issue WBBA is yet to overcome.

Required designs with at least Four (4) Indoor Courts with all infrastructural facilities have been prepared and handed over to the Hon'ble Minister of Sports of the State with earnest request to provide appropriate land, who has been extremely gracious to take personal interest for allotting land to WBBA.

“Yonex”-Sunrise Sports having been the sponsor of WBBA Events, the major Tournaments in the State are now being played only with Yonex Shuttlecocks and the Players representing Bengal Teams are also provided with Yonex Kits. WBBA thankfully acknowledges the support of Yonex/Sunrise Sports.

Badminton Association of India under the dynamic leadership of Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta, the President and aptly assisted by all the Office Bearers, and in particular Mr. T. P. S. Puri, Vice President (Administration) and Dr. Vijai Sinha, Hony. General Secretary have changed the entire dimension of the Discipline of Badminton in the Country. WBBA thankfully acknowledges continuous support, co-operation and assistances of the parent National Body.

SEKHAR C. BISWAS
HONY. GENERAL SECRETARY
WEST BENGAL BADMINTON
ASSOCIATION

EVENTS ORGANISED BY WBBA FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST MARCH - 2012

1. Conducted Selection Trial of Income Tax held at Kolkata on 8th June, 2011
2. West Bengal Jr. State Ranking Badminton Tournament held at Batore Bayam Samity Howrah from 5th to 9th July, 2011.
3. West Bengal Sr. State Ranking Badminton Tournament held at Balurghat, Dakshin Dinajpur from 21st July to 23rd July, 2011.
4. 74th West Bengal Jr. State Badminton Championship held at Haldia. Purba Medinipore from 17th August to 21st August, 2011.
5. Conducted LIC Eastern Zonal Level Badminton Tournament held at Park Circus Bayam Samity from 24th & 25th August, 2011.
6. 74th West Bengal Sr. State Badminton Championship at Satya Chowdhury Indoor Stadium, Malda from 7th September to 10th September, 2011.
7. Conducted Inter College Badminton (Men & Women) Tournament – 2011-12 held at Park Circus Bayam Samity on 22nd & 23rd September, 2011.
8. West Bengal Jr. State Ranking Badminton Championship held at Durgapur from 12th to 17th December, 2011.
9. Conducted All India IIT Sports Meet held at Kharagpur from 13th to 18th December-2011
10. West Bengal Jr. State Ranking Badminton Championship held at Khudiram Anusilan Kendra, Kolkata from 19th to 22nd December- 2011
11. Conducted Selection Trial of Calcutta University for University Nationals at Raipur Club on 5th January, 2012.
12. Conducted Inter Govt. Training Institute Badminton championship – 2012 of women from 9th & 10th January, 2012.
13. Conducted All India Central Revenue Sports Meet 2011-12 (Badminton) held at P.L.Roy Indoor Stadium, DRM Building, Sealdah on 31st January & 1st February, 2012.
14. West Bengal Sr. State Ranking Badminton Tournament held at Balurghat, Dakshin Dinajpur from 22nd to 26th February, 2012.
15. Conducted Inter Govt. College Sports Competition-2012 at ITC Hall, Salt Lake on 26th & 27th February, 2012
16. Conducted Selection trial of Office of the Principal Director of Audit (Eastern Railway) at Kolkata on 15th & 16th March, 2012
17. West Bengal Sr. State Ranking Badminton Tournament held at Suri, Birbhum from 14th to 17th March, 2012.
18. Conducted Selection trial of Indian Audit & Accounts Department at Kolkata on 22nd March.
19. West Bengal Jr. State Ranking Badminton Tournament held at Mahadesh Parished, Hooghly from 28th to 31st March, 2012.
20. Few Coaching Camps are being run in the Districts under WBBA. More Coaching Camps will start.

74TH WEST BENGAL SR. STATE BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS
HELD FROM 7TH TO 10TH SEPTEMBER, 2011 AT MALDA
ORGANISED BY: MALDA DISTRICT SPORTS ASSOCIATION IN
ASSOCIATION WITH WEST BENGAL BADMINTON ASSOCIATION

RESULTS OF FINALS

1. MENS SINGLES:
RATIKANTA SAHA BT. TRINANKUR NAG = 21-14, 18-21, 21-16
2. WOMENS SINGLES:
ANURIYA DAS BT. BARNALI RAHA = 21-19, 21-12
3. MENS DOUBLES:
TRINANKUR NAG ASHUTOSH TIWARI
 & BT. & = 21-15, 23-21
PALLAB BOSE SANDIPAN BANERJEE

West Bengal Junior State Ranking Badminton Tournament
Organized by: Uttar Dinajpur Badminton Association at Raiganj from
27th to 30th April, 2012 affiliated to West Bengal Badminton Association

RESULTS OF THE FINALS

1. Under -13 Years Girls Singles:
Manidipa Dey Bt. Riya Ghosh = 21-18, 21-15
2. Under -13 Years Boys Singles:
Dishant Debnath Bt. Sourya Dasgupta = 21-10, 21-11
3. Under-15 Years Girls Singles:
Riya Mookherjee Bt. Ipsita Sinha = 21-12, 21-4
4. Under-15 Years Boys Singles:
Arintap Dasgupta Bt. Soumyadipta Basu = 21-13, 21-7
5. Under-17 Years Girls Singles:
Riya Mookherjee Bt. Ipsita Sinha = 21-12, 21-7
6. Under-17 Years Boys Singles:
Shouvik Ghosh Bt. Mayukh Ghosh = 21-19, 21-16
7. Under-19 Years Girls Singles:
Riya Mookherjee Bt. Rupsa Ghosh = 21-19, 21-16
8. Under-19 Years Boys Singles:
Shouvik Ghosh Bt. Arintap Dasgupta = 21-14, 21-17
9. Under-19 Years Boys Doubles:
Snehasish Ghosh Babu Roy
 & Bt. & = 21-18, 17-21, 21-13
Deborshi Chakraborty Akash Paswan

**74TH WEST BENGAL JR. STATE BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS
HELD FROM 18TH TO 21ST AUGUST, 2011
AT HALDIA, PURBA MEDINIPORE
ORGANISED BY: PURBA MEDINIPORE DUSTRICT BADMINTON
ASSOCIATION IN ASSOCIATION WITH WEST BENGAL
BADMINTON ASSOCIATION**

FINAL RESULT HELD ON 21.08.2011

1)	Under – 13 Boys Singles:	ARINTAP DASGUPTA	BT.	DISHANT DEBNATH	=	21-8, 21 - 7
2)	Under-13 Girls Singles:	IPSITA SINHA	BT.	MANIDIPA DEY	=	21-10, 21 - 14
3)	Under – 15 Boys Singles:	MAYUKH GHOSH	BT.	ARINTAP DASGUPTA	=	18-21, 21-19, 21-15
4)	Under – 15 Girls Singles:	RIYA MOOKHERJEE	BT.	IPSITA SINHA	=	21-3, 21 - 3
5)	Under – 17 Boys Singles:	SHOUVIK GHOSH	BT.	RAJDEEP MITRA	=	21-9, 21- 13
6)	Under – 17 Girls Singles:	RITUPARNA DAS	BT.	ANURIYA DAS	=	21-14, 21 - 15
7)	Under – 19 Boys Singles:	TRINANKUR NAG	BT.	PALLAB BOSE	=	14-21, 21-10, 21-12
8)	Under – 19 Girls Singles:	ANURIYA DAS	BT.	SANCHALI DASGUPTA	=	21-17, 21-10
9)	Under –15 Girls Doubles:	MADHURIMA MUKHERJEE ATREYI BHANJA	BT BT	ANANNYA E.TIGGA RIYA GHOSH	=	21-19, 21-19
10)	Under – 15 Boys Doubles:	ARINTAP DASGUPTA MAYUKH GHOSH	BT.	BABU ROY AKASH PASWAN		21-9, 21-09
11)	Under – 17 Boys Doubles:	RAJDEEP MITRA SHOUVIK GHOSH	BT.	ROUNAK MAITY ADITYA DUTTA		21-18, 21-10
12)	Under – 19 Boys Doubles:	TRINANKUR NAG PALLAB BOSE	BT.	RAJDEEP MITRA SHOUVIK GHOSH		21-16, 21-12

**SEKHAR C. BISWAS
HONY. GENERAL SECRETARY
WEST BENGAL BADMINTON ASSOCIATION**





Suresh Goel, India's most creative stroke-maker

By Shirish Nadkarni

When three-time former national champion Damayanti Subedar-Tambay was asked to compare the relative merits of two of Indian badminton's greatest stroke-makers Nandu Natekar and Suresh Goel, her response was, "Nandu was a



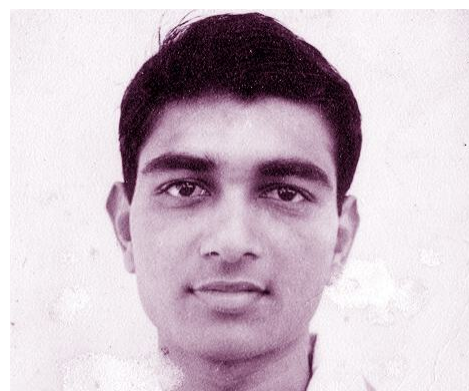
**"Suresh Goel
was a great strokeplayer"**

magnificent player with great shuttle control and a vast repertoire of strokes. But if you ask me to name the most creative stroke-maker I have seen, it would have to be 'Guru' Goel! "Goel combined delectable strokes with sufficient power to be able to rattle the best of players, attacking or defensive. Natekar lacked that kind of firepower. Guru had one of the best backhands in the business, but God help you if he managed to convert the backhand into an overhead shot! You simply could not tell what he was going to do, or where the shuttle was going to go." Indeed, so tricky was Goel's overhead that he could play five different strokes with virtually the same action – the straight drop, the cross drop, the straight toss, the crosscourt toss, and a stinging down-the-line smash. You had a chance of getting back a stroke from his backhand, but his overhead often left players standing, dithering as to which side they should go! Writing about Goel,

the noted American sports writer Jim Wiggleworth once noted, "Deception is his greatest asset. He can drop, clear or smash with exactly the same motion. His game has bold shots that keep the opponent off-balance and the great wrist gives him a tremendous backhand." This deception was at its very best when he played a super-fast younger player. Like Partho Ganguli. Goel almost always won the first game of a match against the speedy Ganguli, sending his rival scurrying in the wrong direction with late, last-second changes of stroke. The second game of their match would be the determinant factor as to who would win the tussle. As Goel tired, Partho would begin turning the screws, trying his best to prolong the rallies to keep his redoubtable opponent from getting his breath back. It would be a ding-dong battle; and whoever won the second game would win the match – since Goel would mostly be a spent force in the decider. That did not, however, happen in one particular

match that this amazing talent played at the Western Railway Institute court at Bombay Central in 1977 against the speedy dynamo Uday Pawar, who had returned fresh from an appearance in the National singles final against Prakash Padukone. At the time, the Allahabad-domiciled Goel was 34, whereas the fit, stocky Pawar was barely out of his teens, and in prime form. The portly 'bhaiya' produced an array of delectable strokes and strong defence against his rival's power-play to win the first game. However, he ran out of breath in the second as Pawar prolonged the rallies and concentrated on tiring his much older opponent out. Everyone expected the Mumbai player to run away with the third game as his older rival had appeared very near the end of his tether. But what happened in the decider left everyone present in the hall thunder-struck. Goel handed out a love-game to Pawar, amazingly stepping up

the pace and using his smashes liberally to keep the rallies short. On five occasions, Pawar dribbled the shuttle sharp at the net, and stood with racket up, ready and waiting for his opponent's response. One would have expected the lumbering elder to desperately send the shuttle soaring back to the baseline, since it appeared suicidal to try employ the counter-dribble. But that is exactly what the master of deception did! Five times, he got to the net a split-second before the shuttle was set to hit the floor, and waved his magical wand in a short arc inches from the floor. The bird rose gently, climbed the net, hugged the tape and rolled over on his opponent's side. Pawar, standing right there, could do absolutely nothing against this stroke. Once could have been considered lucky; twice would have been coincidence; thrice would have been monumental luck. But five times? I was sitting as a linesman for that particular match; and ended up shaking my head in sheer wonder at the man's exquisite control and racket skills. Hardly



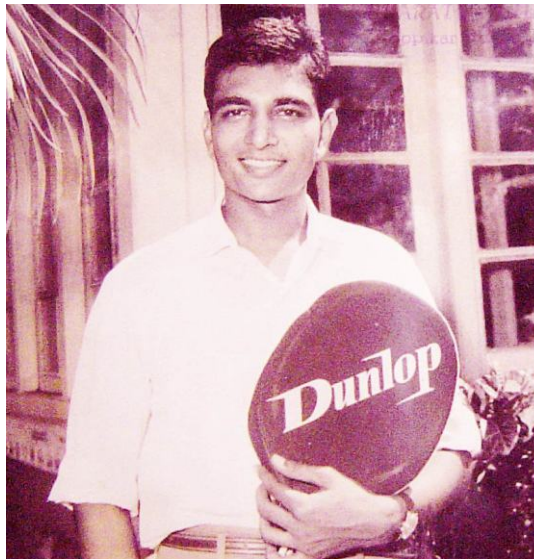
**Suresh Goel
was national champion
many times**

anyone else could replicate the control he exercised at the net. Despite his considerable badminton achievements, Goel remained amiable, humble and self-effacing. And despite his relative lack of

sophistication and limited knowledge of the English language, he attracted the ladies who gravitated towards him like moths to a flame. Born on 20th June 1943 in Mirzapur, Suresh Chandra Goel (to give him his full name) belonged to the Aggarwal community. He first held a racket at the tender age of seven; and, despite not having a formal coach, began wielding it in a short time like a magician's wand. School and inter-school titles fell to him like ninepins, as he swept past boys several years older than him.

Goel's first junior National singles title came at Hyderabad in 1957 at the age of 14. He went on to retain the crown the following year at Gauhati – after which he decided that it was beneath his dignity to compete at the junior level. Another fine U.P. player, Trilok Nath Seth, was to become his mentor and guide at around this time. Two years later, Goel heralded his phenomenal talent by leading the then reigning All-England champion Erland Kops of Denmark a merry dance on the court, and beating him in the Central India Major tournament at Jabalpur on October 19, 1960. Kops, it must be mentioned, had won the triple crown at the 1959-60 Indian Nationals barely nine months earlier, but could not read the 17 year old's strokes in that Jabalpur clash. That performance, among others, earned Goel a call-up to the national Thomas Cup squad, of which he was to be an integral member over five campaigns in 1960, '63, '69, '73 and '75. Stamping his class in the state by winning the Uttar Pradesh senior singles title while still a junior – for four years between 1959 and '62 – he also sallied forth to Malaya in '62 to help the Indian juniors' team bag the team championship trophy of the Malaya School Sports Council. He was to win the Inter-University championship for Allahabad University that year. After clearing his Intermediate examination in Arts from the U.P. Board of Higher Secondary & Inter Education the same year, Goel decided to forsake any further studies and, in May 1963, joined the Diesel Locomotive Works of the Indian Railways, where he was to remain all his life. Goel was to bag five National open singles titles between 1962-63 (when he

was only 19 years of age) and 1970-71. The fifth and final one of these was the last singles crown that any player other than Prakash Padukone and Goel's own protégé Syed Modi was to win for the next 17 years until Modi was murdered in July 1988. Moving into the paired event when he found his singles powers slowly waning, Goel was to bag two National men's doubles titles after reaching the final on eight occasions in his illustrious career – at Madras in 1971-72 with Dipu



**“Suresh Goel
Was popular world-wide”**

Ghosh, and in 1975-76 with Leroy D'Sa. He formed a lethal mixed doubles combination with Railways team-mate Maureen Mathias-D'Souza, taking the National crown thrice in a reel from 1974-75 to 1976-77. Goel could so easily have been the first Asian champion. Having won three consecutive National singles titles between 1962-63 and '64-65, and usurped Nandu Natekar as the country's top singles player, he was one of the forerunners for the stellar title at the first Asian Badminton Confederation Championships in Lucknow in 1965. He was seeded No.7 in a star-studded field, but cocked a snook at the seeding committee by knocking out the top seeded Malaysian player Yew Cheng Hoe in a three-game thriller that many who witnessed it consider to be one of the finest ever matches witnessed in this country. That pitted him against fellow-

countryman Dinesh Khanna in the semi-final. Says Khanna, “Suresh had beaten me on several occasions earlier, but probably the physical and emotional strain of beating Cheng Hoe made him rather flat in his match against me.” Knowing the returning machine's ploy of prolonging the rallies in an effort to tire him out, Goel went on an all-out offensive and tried to hit smashes from even improper positions – which proved disastrous. He committed mistakes

galore, and Khanna waltzed through the match in straight games to make the final and create history. It was fitting that, within a few months of being honoured with the Arjuna Award, the then 25 year old Goel won the fourth of his five National singles titles in the 1967-68 Nationals at Madras in February 1968. His victim in the final was his Railways team-mate Dipu Ghosh; and he wrapped up the match with minimal fuss in less than half an hour. Goel was to be honoured with the captaincy of the Indian Thomas Cup squad in its tie against Indonesia at Jaipur in 1969-70. India came unstuck by a 2-7 margin against the powerful Indonesians who had Rudy Hartono, Darmadi and Muljadi in their ranks. The only ones to salvage points for India were Dinesh Khanna, who swept Muljadi aside in the third singles, and the Ghosh brothers, Dipu and Romen, who accounted for Mintarja and Indratno. Goel failed to stand up against the raw speed and power of Hartono and Darmadi. By the mid-1970s, Goel was being increasingly troubled by his steadily expanding girth which prevented him from moving as well on the court as he would have liked.

“Dad was troubled by the fact that he was slowing down on the court; and he did not like to think that his singles career was behind him,” recalls his son Ravi, one of two children born from Goel's union with Kiran. “He then began something he had avoided all his life – physical training.” While doing spot skipping at the Babu Stadium in Lucknow, Suresh Goel collapsed, and was diagnosed at the hospital as having died from instant heart failure. How ironic it was that this large-hearted player should find that very organ failing him in his hour of greatest need!



By Dr. Dilip Nadkarni
Sports Orthopedic Surgeon Mumbai

A couple of months back, 45 year old badminton player Pritam, came to my clinic with acute pain in his shoulder. He had played six games of doubles on Sunday. He said that the games were tough and had 'jump smashed' several times to win key points. The pain started on Sunday after the game and got quite unbearable on Monday morning. Further history revealed that Pritam was a regular club level badminton player and had played the game regularly for the past 20 years. He had occasional pains in the shoulder, over the years, but never unbearable like this episode.

Clinical examination revealed that Pritam could hardly lift his shoulder and even as I moved his shoulder gently, there was significant pain. X rays revealed nothing, as the bones were normal. An MRI (Magnetic Resonance Imaging) was performed, which revealed a tear in his Rotator cuff.

The Rotator Cuff muscles are small muscles situated around the shoulder joint, which can become damaged during the stresses of Badminton. These muscles are overworked in badminton due to the overhead activities like smash and toss in badminton. Over the years, these muscles degenerate and ultimately can tear. In the case of Pritam, the niggling pain in the past could have been due to the degeneration and inflammation in the cuff muscles.

Pritam was advised rest from badminton for 3 weeks. Ice application was followed by gradual physiotherapy to strengthen his shoulder muscles. In Pritam's case the shoulder symptoms did not subside and an arthroscopy was advised. Arthroscopy as you know has helped scores of badminton players with knee injury. Ligaments and cartilages in the knee have been treated successfully by Arthroscopic surgery. The good news is that several

badminton injuries in the shoulder too can be treated with arthroscopic surgery.

Arthroscopy is the surgical procedure where the joint is examined and treated using keyhole techniques. In Pritam's case, a telescope was inserted in his shoulder, which revealed the tear in the Rotator cuff muscle called Supra-Spinatus. The torn portion of the muscle was reattached to the bone using Arthroscopic anchors. Pritam is currently undergoing a rehab program, and should be fit to wield his racket in a couple of months.

Shoulder injuries rank 4th among badminton injuries after knee, back and ankle injuries. Shoulder injuries amongst badminton players are extremely common. Badminton places a high and very sport specific demand to the sporting shoulder. In mechanical terms the shoulder has to deliver highly repetitive arm actions, performed at high speed and high force. 'Reaching for the shuttle' in badminton may place the shoulder at extreme ranges of movement, causing high risk of shoulder injury.

Sharif conducted a study of musculoskeletal injuries among Malaysian badminton players. This study reported shoulder injuries as the primary upper limb injury in Malaysian Badminton players. In fact 36.9 percent of upper limb injuries involved the shoulder.

In another study on 188 international top-level badminton players during the World Mixed Team Championships showed that previous or present shoulder pain on the dominant side was reported by 52% of the players. Previous shoulder pain was reported by 37% of the players and on-going shoulder pain by 20% of the players.

Apart from Rotator cuff injuries, I have seen other injuries like shoulder



Dr. Dilip Nadkarni

dislocation among badminton players. A shoulder dislocation occurs when a player falls on the court while running. The player usually falls on an outstretched hand and the shoulder pops out. There is severe pain and the player needs to be taken to an orthopedic facility immediately. I remember putting back a dislocated shoulder of a badminton player, courtside in one of the suburban gymkhana in Mumbai.

Shoulder problems in badminton include chronic shoulder pains due to tendonitis in the Rotator muscles, biceps tendon and frozen shoulder. Many of these respond to physiotherapy and muscle stretching and strengthening programs. Occasionally cortisone injections, given at these painful spots, has helped players.

To prevent shoulder problems, badminton players must pay attention to flexibility, strength and endurance of the shoulder muscles. Shoulder stabilization exercises under the supervision of a trainer or Physiotherapist can also help prevent



pressure on the Rotator Cuff tendons. Weight training sessions in the gym will strengthen and protect your shoulders from the repetitive stresses of badminton.

Any increase in the amount of training or competition must be gradual so as not to overload the Rotator Cuff muscles. In particular repetitions of the

**“took great care
never had
shoulder injury”**

smash shot should be increased gradually to allow the Rotator Cuff tendons to adapt.

Any minor shoulder pain should be treated at the initial stage and not be allowed to become a full-fledged tear like in the case of Pritam.

The game of badminton is truly enjoyable and addicting. Many of us who love the game tend to get passionate and play in excess. The idea is to play the game for many years, with minimum injuries. The key here is not to become victims of overuse. Badminton should be combined with other forms of exercise like Yoga and weight training to keep us fit and strong to play this beautiful game.

Parental Guidance : Diet for Kids Under 12

Our last issue spoke of a diet plan for veterans. This issue, we will talk about diet for kids under the age of 12, who have taken to the sport!

In India, Badminton is more commonly played at recreational level, but there are a number of children who play at advanced level who require optimum nutrition to maximise their game. In addition to that, Badminton is one the fastest games, and requires lots of stamina and endurance.

Whether you're an advanced player or you just enjoy it at recreational level, playing can involve a lot of energy, so a well structured nutrition programme will help you keep fit and full of energy for a long game. Good nutrition will also help lengthy concentration, in order to maximise your skill potential. Also, regular cardiovascular exercise is also advised to maximise performance.

“All this and much more can be quite stressful for children who go to school, with a heavy load of studies and also play the sport”, says Dietician Geetika Kohli Jangda who gives us a low down on Diet tips for Children under the age of 12 and how to cope up with the stress of playing and studies alike.

“Kids need to eat quite a lot to keep their energy flowing. A typical day of a player child would include training, schooling, homework, playing, etc. This leaves the child with little or no rest. It will leave the kid stressful. Hence eating right food at the right time of the day will help kids incur this and will keep them chirpy and energetic all day through”, says Geetika.



Sameer Verma

“The national junior champ follows correct diet”

Here is a sample diet for a healthy kid, playing the sport

Breakfast

Porridge made with 80g oats + 250ml skimmed milk
2 slices granary bread, toasted + olive oil based spread +
natural crunchy peanut butter/idli/upma/poha/vermicelli
Bowl of fresh fruits

Mid-morning

250 ml glass of milk
4-5 oatcakes with low fat soft cheese+fruit+
Lemon water/Coconut Water

Lunch

Sandwich made with granary bread + olive oil based spread with lean ham/chicken
OR
Proper Indian lunch with 2 katori's dal, two roti's, vegetable
100g mixed nuts, seeds & dried fruit
Mixed salad
Low fat, low sugar yoghurt
Drink

Mid-afternoon

4-5 oatcakes with low fat soft cheese / quark
100g mixed nuts, seeds & dried fruit
Drink

Badminton practice / cardiovascular exercise Immediately post exercise

Sip plenty of water or electrolyte replacement sports drink throughout
25g protein powder (consult local dietician) +
25g glucose in water + a fruit after ten mins

Evening meal

Lean fillet steak or chicken breast or fish + herbs to taste
Boiled new potatoes or basmati rice or dry roasted sweet potatoes or wholewheat pasta
Loads of vegetables
Low fat, no added sugar yoghurt
Drink

1 hour pre-bed

100g cottage cheese / quark / low fat natural yoghurt
Item fruit
Small handful mixed nuts & seeds
Drink

Tips:

- This plan utilises slow released low glycaemic carbohydrates to help provide a sustained energy intake for training sessions.
 - The above plan provides sufficient levels of all nutrients. Even a bit of fats are important for players.
 - Eating every two –three hours is very important
 - Eat 2-3 fruits per day
 - Correct nutrition is the guide to abundant energy in kids
 - Eating two hours before sleep is ideal
 - Eating sprouts and fibrous food will enable good digestion and will keep kids from sleeping during the day
 - Taking two ten minute power naps during the day will help preserve energy
 - Sleep and rest for 8-10 hours is very important for player children
 - The diet plan is merely a general guide, and portion sizes should be adapted to suit the kid's height and weight; remember boys will generally require larger portions than girls!
 - You must eat a variety of different meats/fish, complex carbohydrates, fruit and vegetables every day, and drink plenty of water.
 - Eat every two hours
 - Before playing eat carbohydrate and after playing replenish body with proteins and fruits.
- We wish kids all the best and all the success. Hope the diet helps them on their road to success.

Syed Mohammad Arif, who was recently conferred Padma Sri recently, became a coach at the age of 26 years in 1971. He has not lost none of his zeal or passion for the game. The affable Arif has earned the reputation as a disciplinarian. He has the unusual knack of discovering talent. One of his disciples is none other Pullela Gopichand, who became the second Indian to win the All England title in 2001. He has produced 17 internationals and has made Andhra Pradesh a force to reckon with in India. Even at the age of 67, Arif is regular at Lal Bahadur Indoor Stadium in Hyderabad giving training to young badminton hopeful. "It is nice to see so many youngsters taking the game.

target of 10 seconds because 10 years later, it is definitely going to come down. That is why it is ever evolving. It keeps on improving. We have to be innovative and have a foresight. Every technical and tactical changes need to be observed.

Is Indian coaching late to react?

Usually that happens. For example in



"A typical days work in office for Arif Sir"

Saina Nehwal's success has created interest for the game in the country," says Arif.

What is the change in coaching system in recent times?

Earlier in our country, the difference was, Indian coaches were bookish, trying to impart from the book. We had to be more creative and innovative. There wasn't any research done in our country at all. That's why when we call coaches from outside, we think they are more experienced. They experiment with different things. Things seem to be evolving. For example, whatever a particular player is giving performance, they used to take out his or her training methods. That might be good for a particular individual or an environment. Coaching is ever evolving. While preparing a 7 year old for an 100 metre dash, I can not make him practice with a

hockey, Netherlands which is the size of tamil nadu has over 130 astro turf grounds. Where as in india, which was considered to be the strongest team at one point has only 4-5 astro turfs. This causes the problems for a player to get adapted to astro turfs. International quality equipments need to be available. Nowadays, it has been improved a lot. A lot of facilities are available, but we can still improve a lot.

What made you a coach?

Since my childhood, I was a captain in the school. Being the captain, I used to try to correct their movements. Seeing this, my physical teacher asked me why don't I become a coach. I had no idea what coaching was. But only on his advice, after my college education, I straight away went to Patiala in 1971, I was around 26.

Any regrets?

By Scorpio

I never regretted becoming a coach. As a player, nobody was there to guide us, that motivated me to become a coach. It was never a gamble. My family was totally against it. I said that I love this and I will do whatever I love doing. No one were happy about this, but I had taken this up as a challenge. I always wanted to give the best to our country. There were times when I used to run around, spending money from my own pocket to buy shuttle. There were a lot of tough times.

What is the most important thing for a coach.

Every individual is different. Every character has their own liking and dislikes. Few players maybe aggressive, defensive or deceptive. I have produced all kinds of players. Manoj Kumar was very deceptive. Praveen Kumar was more defensive and Gopi was an attacking player. Every player has different attitude and we have to read their attitude and accordingly mould them and how best they perform. If anybody wants to become a champion, then nobody can stop them. I believe in that. As coaches we have to show them the way. We have to make them believe in themselves. Its more of the psychological work.

How many champions have you produced?

There are about 17 who have brought laurels to the country. There are many others who have represented the country.

On coaching international players

For a player who is coming up, you have to prepare him for everything. Once he becomes an international player, we have to make them understand their own mistakes by analyzing their game themselves using the video replays. Every technical detail is analyzed and worked upon. This way you overcome weakness. According to the weakness and strengths of your opponent if a player is prepared, then he can do wonders.

On foreign coaches

I haven't worked alongside any coach. But I have observed the Korean and



"Ashwini getting those match winning tips from the great coach"

Chinese players practicing at the world series. I observed that the involvement of the players to the game is tremendous. Coaches give directions and plans, but the implementation of these plans is very important. This type of involvement towards the game is inculcated by the coach and how he disciplines them.

Why do you like the Chinese system

I admire the Chinese system because of the amount of load they can take and that is inculcated right from the childhood. They have their goal fixed that is only to become champions.

Your favourite player

I admire Lin Dan a lot. He plays in the court as if he is the king. For the Olympics, if he wants to win, nobody can stop him. The reason he is different from other players is because of his mental make-up. He is very quick and sharp. His reflexes are so good, he changes the direction at the last second. Reading the weakness of his opponent he plays the game according to his will. The best ever in my opinion.

I show my players Lin Dan's games. He looks very comfortable in the court.

Are the coaches under pressure nowadays?

We obviously are very tensed about our players. We have to cope up with it. We have to keep a somber face and build confidence to our players. Just by looking at our face, they should feel confident.

How do you rate Prakash Padukone?

Prakash was a touch player. No player

that time was comfortable playing at the net with prakash he was immaculate in his half smashes. His tosses would land within 6 inches from the backline. He was a very intelligent player. He used to read the strong and weak point of the player very quickly.

How do you look at Lin Dan and Padukone?

I can't compare Lin Dan and Prakash because they belong to different eras. Prakash would counter the strong Chinese attack in a very great style. He beat the then world champion 15-0 which is not an easy

job. Had Prakash played now, I'm sure he would come up with techniques to beat Lin Dan.

What was special about Gopichand?

His involvement. He always showed inclination to work harder and never gave up during his injury. And to come back after his injury shows his mental attitude and stern determination to do well. If not for his injury he might have been the world's top player, I am thinking.

On state of the game in the country when he was the Indian coach

I wish there were academies started when I was the Indian coach. Also a lot more competition. Regularity in training is very important I firmly believe if there are 15 academies through out the country, with the abundance of talent available, we can do wonders. Gopi's academy is the prime one. All the national level training happens and there is a lot of competition.

What should be done to develop the game in the country

There are very few tournaments that happen in India and I am very unhappy regarding that. Unless there are a lot more domestic competitions, players cannot come up. With tournaments taking place at regular intervals, the players will have their goal set. This way they can also work on their weaknesses. A minimum of 8 tournaments according to me should take place. Badminton in India is good. The game is very popular. But the development in training is still required.

How do you rate Saina Nehwal?

Saina is a very gritty player. She never says no to any load of work. I always believed that if she is a world beater and its only because of her grit. She is always ready to take up challenges. I firmly believe that she has that element in her to become an Olympic champion. On her day, she can beat anyone.

Saina's challenge in world badminton and London Olympics

Nowadays because of the videos, the opponents realize that Saina is very good at dribbling at the net and smashes. They are keeping her in at the back, which she is not so strong. The opponents are playing on Saina's weaknesses. Now Saina herself has got to come with a strategy, to go more for half smashes and body line smashes. If she is playing late and high on the net, the opponents can paddle the strokes.

How importance is the fitness?

Fitness is the most important thing. Badminton is a very dangerous game as far as the level of fitness is confirmed. You have to be 100% fit.

On your favourite player Jwala Gutta

Jwala, I will rate her as the best ever that I got in my life as a talent. She was very temperamental and did not like a few physical exercises. She always listens to me and I am sure she will shun that as well. She is a highly talented and a wonderful stroke player. All her hard work has paid off. She has a forehand service which is very deceptive.

Were you unhappy when Jwala and Shruti Kurien as doubles partners

I was little unhappy when Jwala and Shruti split. But I am happy with the way Ashwini (Ponnappa) is gelling with her. Jwala and Ashwini on their day can beat anyone. Jwala dominates the game from the net and Ashwini from the back. Both of them have to create the effective defence. At times they get confused to take shots. That's where they make mistakes but I am sure they will work on it. That can happen if they divide the work.

On Jwala and Ashwini's chances in London Olympics

Jwala controls the whole game, creating opening with her deceptive serves and strokes. Off late, doubles has been given a lot of importance. And they have done wonders. I will be the happiest if the players bring laurels to the country in the Olympics.

Top Ten Benefits of Badminton

The game of Badminton owes its origin and development in India, to the English Army officers. Its first rules were printed in Karachi, which was then a part of India in 1877. Badminton further developed with a first major tournament held in England, and it came to be known as the All England championships. Today, badminton is one of the most popular sports in the world. Research tells us that badminton provides a complete workout and there are many benefits to people who play the sport on a regular basis.

1. Exercise

Badminton is a complete workout capable of exercising almost every muscle in the body to keep you fit. It gives you a cardio workout as well as the effects and benefits of a circuit training workout.

2. Socialization

Badminton helps develop social skills. It fosters collective thinking; builds confidence and gives one a sense of accomplishment and develops leadership qualities.

3. Life lessons

Badminton teaches us to accept winning and losing with a positive spirit and how to manage negative thoughts and emotions in real life situations.

4. Community benefit

Strong communities are built as recreational facilities become hubs of community life. Badminton is inclusive. Benefits extend to all ages regardless of

social or economic status. Especially in India, badminton is a famous community sport and is an attraction in many housing societies and colonies.

5. Well-being

Badminton keeps you feeling well, strong and motivated, enthusiastic and young. It helps



"Great ambassadors for the Game"

ward off depression, anxiety and stress and offers a release from the pressures of everyday life. Research has shown that badminton can contribute to psychological well-being by reducing anxiety and depression and enhancing self-esteem. In a community sport like badminton, kids find a social milieu that can

promote a spirit of social interaction, cooperation and friendship.

6. Planning

Badminton requires us to plan thoughtfully and set goals. We devise strategies to score points and to achieve victory. It really makes players think. They have to consider how much force to use, and at what angle to hit the shuttle. They also have to think about what to do next. If they need a certain amount of points and there is only a certain amount of time left, they have to consider their strategy. These are great ways to develop problem solving skills, and problem solving is definitely a skill that will be useful in life.

7. Competition

Through competition people learn to manage emotions, resolve conflicts. Sportsmanship is an important virtue. People learn that it is not okay to put others down if you lose a game. This helps in life as well.

8. Health

Badminton conditions and strengthens the heart muscle, and reduces hypertension. The result is a lower heart rate and protection from heart disease, especially heart attacks.

9. Effects on Aging

Badminton counteracts signs of ageing, such as loss of strength and energy. It reduces chances of developing osteoporosis.

10. Have Fun!

Badminton provides positive experiences for individuals, families and clubs.

Shachi S Sharma

There is no doubt that Saina Nehwal is the best thing that has happened to Indian badminton in its entire history. At a tender age of just 22 years, Saina, born in Hissar-Haryana, but who has played all her badminton in Hyderabad, has won tournaments and dared to tread where no other player has gone. Her recent emphatic victories in the Thailand and Indonesian-premium series have now ensured that she travels to London as a hot favourite for the gold medal in the 2012 Olympics.

Saina has raised the bar so high as far as her own performances are concerned, that losing out in the second round at the Indian Open in April of this year, had not just been a great disappointment for entire country-but more so for her.

But as National coach Gopi Chand had pointed out in Delhi, “Saina is a tough girl—a real street fighter type. She has that enviable never-say-die attitude. I am sure by tomorrow she will shrug off this defeat as an aberration, and go back to drawing board and start her hard training all over again.”

There was some criticism in press

about her lack of form, her sudden weight loss after she followed a particular diet. But a robust Saina, with her new found form, stormed into contention by these back to back victories in major Asian events and laid low all her ghosts—specially her so called fear of facing the great wall of China. She has shown the world in no uncertain terms, that she is the only player in the world today capable of challenging and overcoming the Chinese might in ladies singles.

With 17 major international titles, far more than any other Indian shuttler, Saina will be gunning for glory at her second Olympics. Her quarterfinal finish at Beijing in 2008, is any case the best showing by any Indian player in any Olympic games. She had lost to an Indonesian player in the event, but today she is matured and strong enough to ensure that barring the three Chinese in the draw,

no one else can trouble her.

Saina remains our best bet for the gold medal, specially, when we consider her extraordinary display at the Indonesian open last in June. The top four ranked players are all Chinese, but one will have to be dropped as per Olympic qualification rules. Chinese federation will have to choose from Li Xuerui, Yihan, Wang Xin and Wang Shixian. Xuerui is the reigning All England champion and one who may trouble Saina most. But in any case Saina will have to be seeded fourth.

Yihan is the only from this quartet that Saina has not beaten. The draw on July 23rd will have a bearing on her chances, but not by much, because in any calculations, the first Chinese she will meet is only in the semifinals. She is almost certain for a podium finish and with a bit of luck, she should make it to the top.

A glutton for hard work, Saina never ever compromises in her training schedule. She is not bothered about the past, but positively looks forward to the future. She is rightly not bothered so much about the Chinese and the fact that they may be peaking at the right time.

As she told the Times of India, “Yes, they are peaking and peaking. But I never go by reputation of any player. I have great faith in my ability. It will be very different in London. I have been working tirelessly towards one goal in last four years and I am ready for the big challenge.”

Hopes of a billion people ride on her strong shoulders. This Olympics will ensure that she walks the realms of Living Legends of world Badminton.

BY Sanjay Sharma



“Looks good for the Gold”

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1- Which year did Prakash Padukone win the senior/junior nationals

A-1961

B-1971

C-1981

2- Who is the second badminton player to be awarded Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award

A-Gopi Chand

B-Saina Nehwal

C-Ashwini Ponappa

3- Who was the mens singles Commonwealth Games champion in 1982

A—Syed Modi

B—Misbun Sidek

C—Taufique Hidayat

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“One of the most senior officials in the BAI, Mr Murlidharan has been a pillar of strength for many years in Kerala and Indian Badminton. He has done yeoman service to the sport. His photograph was inadvertently left out from the photos printed of BAI officebearers in last issue. The error is regretted.”

Editor



Murlidharan



“In a move initiated by President BAI, **Dr Akhilesh Das Gupta** the BAI in a unanimous and highly appreciated move, voted to change the BAI Logo for the very first time in decades. The logo presented above, shows vibrancy and personifies modernity and strength. It will signify Indian Badminton on the move. The base is Navy Blue in colour while the feathers are symbolic of the Indian flag placed on the Ashoka Chakra. A logo that is being appreciated by all.”

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