



PIROS



NEWS LETTER OF THE INDIAN SQUASH PROFESSIONALS

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UBEROI ATTRIBUTES PURPLE PATCH TO BETTER CONCENTRATION

The gregarious **Bikram Uberoi** has done enough in the new year to ensure that he is the most talked about Indian squash player. He upset the top seeded **Yan Ka Ho of Hong Kong** to take the boys' title in the **ASF** Junior squash circuit final round at the **India Cements Academy, Chennai**. It was his fourth title of the new millennium. Bikram Uberoi didn't exactly exult when he learnt that **Mohamed Azlan**, the top seed from Malaysia, would not be taking part. He had expected to be the top seed. So, when he went to Chennai as the second seed, Bikram had a point to prove, which he did. Uberoi's confidence stemmed from having reached the final of the Senior Nationals.

That he has no peer in junior ranks he proved by claiming the **SRAM-Air-India Grand Finals** with ease. He attributes his fine form of the recent months to his improved concentration. "I used to lose my concentration earlier and it cost me some matches." Uberoi, who won the **Junior National** title, had lost to **Ritwik Bhattacharya** in the men's semi-finals of the **Nationals**. He had taken one game off him and was sure he would have won but for a problem in his hip. The injury began playing up as the match prolonged. It was tough luck for Bikram as he had lost earlier to Ritwik in the **North India Open**, a grueling encounter that could have gone the other way.

Uberoi has been making steady progress since winning the Hong Kong Open junior title a couple of years ago. He enrolled in a U.S. college last year, but has taken a semester break to play here. The decision has paid dividends as he finds himself at No 3 or No 4 on the men's ladder. Uberoi is now eyeing a place in the India squad for the Asians. When asked whether he was wary of running into the fitter Services players in the trials for the Asians, Uberoi said confidently, "Their strength is lasting power but I hardly allow the game to last, I finish the rallies." Uberoi took in his stride, Servicemen **Anuj Kalra** and **Maj. Rajdeep Brar** at the Nationals and he has also beaten **Gajendra Singh Rathore**. Ritwik Bhattacharya and **Manish Chotrani**, the current National champ, are the only men he hasn't beaten. He considers **Udai Singh**, now settled in Singapore, as the best Indian player today. Uberoi said the few months he spent at Rhode Island didn't help his squash much. "It only helped me become fitter than before." Then how did his game improve? "I have been playing a lot with **Anshul Manchanda** and this has helped." Manchanda, the son of India's all-time great **Brig Raj Manchanda**, is out of the junior ranks and did well to reach the last eight of the Nationals. When asked whose guidance has really helped him, he says it is all his own work. Asked if he was lacking in any particular area, Uberoi feels he can play most strokes with an amount of certainty. All he needs, he says, is lasting power and he will be able to tackle the best in the game.



Bikram Uberoi with one of the several trophies that swelled his bag in 1999-2000

Barada's stabbing shocks squash world

The stabbing of Egypt's rising star, **Ahmed Barada**, ranked No 3 in the returning to his Cairo home at around midnight on March 19 after attacked by an unknown assailant as he was getting out of his car. The for at least a month. He withdrew from the **Al-Ahram PSA Masters** in the final of the World Open in Cairo last September. He had beaten the **Heliopolis Open**, also in Cairo.



world, took the squash world by surprise. The 22-year-old was spending the evening at a friend's engagement party, when he was injured to his lower back means he is unlikely to be able to train or play **Hurghada**, Egypt, which he was expected to dominate after reaching world champion **Peter Nicol** two months later in the final of the



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Rookie Vikram lights up Air India grand finals



Vikram Malhotra with coach Chandrakant Pawar

Deepali Anvekar has no rival in the under-19 ranks in the country. The Virar Medical College student toyed with **Priyanka Yadav** with a 9-0, 9-1, 9-1 win, in the under-19 final. **Chandrakant Pawar** has trained both of them and he must have been happy to see them dish out good stuff. Yadav cannot match the power game of Deepali, who is an all-rounder, but some fine skills from mid court were indicative of her widening her repertoire of shots through practice mornings and evenings all year round. Squash wonder girl **Alisha Mashruwala** has no opposition in the under-15 group. She trounced **Natasha Lall** 9-2, 9-2, 9-0 to claim the under-15 girls title.

Raj Singh Dungarpur, the CCI president, appealed to the SRAM to take the game to the districts so that public courts could unearth the champs of the future when the game would be free of its elitist tag. **Khalid Ansari**, the SRAM president, said the association had been receiving a good response from various quarters in its bid to increase the number of courts. Though they finished on the losing side, the Seth brothers, Mihir and Vir, have shown that in a season or two they will be kids to reckon with. They are a bundle of energy on court and are bound to reward the efforts of their keen parents. The best news of the event was Air-India's commitment to sponsor the event for the next two years.

Vikram Malhotra set a marvellous example for Mumbai's juniors. He proved that with the right application they can climb the squash ladder fast. Vikram had less than seven months experience of playing the sport. Yet he raised eyebrows by the time he had finished the season. Vikram won the under-11 title of the four-leg **Air-India SRAM Junior Squash** tournament at the CCI's Glass-back courts. Vikram, of **Maneckji Cooper School**, Juhu was new to the game having begun playing just seven months earlier. But his father Shiv had drilled the right aspects of the sport in him and the Khar Gymkhana lad captured the under-11 title beating **Vir Seth** in the final 9-0, 9-6, 9-1.

The **Jangras** from **Jindal complex** had two titles. **Sandeep Jangra** beat **Sarvesh Chauhan** in the under-13 final, while **Ashish Jangra** claimed the under-13 title beating **Maneckji Cooper** 9-6, 9-1, 9-5. **Vishal Kapoor** and **Mihir Sheth** keenly contested the under-17 final. Kapoor's deft touch on occasions gave him the upperhand and the title.

Bikram Uberoi romped home in the under-19 final against **Rahul Lall** 9-0, 9-1, 9-0.

Evergreen Pawar Claims Kanchan Pro Masters Title

Chandrakant Pawar, outwitted the younger and fitter **Santosh More** 13-15, 15-11, 15-9, 15-12 to win the Professionals title in the **Kanchan Pro Squash** tournament organised by the ISP at the **Willingdon Catholic Gymkhana**.

Representing **The Leela**, Pawar dropped the first game to his younger **Otters** club rival **Santosh More** before turning on the magic to win the next three. The 45 year old professional prevailed to take home the first prize of Rs.3000 and home appliance from the sponsors, **KANCHAN**.

In the handicap doubles event for men, the top seeded player **Niraj Shirgaokar** and **Amit Chinoy** lived up to their billing when they got the better of unseeded **Avinash Bhavnani** and **Vinay Bajaj** of **Otters Club**. Chinoy was a virtual returning machine, while Niraj hit lovely winners with strong backhand.

(Scores on page 4)

SQUASH AT KOLHAPUR

At the prize distribution of the **Air-India** grand finals, **Raj Singh Dungarpur**, the chief guest had appealed to the **SRAM** to take the sport of squash to the districts. Well things are moving with the **ISP** organising a **Kolhapur Open** tournament at **Residency Club** from April 7 to 9. **ISP** has a fine track record of organising 31 tournaments and adopting three players. There will be two events, a handicap one for locals followed by **Kolhapur vs ISP** team event. Leading players will be on view. If this event, co-sponsored by **Ugar Sugar Works** and **ISP** clicks, squash could be played in other districts and the squash could come into the mainstream of sport in the state and get state recognition. When that happens, the players would be eligible for the state sports honours which presently are denied to the squash players in spite of their achievements being on a par with those of the others. **Niraj Shirgaokar** of **Ugar Sugar** in many ways will be the pioneer of promoting squash in the district.

The ISP team: Chandrakant Pawar, Santosh More, Amit Chinoy, Carl Bokadawala, Vinay Bajaj and Rajesh Sonwane (Reserve).

The Kolhapur team: Niraj Shirgaokar, Mihir Kapoor, Avinash Bhavnani, Samir Date, Vishal Kapoor, Mahendra Agarwal (Reserve).



Niraj Shirgaokar

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MIHIR KAPOOR PRIDES ON WIN OVER BIKRAM



Mihir Kapoor would have liked to sign off from the under-19 ranks with a national title. But it was not to be. He had to remain runner-up. But he ended the recent season happy having beaten the most talked-about player of the season, **Bikram Uberoi**, who swept everything before him in the under-19 ranks. He beat Bikram in one of the four legs of the **Air-India-SRAM** Junior tournament but he could not play the grand finals owing to 12th standard board exams. In fact, Mihir won all the four legs of the Air-India event. **Junaid Nathani** was usually his rival. One that got away was the Indian Open in which he lost to **Abhimanyu Jain**.

Mihir is now eyeing a place in the universities of either **Franklyn Marshall** or **Denison**. Mihir did his early schooling at Doon School. They had a good squash coach but when he was in the eighth standard he left. Mihir found a vacuum till the 11th standard after which he decided to come back home. He began playing at Otters Club where father **Gopal** played the sport. He says **Cyrus Poncha** and professional **Santosh More** have helped him in coaching. At Junior Nationals he has usually made the semi-final grade. Last year he lost to Bikram in the last eight. He attended the camp under **Rehmat Khan** arranged by the SRAM. He was advised to put more power in his shots and tone up his fitness.

His chart has been: semi-finalist in 1995, quarter-finalist in 1996, semi-finalist in 1997, quarter-finalist in 1998 and again the following year in the under-16 and under-19 events. A case of born at the wrong time.

Maybe luck will smile on him in the **Ivy League**

Manish, Deepali & Nathani Emerge Supreme Switcher - The Leela Squash

Manish Chotrani and **Deepali Anvekar** further highlighted their domination on the game of squash in the city when they lifted the men's and women's titles respectively in the **Switcher** Invitation prize money squash tournament, played at the glass back courts of **The Leela**.

National champion Chotrani had a tough time, though, in the final against under-19 National champion and junior Asian champion **Bikram Uberoi**. Uberoi won the first game 15-11, but also aggravated an old injury. Yet, he put up a gallant fight, but was found wanting in some departments against the 29-year-old Chotrani, who is still extremely fit. Chotrani won the next two games at 15-11, 15-3 before getting another scare in the fourth. Scores ran neck to neck, with Uberoi wiping out a 3-point deficit to level scores at 14-14. However, Uberoi the long match seemed to have got to Uberoi, who could not maintain the momentum and lost 15-17. Chotrani was richer by Rs 6,000. The women's field was depleted with the last-minute withdrawal of national champion **Mekhala Subedar** and Deepali made the most of it. Facing Madras las **Joshana Chinappa** in the final, Deepali, the under-19 National champion was stretched bit in the first game, which she won 15-13. However, the next two were easy at 15-6, 15-6. The boys under-19 title was lifted won by **Junaid Nathani**, but not before dropping a game to **Vishal Kapoor**.



Salifee Jani (ISP), Srikanth Ruparel, Ehsan Shah (Treasurer, SRAM),

Narendra Gour (Director, ISP), Sanjay Manjrekar (Chief Guest)

& Robin Cornelius (C.M.D., Mabrouc SA) At The Prize Distribution Function

2000. The prize money was Rs 6,000. The women's field was depleted with the last-minute withdrawal of national champion **Mekhala Subedar** and Deepali made the most of it. Facing Madras las **Joshana Chinappa** in the final, Deepali, the under-19 National champion was stretched bit in the first game, which she won 15-13. However, the next two were easy at 15-6, 15-6. The boys under-19 title was lifted won by **Junaid Nathani**, but not before dropping a game to **Vishal Kapoor**.

Indian Stars on Denison Sky

The **Denison University** Squash Team has finished its **strongest** season ever by ranking **seventh** in the Intercollegiate Squash Racquets Association. The DU team was the third-ranked small college, trailing first-place Trinity (Conn.) and runner-up Williams (Mass.). Denison beat Dartmouth College 7-2 at the National Championships at Yale University in late February, to firm up its seventh-place ranking. Denison also was nominated for the **Barnaby Award** for most improved team for the second time in its five-year history of playing intercollegiate squash.

DU senior **Arif Paul** (Mumbai, India), who finished No. 5 in the nation, became a four-time, All-America First-Team. Paul lost the deciding match to **Tim Wyant**, Harvard's captain and No. 1 player. The contest lasted one hour and 45 minutes and went to five games.

DU freshman **Awicsh Jayaswal** (Mumbai, India) finished No. 16 and became a member of the All-America Second Team. Only 10 players are selected for each honor. Paul was one of five players nationwide to be nominated for the **Skillman Award**, the highest individual award in college squash. Denison has a short but rich tradition in squash. The team began in 1995, ranked 33rd in the nation. The college moved to 21st place after the first year. The team then finished 13, 8, 10, and 7 respectively in the past four years. There are 36 teams that compete including those from the Ivy League and small liberal arts colleges in the east. The handful of other schools west of the Hudson River who compete in squash include Northwestern, Stanford, Cal Berkeley, and Western Ontario.

The Denison Squash Club had several notable wins that include: Navy (9-0); The University of Pennsylvania (9-0); Franklin and Marshall (9-0); and Dartmouth (5-4), (7-2). Close losses include matches against No.4-ranked Yale (4-5) and No. 5-ranked Western Ontario (4-5). Squash is a winter indoor court sport popular in England, Europe, Asia and Australia. The United States adopted the international game in 1995, the year Denison began its squash program. There are 10 players on each college team who play the best of five games. The first player to win 15 points wins the game. Home Denison matches are played on international courts at the Castellini Courts in the Mitchell Recreation and Athletics Center. **Jon Bridge** '82, Denison major and planned giving officer, serves as the team's coach.

Irish Open 2000 (12-3-2000) :

Peter Nicol (Sco) beat Jonathan Power (Can)
15-12, 15-15, 9-15

Swiss Open (6-3-2000) :

Men: Adrian Hansen (RSA) beat Julian Wellings (Eng) 6-15, 15-13, 15-7, 15-5. **Women:** Jenny Trantfield (Eng) Agnes Muller (Swi) 9-3, 9-0, 9-5

Odense Women's Open (6-2-2000) :

Ellen Petersen (Den) beat Wendy Maitland (Sco)
9-6, 5-9, 9-6, 9-5

Flanders Open (5-3-2000) :

Peter Nicol (Sco) beat Ahmed Barada (Egy) 15-14, 15-5, 3-0 (ret'd).

Women's Finish Open (29-2-2000) :

Nicol David (Mas) beat Salma Shabana (Egy) 9-1, 9-0, 9-5.

Women's Danish Open (21-2-2000) :

Janie Thacker (Eng) beat Maha Zein (Egy) 9-4, 9-9, 9-7

All India Inter-University Squash (Mumbai) 20-1-2000

Results: Mumbai bt J.N.Vyas, Jodhpur 3-1; Siddharth Thakkar lost to Harendra Pal Singh 2-9, 9-7, 9-7, 9-4; Vijay Jangra bt Deepak Rathi 9-4, 9-10, 9-7, 9-1; Anshul Manchanda bt Gautam Sharma 9-0, 9-1, 9-0; Saket Wali bt Dharmendra Khetani 9-2, 9-5, 9-6. Third Place: Delhi bt Devi Ahilya, Indore 3-0; Robinod Dube bt Kshitij Nikharth 9-4, 9-1, 9-1; Rahul Pandit bt Siddharth Rajopadhyaya 9-2, 9-4, 9-5; Harinder Singh bt Vijaya Patni 9-1, 9-0, 9-7.

All India Junior Squash, 4th Leg 22-1-2000 FINAL

Boys U-11: Vikram Malhotra bt Alok Sharma 5-9, 6-9, 9-0
U-13: Sandeep Jangra bt Nikhil Seth 9-3, 9-3, 9-0
U-15: Rishabh Singhi bt Yogin Thakur 9-5, 9-7, 9-5
U-17: Vishal Kapoor bt Mihir Seth 9-4, 9-4, 10-8
U-19: Mihir Kapoor bt Bikram Uroli 7-10, 8-9, 9-5, 9-7
Girls U-15: Alisha Mashruwala bt Liana Deboo
U-19: Deepali Anvekar bt Priyanka Yadav 9-4, 9-0, 9-1.

SEMI-FINALS

Boys U-11: Vikram Malhotra bt Ishaan Bahwani 9-3, 9-1, 9-3
U-13: Sandeep Jangra bt Manoj Dhorla 7-9, 9-7, 9-9, 9-3
U-15: Rishabh Singhi bt Aditya Manjrekar 10-8, 9-6, 2-9, 10-8
U-17: Vishal Kapoor bt Supreet Singh 9-1, 9-3, 10-8
U-19: Mihir Seth bt Bipin Batra 9-1, 9-1, 0-4
U-19: Mihir Kapoor bt Rohan Gracias 9-6, 9-7, 9-5.

INTERNATIONAL

Austrian Open (20-2-2000) :

Rodney Durbach bt Tim Garner 13-15, 15-5, 15-7, 15-9

British National Championships (13-12-2000) :

Men: Peter Marshall (Eng) bt Davis Evans (Wal) 15-9, 15-6, 15-11. **Women:** Cassie Campion (Eng) bt Sue Wright (Eng) 9-1, 2-9, 9-2, 2-9, 9-3.

Maddi Squash Open (9-2-2000) :

Kareem Darwish bt Anthony Ricketts
15-6, 17-16, 17-16.

Rosebowl Women's Classic (6-2-2000) :

Sarah Fitz-Gerald (Aus) bt Sue Wright (Eng)
9-3, 5-9, 9-4, 10-8.

INDIAN

Bikram Uroli w/o Taran Machra.

Girls U-19 : Priyanka Yadav bt Supriya Balsekar 9-4, 9-2, 9-2. Deepali Anvekar bt Rachita Vora 9-1, 9-0, 9-4.

All India Grand Finals at CCI, Mumbai 7-2-2000

Boys U-11: Vikram Malhotra bt Vir Seth 9-0, 9-6, 9-1
U-13: Sandeep Jangra bt Sarvesh Chauhan 9-0, 8-10, 5-9, 9-4, 9-3 **U-15:** Vikas Jangra bt Yogin Thakur 9-6, 9-1, 9-5 **U-17:** Vishal Kapoor bt Mihir Seth 9-7, 9-7, 8-10, 9-5 **U-19:** Bikram Uroli bt Rahul Lall 9-0, 9-1, 9-0
Girls U-15: Alisha Mashruwala bt Natasha Lal 9-2, 9-2, 9-0 **U-19:** Deepali Anvekar bt Priyanka Yadav 9-0, 9-1, 9-1

Switcher-The Leela Squash 5-2-2000

(Top-8 in Men/Women/Junior Under-19 by invitation)

Finals:
Men: Manish Chotrani beat Bikram Uroli 11-15, 15-11, 15-3, 17-15 **Women:** Deepali Anvekar beat Jostina Chinappa 15-13, 15-6, 15-6 **Boys U-19:** Junaid Nathani beat Vishal Kapoor 15-9, 15-13, 3-15, 15-8.

Semi-finals:
Men: Jostina Chinappa bt Priyanka Yadav 15-11, 15-13, 15-8. Deepali Anvekar bt Analia Dhalla 15-2, 15-5, 15-4. **Boys U-19:** Junaid Nathani bt Deepak Yadav

Tournament of Champions Men's Final (4-2-2000) :

Jonathan Power (Can) bt Martin Heath (Sco)
15-12, 15-11, 14-15, 15-12

Greenwich Open (24-1-2000) :

Men: Joseph Kneipp (Aus) beat Del Harris (Eng) 15-7, 15-10, 15-3. **Women:** Sarah Fitz-Gerald (Aus) bt Suzanne Horner (Eng) 9-6, 9-0, 4-9, 9-7.

Glidden Women's Open (17-1-2000) :

Sarah Fitz-Gerald (Aus) beat Suzanne Horner (Eng) 9-1, 9-0, 9-7.

Marsh & McNielsen Apawamis Open (11-1-2000) :

Mens Final: Nick Taylor (Eng) beat Del Harris (Eng) 15-9, 9-15, 15-9, 9-15, 15-9.

Women: Linda Charman (Eng) beat Fiona Geaves (Eng) 9-6, 9-7, 3-9, 5-10, 9-8.

15-8, 15-6, 15-11. Vishal Kapoor bt Supreet Singh 15-8, 15-9, 15-5. **Men:** Bikram Uroli bt Anshul Manchanda 15-10, 15-8, 15-8. Manish Chotrani bt Santosh More 15-5, 15-9, 15-10.

ASF Asian Junior Circuit Squash Championship 14-2-2000

The results: Boys Final: Bikram Uroli (Ind) bt Yan Ka Ho (HK) 9-5, 9-2, 9-0. **Placings:** (3-4): Marcus Yee (Mal) bt Kelvin Ho (Mal) 9-6, 3-9, 9-3, 9-3; (5-6): Kenny Ng (Mal) bt Aaron Chee (Mal) 9-4, 9-2, 2-9, 9-0; (7-8): Wong Wan San (Mal) bt Navin Samarasinghe (SL) 9-7, 4-9, 9-6, 9-3. **Girls Final:** Tricia Chuah (Mal) bt Cheryl David (Mal) 9-0, 9-2, 9-4. **Placings:** (3-4): Elise Ng (HK) bt Daphne Ting (Mal) 2-9, 7-9, 9-4, 9-2, 9-5; (5-6): Akanksha Hazari (HK) bt Kong Yi Zhen (Mal) 9-1, 7-9, 9-2, 9-0; (7-8): Valdehi Reddy (Ind) bt Leong Yie Man (Mal) 3-9, 9-7, 9-2, 9-6.

Kanchan Pro Masters (1-4-2000)

Professional Finals:
Chandrakant Pawar beat Santosh More 13-15/15-11/15-9/15-12

Semi Finals:

Chandrakant Pawar bt Gopi Mohite 15-8/15-9/15-11
Santosh More bt Anant More 15-11/13-15/15-8-15-8

Doubles Finals:

Neeraj Shringapurkar & Amit Chinyot bt Avinash Bhavnani & Vinay Bajaj 14-15/15-12/15-11/15-10

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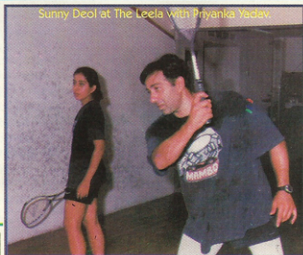
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Sunny Deol at The Leela with Priyanka Yadav.