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Edition



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PRO SQUASH



India's Only Squash E- Magazine

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An electronic engineer by education, Mr Ashish Gupta is the Managing Director of Winmark Exhibitions based in Mumbai. But sport remains his passion and the love for the game of squash had helped him to be in the administrative department of SRAM. Mr. Gupta, ex-secretary of Indian Squash Professional, currently holds the position of President

of SRAM. A candid chat with Poulomi Kundu reveals his vision for the game and his plans for making squash a popular sport in India.

➤ **Why did you start playing squash?**

In my young days I played different kinds of sports as I was an enthusiastic sports person. But I didn't stick to any particular sport. I started playing squash and found the game to be quite different from others in a way that here two beginners can easily start hitting the ball, move around the court and enjoy playing the game. What I want to say is that this is a game that is suited for all level of players. Thus, some 30 years back squash attracted me and still I play it.

➤ **What are the developments you have noticed in the game?**

When I started playing, we used to play with wooden rackets with natural 'gut' string. The rackets were really small and the number of shots and angles were very limited. But today the racket has become more than double in size with synthetic high-quality strings. Coming to the balls, squash balls have coloured dots that indicate their dynamic level. We played with red dot balls which were slow as the bounce was high. But now experienced players play with double yellow dot balls which are extra slow balls where the bounce is very low. So with the advanced racket and balls the speed, power and shots have evolved tremendously.

➤ **As the President of Squash Racquet Association of Maharashtra where do you see squash today as an organized game?**

The level of squash activity, coaching and tournaments going on in Maharashtra is quite good. We have managed to pull up the game and now moving into the districts. We have got the Government of Maharashtra to issue a directive that districts should have one or two squash courts along with other sports facilities.

➤ **But how far the game has grown in India as compared to the international standard?**

Of course things are changing now. Our top players are in the first 20 in international ranking. But we still lack the so-called media exposure. We want more players to play so as to raise the bar of competition which will automatically increase the standard of the game. Moreover we need to have exposure to the games of foreign players that really helps in increasing the level of the game. ■■■

When Mumbai kids make India proud!

Dutch Junior Open 2017, Amsterdam, Netherlands 16 July 2017

Mumbai's Neel Joshi and Ananya Dabke win Dutch Junior Open 2017

Boys Under-15:

Finals:

Neel Joshi beat Khalil Alhassan (Eng)
9-11, 11-4, 11-5, 11-6

Girls Under-15:

Finals:

Ananya Dabke beat Serena Daniel (USA)
11-7, 11-4, 12-10

Quarter-Finals:

Aishwarya Khubchandani lost to Torrie Malik (Eng)
0-3

Yoshna Singh lost to Daniel
4-12, 11-9, 12-14, 11-13, 4-11

Boy's Under-19

Final:

Curtis Malik (ENG) beat Charles Culhane (USA)
11-9, 7-11, 14-16, 11-5, 11-6 (72m)

Semi-finals:

Curtis Malik (ENG) beat [9/16] Vikas Mehra (IND)
11-9, 11-2, 11-8 (35m)

Charles Culhane (USA) beat [3/4] Yali Shass (ISR)
11-5, 11-7, 11-2 (41m)

3rd round:

[2] Michael Mehl (CAN) beat
[9/16] Aryan Parekh (IND)
11-4, 9-11, 11-3, 11-4 (56m)

1st round:

Carlton Oldham (ENG) beat Arman Jindal (IND)
11-13, 14-12, 11-5, 10-12, 11-9

Girl's Under-19

1st round:

[2] Sára Nagy (HUN) beat Aaradhana Kasturiraj (IND)
11-6, 12-10, 11-4 (35m)



(L-R) Neel Joshi, Ananya Dabke & Avinash Bhavnani ■■■

Interview

Akhil Behl is the CEO and co-founder of Ayana Hospitality Pvt. Ltd. He leads the Indian JV, influencing the design process of hospitality ventures from concept level. Over the last few years, he has been involved in the conceptualization of luxury eco-lodge projects in Kanha and Pench National Park and a luxury second home development with a hospitality component outside Mumbai. Most recently, he has had extended stints at Mantis properties, understanding the critical aspects of delivering a luxury boutique experience to discerning travellers.



Akhil Behl

Former Indian National
Squash Champion

Excerpts from a candid chat with Ms. Anjali Sugand during the Hyatt Regency Mumbai Squash Tournament 2017.

➤ **How did your squash career start?**

Umm, Squash career started when I was 13-14 years old child. I won various National Championships U-17, U-19... I won Mens National Championship when I was 20 years old. After that I left for the US and I played squash over there for Trinity College. There I won the National Championship four years in a row

➤ **Tell us something about your profession.**

Right now I run a hospitality company with two luxury boutique hotels primarily into wild life and safari.

➤ **What kept you glued to the game?**

It's a great work out. It's little bit of an escape from the everyday monotonous life. Especially the shuttle between work and home is a tedious routine, squash in between is refreshing.

➤ **So how has your experience at the Hyatt Tournament been so far?**

Superb yeah! It's the first time I've come to play here actually. Hyatt is the new Leela for squash now. The gym and the infrastructure here is lovely too. I'd suggest they atleast have two squash courts, nonetheless one is good start. Having a squash tournament at a luxurious hotel is a great idea, the place is also well taken care of. So it's been a great experience yeah! ISP has done a good job with the tournament as usual I must say, so congratulations to you on that!

➤ **How do you manage your work and the squash career?**

Umm, my squash career isn't much of a career right now so it's more of a work career that I have on my plate now. But well, I think a bit of time management, making sure you sleep well and get enough time to take half an hour off from work for squash, it's easy then. ■■■



(L) Ms. Anjali Sugand in conversation with (R) Mr. Akhil Behl

Men's / Women's World Junior Championship 2017 Devoy Squash & Fitness Centre, Tauranga, New Zealand, 19 - 24 July 2017



MEN'S RESULT

Final:

[3/4] Marwan Tarek (EGY) beat [3/4] Victor Crouin (FRA)
11-9, 3-11, 11-6, 3-11, 11-2 (58m)

Quarter-finals:

[3/4] Marwan Tarek (EGY) beat [5/8] Abhay Singh (IND)
8-11, 11-4, 11-6, 11-6 (52m)

4th round:

Aly Hussein (EGY) beat [5/8] Adhitya Raghavan (IND)
11-3, 8-11, 11-7, 4-11, 11-3 (47m)

3rd round:

[3/4] Marwan Tarek (EGY) beat Yash Fadte (IND)
11-5, 11-4, 11-6 (25m)

2nd round:

Ronald Palomino (COL) beat Aryaman Adik (IND)
11-6, 11-7, 11-3 (26m)
Hafiz Zhafri (MAS) beat Tushar Shahani (IND)
11-3, 11-9, 11-8 (40m)
Abbas Zeb (PAK) beat Veer Chotrani (IND)
11-8, 11-7, 11-5 (29m)



WOMEN'S RESULT:

Final:

[3/4] Rowan Reda Araby (EGY) beat
[1] Hania El Hammamy (EGY)
11-7, 11-9, 11-8 (33m)

3rd round:

[3/4] Nada Abbas (EGY) beat
Aishwarya Bhattacharya (IND)
11-4, 8-11, 9-11, 11-6, 11-3
Jana Shiha (EGY) beat
[9/16] Akanksha Salunkhe (IND)
11-6, 11-8, 11-4 (16m)
[9/16] Aifa Azman (MAS) beat
Sunayna Kuruvilla (IND)
11-4, 11-6, 11-6 (24m)

2nd round:

[1] Hania El Hammamy (EGY) beat
Ashita Bhengra (IND)
11-2, 11-1, 11-3 (15m)
[9/16] Zoe Foo Yuk Han (MAS) beat
Samita Sivakumar (IND)
13-15, 11-4, 11-6, 11-6 (31m)

1st Round:

Elisabeth Ross (USA) beat Sanya Vats (IND)
12-10, 15-13, 11-5



Guhan Senthilkumar loses in 1st round of Men's Gibraltar Squash Open, Gibraltar- 1 July 2017

Final:

[5] Sébastien Bonmalais (FRA) beat
[7] Nick Mulvey (ENG)
11-6, 11-8, 11-7 (35m)

1st round:

[2] Arthur Gaskin (IRL) beat
[Q] Guhan Senthilkumar (IND)
11-4, 11-3, 11-7 (40m)



Mr. Guhan Senthilkumar

Abhishek Agarwal is recently making waves in the national circuit of squash. The 22-year old graduation student, Abhishek has been practicing in Jindal Squash Academy near Mumbai since 2006. His highest ranking in India for Juniors under 19 was 3 and he had played squash with top players of India including Saurav Ghoshal, Harindarpal Sandhu, Mahesh Mangaonkar, Ravi Dixit and others. In the sidelines of SYSKA-GSC Squash Tournament 2017, Abhishek spoke to Poulomi Kundu about his game, achievements and future plans.



Abhishek Agarwal

☛ **How did you come across squash?**

The place where we stay, JSW in Vasind has squash courts and the opportunity to play that sport is definitely better than any other sport. The speed of squash attracted me and while playing I understood that this sport keeps me immensely fit and strong. It also gives me a positive energy; it helps me to fight through the adversities of life. That's why I stuck to this game and continued playing.

☛ **How do you see your future in squash?**

I am playing this sport for the last 12 years. It had opened a complete new world for me. I keep travelling, meet new people, interact with them and thus I had grown tremendously as a player and also as a human being. I am looking forward to play this sport in national and international circuit for many years. But to play in international circuit, I need to have sponsors who can push me there. I have been in touch with some company who intends to sponsor me. Jindal Squash Academy sponsors us tournament wise and recently Head has promised me to sponsor my playing equipment. But sometimes it really becomes hard to travel and play without proper sponsors. So, I had started coaching. I am a certified Level 1 Coach from World Squash Federation. I coach at Juhu Gymkhana and Otters Club where more than

20 kids play every week. Like this I earn money that I spent in playing tournaments in national circuit.

☛ **Why do you think that young players like you will pursue this sport as the squash scenario is quite bleak in India?**

Yes, the sport has a long way to go in India. I have seen young kids interested in playing squash but till the age of 19 they get exposure in national circuit. But after that as there is very little scope in India, they start looking for scholarships on the basis of squash from foreign universities. A standard player gets a call from any of those universities that gives importance to squash.

☛ **Abhishek, you are one of our brightest squash players and we hope you continue in this field. Who are your greatest inspirations?**

I couldn't have played this sport for this long if I was not supported by my family. My parents are always by my side. Next are my school teachers who had always encouraged me to go to tournaments and play. And my friends are also so supportive. I never had to think of any backlog of my studies or home works. The main aim for me right now is to play in the international circuit. I am keeping my fingers crossed and working hard for the best. ■■■



Yuvraj Wadhwani at Penang Junior 2017

-: Indian Boy's placing :-

Boys Under-15: Shuhan Sehgal (24th place)
Boys Under-17: Gautam Nagapal (17th place),
 Jaideep Singh (28th place)
Boys Under-19: Rutwik Rau (8th place)

Men's Penang Junior U-19 Open, Penang, Malaysia | 5 July 2017

India's top U-13 player - Yuvraj Wadhwani - took the spotlight among the bunch of Indians who had taken part in the Penang Junior Squash Open which concluded in Penang, Malaysia.

The Maharashtra youngster, finished third in the boys U-13 category after losing to the top seed and eventual winner Joachim Chua of Malaysia 11-9, 5-11, 5-11, 7-11 in the semifinals stage of the competition.

In the third placings encounter, Yuvraj got the better of Shamiel Haeyzad Bn Sharulhisam, also of Malaysia, 8-11, 12-10, 6-11, 12-10, 11-2.

-: Indian Girl's placing :-

Girls Under-11: Anahat Singh (5th place)
Girls Under-13: Sonia Bajaj (14th place)
Girls Under-15: Amira Singh (11th place) ■■■

5,000 Men's South Australian Open, Adelaide, Australia 8th PSA title for Harinder | 8 July 2017



Final:

[3] Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu (IND) beat [4] Rhys Dowling (AUS) 11-8, 12-10, 11-4 (40m)

\$10,000 Men's Victorian Open, PSA M10, Melbourne, Australia, 11 - 16 July 2017

Harinder Pal Sandhu bags his ninth PSA title at the Victorian Open

India's Harinder Pal Sandhu continued his immaculate run of form as he claimed his ninth PSA title by winning the Victoria Open in Melbourne. Sandhu now has the most number of titles for an Indian male player in the professional circuit as he went past Ritwik Bhattacharya's earlier record of eight.

In the final, the third seeded Harinder beat the top seed Rex Hedrick of Australia, a player who is several rungs above the Indian in world rankings, 12-14, 11-3, 11-4, 11-7.

Except for the first game which went close and in the Australian's favour Harinder was at his best thereafter as he combined power and precision to wear down the local favourite in 77 minutes.



Mr. Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu

This has been an amazing 17-match unbeaten streak for the Indian starting with the Malaysian Tour success in early May. The Makati Open in Philippines and the South Australian Open victory followed before this latest success.

Final:

[3] Harinder Pal Singh Sandhu (IND) beat [1] Rex Hedrick (AUS) 12-14, 11-3, 11-4, 11-7 (77m)

Cologne Junior Cup, Germany | 10th July 2017

Bright young Indian talent, Neel Joshi showed sensational touch in the U-15 category by winning the title in the prestigious Cologne Junior Cup 2017

All Final Result:

Boys Under-15:

Neel Joshi beat Marek Panacek of Czech Republic 9-11, 11-3, 11-6, 11-3.

Boys Under-13:

Rutva Samant lost to Abdallah Amr of Egypt 8-11, 14-12, 13-11, 14-12.

Girls Under-13:

Yuvna Gupta lost to Lojayn Gohary of Egypt 1-7, 8-11, 11-7, 11-7.

Girls Under-15:

Aishwarya Khubchandani lost to Serena Daniel from USA 14-16, 7-11, 11-9, 11-9, 11-8.



Neel Joshi

TESTIMONIALS



Bhavesh Shah,
Squash Secretary,
JVP Club

I would like to express our whole hearted gratitude to ISP for your unswerving support and efforts made to promote Squash as a mainstream sport and being unequivocal about the same. This in turn has provided ample opportunity to the young and upcoming Squash athletes to show showcase their mettle and compete in different tournaments (around the country and world alike).

Thank you once again for your contribution, well wishes and undying enthusiasm for striving to work together thereby making the bigger goals easily and smoothly attainable.

"I have been associated with ISP for several years and have played and won many of their tournaments. Over the years it has been an absolute pleasure getting a chance to participate in these tournaments and Mr. Mahendra Agarwal has been a crusader who has given the game of squash so much in Mumbai and Maharashtra through his continous perseverance and dedication in hosting and sponsoring these tournaments tirelessly. I wish ISP the very best going ahead"



Niraj Shirgaonkar
Squash Secretary,
Otters Club.



Amit Gajria,
Head Coach,
Goregaon Sports Club

ISP's Mahendra Sir has been very supportive since so many years for organizing tournaments in our club, inviting squash celebrities for events in our club, any infrastructure and logistical support we have required for squash. The contribution ISP and Mahendra Sir have made to this sport is amazing. Hats off to the committee and staff of ISP for such fabulous job and I, on behalf of Goregaon Sports Club, wish them good luck for many more years to come. Hip Hip Hurray!!!

NSCI & I are proud of being associated with ISP over the years. We are glad that ISP has always been at the forefront in promoting the game of squash whole heartedly. Cheers to the 100th edition of PROSQUASH magazine & many more years of ISP for the Squash Community!



Jay Jhaveri,
Squash Convenor, NSCI.



Appaji Bopanda,
Senior Sports Officer,
IIT-Bombay.

Congratulations to you and the team on the release of your Hundredth issue of the Indian Squash Professionals Magazine- PROSQUASH!