

Sunny days of Indian Badminton:

Indian Badminton is looking good with Sindhu's latest triumph in Malaysia; Stardom awaits other Players

May 07, 2013 (Mumbai) Sanjay Sharma

Indeed, these are good days for Indian Badminton. The sport in the country is not just about Saina Nehwal and Ashwini Ponappa, who have shown the way. Players like K Srikanth, Ajay Jayaram, Saurabh Varma and Sameer Verma, HS Prannoy and to a lesser degree Saili Rane, Tanvi Lad, Sai Praneeth, Guru Prasad have been winning smaller Badminton World Federation (BWF) Championships and also knocking out some much higher-ranked, world players with ease.



(Rising Star: P.V. Sindhu, Pic/Shadab Khan)

The Badminton story today is no longer confined to Indians taking the likes of Lee Chong Wei or Li Xuefei to three games. Those victories don't even make National headlines. Soon, we will see the singles specialists rubbing shoulders with the mighty shuttlers of China, the only frontier left for the young brigade to conquer.

Seventeen-year-old PV Sindhu, who clinched the Malaysian Open on Saturday is by far the most promising young sportsperson in the country. In Kuala Lumpur, she showed her fighting spirit, a quality which helped her reach the semi-finals of the Indian Super Series recently in Delhi where she defeated Japanese girl Yui Hashimoto in straight games.

The same Hashimoto had, in the previous round, defeated Indian ace Nehwal in three games. It shouldn't be forgotten that Sindhu shocked reigning Olympic champion China's Li Xerui last year and also won the Asian under-19 title, an event which is most difficult to triumph in after the Worlds or Olympics.

In Delhi recently, K Srikanth had accounted for Danish No 1 and fourth seeded Jan O Jorgensen while Prannoy had knocked out the legendary Taufik Hidayat. Many of the top men's and ladies singles players are regularly biting the dust at feet of the nimble-footed Indians. The surfeit of talent is not lost on Sindhu's sporting family.

Her father was delighted that she overcame a big deficit to win in Kuala Lumpur, but he also said, "the main factor for Sindhu and all other players like Prannoy and Srikanth and Sai Praneeth is the ideologies they are learning from Pullela Gopichand, our national coach. He himself was a great fighter, never in awe of any player in his career. The same virtues are rubbing off on these youngsters. They go to these Championships with a view to win, and not to be mere tourists.

The charge of the young brigade is a real eye-opener. They go abroad with their heads held high, with pride and self-belief. And they train really hard under taskmaster Gopichand. If the age factor and the performances in Delhi and Malaysia indicate that there are more wonderful things in store for Indian Badminton.