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SHREE JAHANGIR CAME, SAW AND CONQUERED

(31/08/2004)

One didn't expect squash legend Jahangir Khan to have such a good memory as to say "Aap badle nahin" (you have not changed) when one pointed to his bulging waistline and added "shall I show you a photo of yours at 18 in 1981?" He didn't want to see that pic taken at the 1981 Asians the first which he won and made Pakistan President Zia proud. Zia had held that Asian purely to showcase Pakistan's talent in the sport and some six Pakistanis made the last eight Memories of all that came back when one met Jahangir when Capt Jamshed Apoo had an impulse to call him so that the youngsters gathered at the Herald Maritime Services Open could meet the greatest player of all time.



At the Prize distribution function held at Otters Club: From left: Rushabh Vora (Winner, Boys U-19), Deepak Kocher (Winner, Mens Over 40), Mahendra Agarwal (Director, ISP), Jahangir Khan (WSF, President), Siddharth Suchde (Winner, Mens), Vikram Malhotra (Winner, Boys U-15), Ashish Gupta (PRO, SRAM), Noreena (PRO, ISP)



Capt. Jamshed Apoo of Herald Maritime Services along with Khalid A-H Ansan (President, SRAM) presenting a silver plaque to Squash Legend Jahangir Khan.

The move was a hit though there were hurdles galore when the SRFI chief tried to prevent Jahangir coming only to be told he was coming to see his friends and had every right to do so.

Jahangir coming meant memories coming about how he saw over 20 laps of the Brabourne stadium as a warm up before his game against Chris Dittmar. What was important was that Jahangir got to see the talent India has and the next day after the finals spoke at length to the Indian kids removing all doubts they had about the sport and the training needed to reach the level he did. Jahangir got to see the future of Indian squash as Siddharth Suchde beat national champion Ritwik Bhattacharya to claim the biggest-ever top prize of Rs one lakh. Summing up his visit Jahangir said "I met many old friends. I saw good squash. I am sure India can produce great players. Inshallah this won't be a one-off visit."

I asked him when he looked back on his career what did he remember the pain of the pleasure because one had known him to make a lot of sacrifices in training. "Those times were different. I put in hard work and enjoyed doing it. And reached levels I had only dreamt about."

Bloodlines obviously helped, one asked him. "Indeed, yes. I came from the famous squash family. My father was a world champ so also my uncle. It was like a family business. I got the basics from my father." The father Roshan Khan was in coma in a Karachi hospital when Jahangir was here. Jahangir had an early setback when his elder brother Torsam died on court when he had just begun to shape his game. Recalling that the squash master said: "It was a big blow. Everything I achieved in squash can be attributed to Torsam. He was the best thing that happened to me."

Second-best would be Rahmat Khan his cousin, who we are familiar with having come to India and introduced to the mainstream of Indian squash by ISP. Rahmat had been playing on the circuit but after Torsam's death he sacrificed his playing to take charge of

JAHANGIR'S INDIAN BROTHER

If there was one compelling reason for Jahangir to visit India at short notice during the Herald Maritime Services Open, it was because of his friendship with Tariq Gore, the Otters Club player. Tariq used to visit England where their house was close to that of Jahangir's. Said Tariq during Jahangir's visit here: "In the 60s my first squash lessons were given by Jahangir's father. Roshan Khan. We grew up together and are like brothers."

Why didn't he also become a squash player?" one asked Gore. "My father was keen that I take up the family business and that's how squash went on the back burner." So how did he find Jahangir? "He is a great individual, a very fine human, being, and he loves India. When he came here he told me he found no difference. The same warmth was there among the people."

And Mumbai got the salute of a "fine city". No wonder Jahangir parted till the wee hours with the likes of Feroz Khan, another close friend. Because of all this, one is sure Jahangir will come, see and conquer Indian squash hearts again.

Jahangir. Says a grateful Jahangir: "Rahmat was a big sacrifice. That was the time when I needed somebody by my side in big tournaments and Rahmat fulfilled that need." Rahmat fine tuned his game using the latest methods which he had picked up on the English circuit. He produced coaching videos of Jahangir and also books. The works talking of the shock of a young man in a big man's game. Jahangir said: "I had won the world amateur title at 15. But when I began playing the big guys I was only thinking of taking a game off them. But I surprised myself by beating the likes of Geoff Hunt. I then said to myself, 'If I can beat Hunt I can take them all. And that's how I went on to beat Jonah Barrington and Qamar Zaman.' Mention of Zaman brought me memories of how Zaman made Jahangir dance in the final of the first Asians in Karachi in 1981 which I happened to cover. His feigning and double shots and wrist work took one's breath away. But that was only in game one.

After that Jahangir took hold of the 'T' and dictated the match. That's

HERALD MARITIME SERVICES SQUASH OPEN 2004

(31/07/2004)

Suchde grabs jackpot from Ritwik



Raj Singh Dugarpurkar (Advisor, SRAM), Jahangir Khan (Chief Guest), Capt. Jamshed Appoo (Sponsor), Rushabh Vora (Winner, Boys U-19), Deepak Kochar (Winner, Mens Over 40), Siddharth Suchde (Winner, Mens), Khalid A-H Ansari, Aashish Gupta (PRO, SRAM) and Navneet Sori (Director, ISP)

A man blowing a *tutari* (a Maharashtra horn instrument used to welcome royalty in bygone years) announced the arrival of Jahangir "Unsquashable" Khan at Otters Club. It was befitting treatment for the King of Squash.

The Pasha of squash, the legendary Jahangir Khan was in the city of Mumbai considered the 'Mecca' of squash in India as Chief Guest of the Herald Maritime Services open Squash Championships 2004. His was a personal visit and had come to Mumbai on the invitation of Capt. Jamshed Appoo the sponsor of India's highest prize money (Total Rs. 6lacs) tournament.

When the Rs one-lakh prize money was announced for the men's winner of the Herald Maritime Services Squash Open at the Otters Club it was widely thought that national champ Ritwik Bhattacharya would take the jackpot kept by racing patron Capt Jamshed Appoo who had added a Rs 50,000 antique trophy to boot. But Siddharth Suchde had other ideas. He outslugged Ritwik to claim the men's title: Suchde had lost to Bhattacharya in a PSA event at Chennai a fortnight earlier so the win showed a lot of character. The length of his shots was impeccable as was his

how Jahangir won the first Asian title. I was wondering whether to ask about his arch-rival Jansher who ended his reign but decided not to as not to spoil the mood. Someone else mentioned him and I overheard Jahangir saying "Saab dadi badhaya hai." (he has grown a beard almost like a mullah). I asked, Jahangir why he assumed his present post of president of the World Squash Federation. He said: "I always had the desire to help the game. Being president of the world body was another dream. The other dream is squash being accepted in the Olympic Games. We are in a long queue and I don't think it will happen before 2012."

Just right timing for Jahangir Jr to win it what? One asked him. He smiled. "My son is two and a half years old. I don't know which sport he will choose. I can only hope it is squash."

control. Bhattacharya was not as livewire as he normally is and that helped Suchde.

But he won the third and fourth games after being two-down. In the decider, delectable drops and whiplash kills were played with superb judgement by Suchde, trained by Satinder Bajwa at Harvard and he won it at 15-4. Jahangir Khan was very impressed by the Mens winner Siddharth Suchde and felt he had the potential to bring laurels to the country in future.

Rushabh Vora dropped a game before getting the better of Manek Mathur 15-7, 15-11, 9-15, 15-8 in the under-19 final while, Vikram Malhotra was clinical in his 15-13, 15-6, 15-10 win over second seed Laxman Joshi. Vora received a pay cheque of Rs 75,000 unheard of anywhere in the world while Malhotra got Rs 25,000. The over-40 guys also made merry Deepak Kochar claiming Rs 40,000 beating Chetan Ladiwala.

Capt Appoo made history by donating antique trophies. The men's was a sterling silver trophy which once belonged to Mr Pratapsingrao Gaekwad of Baroda till April 12, 1953. Other trophies were a coat of arms of Royal Indian States, French silver coasters of floral and scroll design and an English Hallmark silver bowl for the other winners. Squash players are luckier than others in this respect.

Speaking to the press Capt. Jamshed Appoo assured that the tournament would be even bigger the next time around. Capt. Appoo has once again proved to be the most generous patron of Squash in India.

RESULTS

Mens

Siddharth Suchde bt Ritwik Bhattacharya 15-8, 15-8, 8-15, 9-15, 15-4

Boys U-19

Rushabh Vora bt Manek Mathur 15-7, 15-11, 9-15, 15-8

Boys U-15

Vikram Malhotra bt Laxman Joshi 15-13, 15-6, 15-10

Mens Over-40

Deepak Kochar bt Chetan Ladiwala 11-15, 15-11, 15-11, 15-11



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HONGKONG JUNIOR OPEN

Ankita, Mahesh to the fore

(10/08/2004)



At the prize distribution function : Ankita Sharma (Winner, Under-11), Aditya Jagtap (Runners Up, Under-13), Vikram Malhotra (Runners Up, Under-15), Sachika Balwani (Semi-finalist, Under-11) and Mahesh Mangaonkar (Winner, Under-11).

Ankita Sharma, the young lass who has been making rapid strides after switching to coaching by Sunil Verma at the Jindal complex, and Riaz Mohammed at the Hotel Tulip Star beat the top seed Ms Hokapo (HK) 9-4, 9-6, 9-6 for the under-11 title in the Hong Kong Junior Squash Open.

Ankita, daughter of top cop Pradeep Sharma, had been runner-up in Milo Junior Open in Malaysia in June 2004. Ankita showed character because Hong Kong player was 6-2 in the third game. But Ankita used her reach and with hard shots took the game. Hokapo had beaten in the semifinals Ankita's teammate and arch-rival Sachika Balwani 3-0.

In the Boys Under-11 event Mahesh Mangaonkar of India beat Won Fung of Hong Kong 9-5, 9-7, 3-9, 10-8. The fourth game was very tough for young Mangaonkar managed to beat his rival 10-8.

Aditya Jagtap lost Kin the Under-13 event to top seed Fung Long of Hong Kong 9-4, 9-6, 9-4 and in the Under-15 India's top seed Vikram Malhotra lost to Au Ching Ming of Hong Kong 3-0.

ASIAN CHAMPIONSHIP IN KUALA LUMPUR

(27/06/2004)

Random glory for Indian's at the Senior Asians



Ritwik Bhattacharya

In 1981, Malaysians barely made it to the last eight among men of the First Asian Squash Championships. A policeman, Gopal, and an army man Maj Maniam were their flag bearers at Karachi. Maniam went on working at his game and has risen to position of chief coach of Malaysia and director of the Asian Squash coaching network being attached to the India Cements Academy.

In 2004 both the Asian titles, men and women were claimed by Malaysians. Maniam can take dual pride in Malaysia's rise and also that of India. For India claimed the team bronze at Kuala Lumpur, for the first time since 1990 when the Asians were held at Kolkata. Singapore and Hong Kong were the teams that had been claiming that position in the intervening years. The team of Ritwik Bhattacharya, Saurav Ghoshal, Siddharth Suchde and Manish Chotrani defeated Kuwait 2-0. The women dropped a rung when beaten by Japan for the bronze. But Joshna Chinappa did her reputation no harm by winning her tie against the top ranked Japanese Mami Nishio 9-2 9-6 7-9 9-4. In the deciding rubber Mekhala Subedar lost to Chinatsu Matsui.

In the individual championships, our top Indians can console themselves

that they lost to the eventual champs. Ritwik Bhattacharya lost to Ong Bee Hee 5-9-5-9. Joshna defeated Asian Games bronze medalist Lee Hye Kyong (Kor) 2-9-9-5 9-3 9-3 in the quarterfinals. She then made people sit up when leading 8-6 in the second game against Nicol David. However David produced the stuff of champs and Joshna lost 3-9 8-10 4-9 in the semifinal. For her efforts, Joshna won the 'Hassan Moosa award' for her outstanding performance as a junior woman player. Moosa was the secretary of Pakistan Squash and later PIA Sports when he was gurned down in 1998. The Indian junior women's team of Joshna Chinappa, Supriya Balsekar, Alisha Mashruwala and coach Cyrus Poncha also won the 'ASF team award' for their excellent performance at the World junior championships held in Cairo. They received it from N. Ramachandran, secretary of the federation.



Saurav Ghoshal

PIA 13TH WORLD JUNIOR SQUASH

(23/08/2004)

Mixed luck for Pakistan, Indian's disappoint

Pakistan proved they are good as a team among juniors but there are other fine individual players around in Asia That was the message from the PIA 13th World Junior Squash Championships held at Islamabad in August.



Sandeep Jhangra

Pakistan retained the team title beating Egypt. They had won under coaching of Rehmat Khan in Chennai two years ago. Egypt's Ramy Ashour became the World Junior Squash Champion following a 3-0 finals victory against Yasir Butt of Pakistan at the Mushaf Ali Mir Squash Complex Courts. No Pakistani has won since Jansher 18 years ago. Jansher's nephew Amir Atlas won a special prize as the find of the championship, reaching the semis and losing to Ashour.

It is said the over-cheering of the home crowd upset Butt. In the semis Ramy Ashour had beaten Pakistani Amir Atlas Khan 9-2, 9-5, 9-6 and Yasir Butt had upset the number two seed and Amir elder brother Khalid Atlas Khan 9-1, 9-2, 9-3 in the second semis.

The Indian campaign at the world juniors ended abruptly and rather disappointingly with the highly rated and the tournaments top seed Saurav Ghoshal's comprehensive defeat at the hands of Pakistani Basit Ashfaq ranked much below in four games (5-9, 0-9, 9-7, 6-9).



Vikas Jhangra

Much was expected from the Indian contingent specially since the well known coach Major Maniam, hired by the SRFI at a huge cost to the Sports Authority of India was personally planning and supervising the structured training program spread over several months and camps held at the squash academy in Chennai.

Sadly the performance of the Indian team ranged from dismal to pathetic with not a single player left in the fray within the first three days of the competition. While Harinder Sandhu and Sandeep Jhangra lost in the 1st round and A. Parthiban in the 2nd, what really hurt was the defeat of Saurav Ghoshal in the 4th round itself. The only creditable performance came from the not so highly rated Vikas Jhangra who reached the 3rd round in the competition.

In the team event India lost to No 3 seeds England 2-1 in the last eight. The two Jangras, Sandeep and Vikas lost to Joel Hinds and James Wright while Saurav Ghoshal prevented a whitewash defeating Chris Simpson 9-2, 9-3, 9-4.

KHAR GYMKHANA AIR TEL ALL INDIA SACCOL/ COLLEGE SQUASH OPEN

Gift bonanza for Juniors

Fun and Excitement two words that describe the Khar Gymkhana Airtel All India School/College Squash Championships held from 4th to 8th September 2004. Each player was welcomed for his/her match with a participation certificate, tournament T-shirt, bandana, snacks and other gifts including beautiful wrist watches for all outstanding players. This was just the beginning at what followed was free breakfast, and a superb lunch at the clubs exclusive restaurant 'The Boulevard' at a highly subsidised rate. Soft drinks sponsored by Pepsi were on tap as much as little tummies and bladders could hold. And Squash was not the only game the participants played. There were fun games and competitions organized in association with Pepsi and players, coaches and parents alike participated and won prizes on the spot.

As far as the organizational part of the event was concerned, that was superlative too. The tournament director, Ashish Gupta developed several tools on his computer to make easy to read draws and excellent match scheduling due to which the tournament progressed with clockwork precision. The entire organizational team was perfectly synchronized and in spite of the organizers desire to accommodate players with misplaced entries the tournament progressed on schedule. Refereeing was as good as could have been with certain upheavals occurring recently and SRAM deciding to eliminate dependency on others. Erring spectators, coaches and players were well controlled, and controversies regarding age-fudging settled effectively something all tournament organizers should attempt to follow.

The 'Victory Ceremony' was a glittering affair where the top four players in each age category got amazing prizes like camcorders,



Winners of Khar Gymkhana Airtel All India Inior School/College Squash Championship, along with the Guest of Honour, Capt. Salaria (6th from left) and the office bearers of Khar Gymkhana.

television sets, stereo systems, DVD players, mobile Phones, discmans, cordless keyboard! These prizes were given away by the Guest of Honour, Capt. Swaran Salaria M.D. Thg guard force, DCP Amitabh Gupta and this club President Hari Mehra. The Raju Chainani Award for the most promising player of the year 2003-2004 was given to Mahesh Mangaonkar and Ankit Sharma. The award included beautiful trophies and cash prize and was given away by the SRAM Secretary General and founder director of ISP Mahendra Agarwal. All in all this was the most enjoyable and well run squash event one has seen. Khar Gymkhana mentioned doing it even better next time one wonders How!.

Results**Boys U-19**

Vikas Janra (RK Talreja College, Ulhasnagar) bt Rushabh Vora (HRC College) 9-2, 9-3, 9-2

Boys U-17

Sandeep Janra (Jindal) bt Manik Mathur (CCI Squash Academy) 9-6, 5-9, 9-6, 9-1.

Boys U-15

Vikram Malhotra (Beacon High School, Mumbai) bt 2-Laxman Joshi (Jindal) 9-5, 4-9, 4-9, 9-3, 9-2.

Boys U-13

Paramjeet Singh (Dhampur) bt Aditya Jagtap (Bombay Scottish) 9-3, 4-9, 9-5, 9-7.

Boys U-11

Mahesh Mangaonkar (Don Bosco School) bt 2-Tarun Nambiar 9-2, 5-9, 10-9, 9-3.

Girls U-19

Shivangi Paranjpe (St. Anne's, Fort) bt Madhura Paranjpe (St. Anne's, Fort) bt 9-7, 9-1, 9-2.

Girls U-13

Ankita Sharma (Arya Vidya Mandir) bt Sachika Bahwani (Bombay Scottish) 9-7, 9-6, 9-2.



Founder Director Mahendra Agarwal giving away the Raju Chainani award for outstanding performance for the years 2003-2004 to Mahesh Mangaonkar

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Nambiar's upset win lights up new
event at Juhu Gymkhana (29/08/2004)



At the prize distribution function held at Juhu Gymkhana, Mumbai. Winners along with Chief Guest Sarjaj Nirupam-Member of Parliament and other dignitaries.

Tarun Nambiar lit up the first-ever Mumbai Suburban Schools Squash when beating the top seed Mahesh Mangaonkar in the boys under-11 final. The action was packed in the fourth game which went to extra points. But Nambiar who lost it showed his nerve by romping home in the decider. In the girls under-13 final, Ankita Sharma took her time while beating Saurya Kharki in the final. It was her fourth major title of the year.

RESULTS

FINALS

Boys Under 11

Tarun Nambiar Beat Mahesh Mangaonkar 9-2, 9-6, 8-10, 9-2

Under 13

Rahul D'curha Beat Aditi Zaveri 5-9, 9-2, 10-8, 9-3

Under 15

Jay Dalal Beat Akhilesh Nayak 2-9, 10-8, 9-5, 10-9

Under 17

Manek Mathur Beat Vikram Malhotra 9-1, 9-3, 9-0

Girls Under 13

Ankita Sharma Beat Saurya Kharki 8-10, 9-7, 3-9, 9-4, 9-0

Under 17

Shivangi Paranjpe Beat Shahnaz Dastur 9-6, 9-6, 3-9, 9-7

LEELA - ISP SQUASH CLASSIC

WCG make most of handicap

(25/07/2004)

It was an anti-climax when Chandrakant Pawar announced the handicap of the final match to decide the Champion team at the ISP-Leela Handicap Team Championship. With both the Khar Gymkhana and WCG teams tied at 2 matches each, one expected a hum-dinger of a final with Rohan Gracious of Khar Gymkhana pitted against Rajesh Sonawane of the WCG.

Then Pawar dropped the bomb-shell, an eight point handicap for Sonawane and it was all over even before the match began. Though Sonawane tried his best to make it look like a tough fight by losing the second game it was all in vain as Gracious had just no change despite his best effort. The Khar Gymkhana team was distraught and felt they were not given a fair chance to win.

RESULTS

FINALS

WCG bt Khar Gymkhana 3-2:

Jay Thapa bt Suraj Shetty 15-8, 10-15, 15-6;

Rakshak Malhotra lost to Vijay Waghela 15-9, 9-15, 9-15;

Bipin Batra lost to Dhiraj Nagpal 12-15, 14-17;

Avinash Bhatija bt Kunal Jani 15-7, 8-15, 15-11;

Rajesh Sonawane bt Rohan Gracious 15-11, 7-15, 15-11



Chief Guest Paru Rajkumar (Actor) along with the Runners Up Khar Gymkhana team at the prize distribution function held at The Leela.



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ISP CAMPS MOVE ON

(14/08/2004)



Khyati Narawane (Marketing Manager, ISP) alongwith the participants of Chaitanya Tower, Prabhadevi, Mumbai

Once more was the call heard after the success of the eighth squash clinic held by ISP at Chaitanya Tower, Prabhadevi.

More than 45 players participated in this event. The response was so good the camp was made a 20-day one. The trainees were divided into three batches so that all could benefit.

Hitesh Gutka and Vivek Tameja, co-ordination committee member and health club committee member of Chaitanya Tower have taken it upon themselves to make sure all the participants will be trained by the ISP pros. The excitement was such that almost 50 names enrolled on the very first day.

Under 15 age group players Takshay Tameja, Shikar Soni, Amal Hosangady, Privi Sinha and Nivedita Chopra enjoyed the sessions and will continue to play after the camp ends.

All this made this camp the best ISP initiative to date.

'LIFE IS SQUASH' SAYS TOP COACH SUNIL VERMA



Sunil Verma

One of the coaches in hot demand is Sunil Verma, sports officer at the Jindal Sports Complex Vashind. Children don't mind traveling 75 km every day to get coaching from him. Verma played at the top level among professionals reaching one National final and another semi-final. Verma has done his Level II coaching under Maj Maniam, the Asian Squash Federation's chief coach.

Top juniors from India have emerged from the 'Jindal Stable' and the rate with which Verma has produced Champions makes him the most sought after coach in Maharashtra. The 'Jindal Squash Academy' located in Vashind has top juniors from Mumbai running to it for training. With expansion plans on the anvil with four glass back squash courts to be made operational shortly with top class accommodation, the Jindal Squash Academy promises to become the numero uno squash academy in the country.

Verma comes from a family of coaches. Sunil is the son of Pancham Singh Verma whose brother Shyamal Verma was leading professional of India in

the 60s at the College of Military Engineering, Pune. His brother Mahesh is national pro champ. 'Life is squash' is the motto of Sunil Verma.

Excerpts form the interview:

When did you start coaching and with whom?

I started coaching about 15 years ago. I began with MAHESH VERMA and MEKHALA SUBEDAR at Temple Hill Institute, DEVLALI. MEKHALA went on to become a NATIONAL WOMENS CHAMPION for four years.

When did your work at JINDAL start?

In the year 1995 when Mr. SAJJAN JINDAL asked me to join the complex as a sports officer.

Tell us about your wards.

I am proud that two of them SANDEEP JANGRA & VIKAS JANGRA, represented INDIA at the recent WORLD JUNIOR SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP, 2004 in ISLAMABAD. SARVESH CHAUHAN, RITESH SHARMA have followed in their footsteps and next in line are LAXMAN JOSHI and NAVEEN JANGRA. My budding stars are a young group of boys and girls aspiring to become promising players, RINKY SONI - 13, CHETAN RATHORE - 13, VIVEK DUHAN - 10, SHASHI PANDEY - 10, RAHUL SONI - 10.

Do you also get kids from outside the academy?

ADITYA JAGTAP, ANKITA SHARMA, TARUN NAMBIAR, SAUMYA KHARKI & ABHISHEK PRADHAN are members of the JINDAL SQUASH ACADEMY who come to train and have shown tremendous improvement.

How much time do you spend on coaching?

I spend the entire day on the courts. We begin our session in the morning at seven and our session in the evening gets over at nine. I also take care of the other sports activities held at the JINDAL RECREATIONAL COMPLEX.

What motivates you to work so hard?

My will to win and the support of Mr. SAJJAN JINDAL, Mrs. SANGEETA JINDAL & THEIR SON, PARTH who enjoys playing squash. My hope in the best in bringing more talent from VASIND boys and girls.

What is in store for the future?

Our academy will be upgraded. We will have four glass back courts. We will have the best facilities that will enable us to produce the best players. We shall work towards achieving a common dream of an INDIAN WORLD CHAMP.

STOP PRESS!

INTERSTATE NATIONALS IN CHENNAI

The Interstate Team and Individual National Squash Championship which were scheduled to be held in Umed Club, Jodhpur in September 2004 were cancelled due to serious differences between the Club authorities and the SRFI top brass. The Club authorities refused to comply with the demands made by the SRFI and this resulted in the cancellation of the event. The SRAM (Squash Racquets Association of Maharashtra) as well as the Delhi Squash Association made official bids to host the event but quite expectedly the event was shifted to Chennai the headquarters of the SRFI and will be played at the ICL Squash academy located in the TNSRA (Tamil Nadu Squash Racquets Association) complex from the 8th to 11th December 2004.

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ABOVE 60 SQUASH BRIGADE

**R**AWI PURI, 60

COURT CALL: 3-5 times a week in the morning at Bombay Gymkhana

EVEN a slipped disc at 57 did not diminish Puri's passion for squash. As suggested by the doctor, he included regular exercises and swimming.

"Squash is the best sport as it takes less time and builds your stamina, which helps you in other walks of life," remarks Puri, whose initiation into the sport came about as a 12-year-old. Since then he has been at it at the Bombay Gymkhana courts.

"Till date I have never had any heart problem," is a bright spot in his health card, which he attributes to his love affair with squash.

Puri feels there is an all-round enthusiasm for the sport unlike his formative years when "I used to tell people that I have taken up squash and they used to think that I was talking about lemon squash!"

SUDARSHAN SURI, 69

COURT CALL: Daily in the morning for minimum half an hour to maximum one hour. Preferably doubles at Navi Mumbai Sports Club.

A contemporary of international Dinshaw Pandole, Suri had the distinction of rubbing shoulders with the Pakistani professionals Abdul Bari, Jamal Din and Yusuf Khan, who served the Mumbai clubs in fifties. He claims to have even played an exhibition match with the legendary Hashim Khan. However, since joining the Indian Navy in 1958, the trips to the squash courts became less frequent. It was only after a 32-year hiatus that Suri picked up a racquet in 1994.

The consequences were dangerous as twice he was hit on his left eye and was operated upon. But it did little to dampen the enthusiasm.

"I think it's a very wrong opinion of quitting this game after a certain age because no game is harmful. This has to be your personal decision. Even at 70 if you still like the game you can play without over stressing yourself," he stresses.

There is only one complaint though: there are few courts near his new residence, at Vashi, Navi Mumbai. "I think some action must be taken so that more youngsters can take up the sport. Also schools can be approached only if there are squash courts available," he reasons.

**A**SHOK JOSHI, 67

COURT CALL: Four to five days a week for minimum half an hour at Willingdon Sports Club.

FOR somebody who was a regular tennis player, squash has become an addiction of late. "I feel great after playing and miserable if I miss it," says Joshi. Besides, he says, "I have no health problem till today."

Scholarships and admission in US Colleges are among the other benefits that the sport offers, opines Joshi.



He, however, wishes the sport in the country got the kind of sponsorship cricket gets

SISHIR SHIRGAOKAR, 60

COURT CALL: Three or four times a week at Otters Club.

Another tale of passion: Despite suffering a triple knee injury, two decades ago, Shingaoakar's zest for the sport remains as fresh as ever. "I did not play for 3 to 4 years (due to the injury) but once I started playing I had no problems."

His advice to youngsters is simple: "Play hard and come on the world map of squash because squash has got a very bright future."

**C**MDR VK KOCHHAR, 69

COURT CALL: Thrice a week at Cricket Club of India.

It has been a 57-year-old association with the sport and Commander Kochhar's continues to play with the same enthusiasm as he did as a teenager. "I

enjoy the exercise, competition and the relaxation it brings to the body and mind," he says.

For all those oldies who think that taking up the sport could be detrimental, Kochhar has a tip: "The secret for those who think playing at this age is not recommended is to keep playing regular at least 2 to 3 times a week and listen to your body."

The retired commander is delighted at the platform being provided for the youngsters, especially by the SRM. "I see a bright future for Indian squash. Young players are provided good facilities, sponsorship and exposure to play tournament abroad

**R**AMESH BUBNA, 60+

COURT CALL: Almost everyday at Cricket Club of India

It has been a 41-year-old association with squash and Bubna continues to play with the same enthusiasm and enjoys squash at the fullest. "I play squash for 30 to 40 min everyday to keep fit" he says.

"Till date I have never had any health problem" is a bright spot in his health card, which he attributes to his love affair with squash. Tip for all those who think that taking up squash at old age could be not good for health is to play the game of your age without exerting yourself or overdoing it. Being regular is very important according to Bubna.

His advice youngster is very simple "Take up squash for complete fitness"



A.I. SINGH HIGHEST QUALIFIED SQUASH COACH

A.I. Singh, one of India's leading Squash Coach from Chandigarh and presently based in Mumbai attended the inaugural National Coaching Accreditation Scheme (NCAS), Australian Level 3 course organized by Squash Australia at Melbourne. The course is arguably the highest rated Squash coaching qualification worldwide aimed at training coaches to produce high performance players. A.I. Singh was the only Indian and one of only two non-Australians to attend the course. He is amongst the few coaches that have managed to take a player from introduction to Squash to winning a Scottish Title. Mid-Day met up with him for finding out more.



Mid-Day: *What makes this qualification so exclusive and important?*

A.I. Singh: The course was meant to develop coaches for high performance competition players by passing cutting edge know-how to them, exchange of ideas with other leading coaches and enhancing their competency through various assignments. According to a candidate and presenters who know about course syllabus in other countries, this L3 course is by far the highest Squash coaching qualification. In order to be eligible just to attend the course, candidates had to have cleared NCAS Coaching Principles L2 course and NCAS Strength and Conditioning L1 Course as prerequisites, amongst others. There were 18 candidates including prominent Aussie coaches such as Rodney Martin- ex world champion, Paul Frank- Scottish National High Performance Director etc. Presenters included Roger Flynn and Jeff Wollstein, sources of much of the research work being done in the Squash world and Geoff Hunt, former world champion and a squash legend was an assessor. The course itself was so exhaustive that it was spread over 2 separate weeks in November 03 and June 04.

Mid-Day: *This means that you would have made substantial preparations to be eligible. Two separate weeks mean great expense as well. What motivated you, and did you receive any support for attending this course?*

A.I. Singh: This course was in planning for several years and 2-3 years back, Squash Australia had started making concrete plans for holding the course. They were aware as was most of the Squash world that SRFI unfairly denied me the chance to attend an Asian Squash Federation L3 course held in 2000 in Singapore, though I was completely eligible and capable of attending it. In view of this, and the fact that my efforts in promoting Squash as I did in Chandigarh and my achievement in producing India's first Scottish Boys Champion, I was kept abreast of developments on courses being held by several countries. I firmly believe that knowledge should be available to all those who seek it. For gaining knowledge and to prove a point to SRFI, I did all that was necessary to attend the course. I have not been sponsored or supported by anyone for attending this course.

Mid-Day: *It is surprising that anyone should be denied a chance to learn! How did that situation ever come about and how does attending this course 'prove a point'?*

A.I. Singh: I am unsure about why SRFI or its boss started to annoy me. Apparently, a couple of my 'colleagues' misinformed SRFI that I was making 'statements' against SRFI, while what I did, and still do, was to listen to and discuss any player's problems. The indisputable fact is that SRFI itself has troubled several people- that it can be unfair is evident from my denial to attend the ASF L3 course if any proof is needed. Prominent cases highlighted in the press include Joshua Chinappa, with whom SRFI reconciled later when it needed her, and the recent Cyrus Vakil case. Had the SRFI powers that be been sportsmen themselves, they would not only not trouble players but address their concerns, they would also appreciate

the strength of sporting spirit and realize it cannot be crushed. My point is proven through my obtaining more than what was denied to me. Everyone is entitled to his opinion, but in terms of sense of fair-play, desire to groom trainees appropriately with ethical values demonstrated by example, in terms of knowledge base and results thereof and track record of trainees injuries, I was always considered better than the SRFI coaches who flunked Level 2 as is common knowledge. Now, even SRFI cannot but acknowledge the fact that I am the only Indian bonafide Level 3 coach! But then again, did Ravan or Duryodhana ever listen to anyone or face facts? Lets talk about something pleasant now.

Mid-Day: *Tell us about your coaching experiences, past and present, incidents, about your favourite moments or talented trainees.*

A.I. Singh: I started coaching at Yadavindra Public School, Chandigarh where I studied and started playing as a student in 1985. This was 7 years back in July 1997. I had not decided on coaching as a career until September 1998 when YPS won the all India Inter School Team Title. Thereafter, I simultaneously coached in several schools until moving to Mumbai in April 2003. My most memorable incident is when Harinder Sandhu, then 9, was playing a 17 year old at BCS Shimla. Harinder won a really long rally and in elation started 'Bhangra' there and then. He eventually won that match! My most enjoyable times are when travelling with trainees for tournaments when their learnings on life skills and hard work put in training come to fruition. Also, I get a chance to try my culinary talents on my helpless trainees!

Though Harinder is the most successful player I have coached, Mahir Singh best implemented the ideas I gave all my trainees on adopting a balanced and well planned approach towards Squash and studies. He gave up tuitions at my behest, played Squash during exams, and improved results in both! Most players I coach in Mumbai are very talented and intelligent. To get results, they need to be a lot tougher, hard working, methodical and determined, and apply the intelligence they are endowed with to hard Squash training.

Mid-Day: *How do you see the present and future of Indian Squash?*

A.I. Singh: Saurav and Joshna have proven Indian Juniors are as good as any. Harinder is a bright prospect. Ritwik is our first dedicated professional player. SRFI is doing a fabulous job in creating infrastructure and getting youngsters introduced to Squash in Chennai. There are at least 4 Squash Academies in India. We have a few dedicated and educated coaches. Unprecedented this situation might be, players need to have a pathway taking them from State level up to international professional levels with support and encouragement all along. As I mentioned in my last interview with you in July 2001, all those involved with Squash should work collectively to create that pathway. At the moment, Squash is being promoted in pockets. SRFI, which is also the ASF with common office bearers, has demonstrated that while it can take several initiatives, it cannot think beyond the confines of ICL Academy in Chennai. It has frequently sent wrong signals to the Indian Squash community as is happening yet again with Cyrus Vakil's case. Whether by SRFI's divine enlightenment or by others who can think big and have the games interest at heart, the situation needs to change. Otherwise, we will only continue to have talented juniors using Squash as a means for obtaining scholarships in colleges abroad- and no results where we need them and they really matter- in PSA.

RAJASTHAN OPEN NATIONAL SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP

(11/09/2004)

Hospitality at its best

It was Rajasthani hospitality at its best at the 2nd All India Rajasthan Champions 2004 held at the JCL Squash courts between 11 to 15 of September 2004

Five days, Two Squash Courts, around 300 entries in 8 categories and the organizers knew they had a tough job on their hands. What are witnessed and never seen before was the matches played on the first day went on till around 2.30 a.m. in the morning. The organizers though remained unfazed and managed to get the match timings schedule under control on the third day of the tournament.

Top players from all over the country including Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai participated in the Championship. A strong and very vocal contingent from Mayo College was very visible and added to the fun during the tournament. The local challenge came from Parth Sharma and Surbhi Mishra, both solid players but the lack the cutting edge which will come in time with more exposure.

The organizers had made wonderful arrangements as far as accommodation was concerned with some of the top players being put up at the club itself. Sumptuous Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner was being served at the club premises at subsidised rates. The tournament Committee especially Dharmendra Kamthan went out of their way to ensure the players were comfortable. One felt they were almost 'spoiling' the players with their hospitality. While Saurav Ghosal, Joshna Chinappa, Vikram Malhotra and Deepika Pallikal expectedly won in their respective categories. Harinder Sandhu caused an upset in the Boys under 17 category beating a tired looking Sandeep Jangra in straight

games. The boys under 11 final went to the wire with Sumaer Sandhu getting the better of Deepak Mishra in five games

Rajasthan's power minister the Honourable Gajendra Singh Khimsar graced the well attended Prize distribution ceremony as chief guest. The honourable minister a top level Squash Player of the yester years having donned the India colors spoke about this changes he had witnessed in the game over the years. He advised the youngsters on how to consistently bring out their best performance in games that matter. The Sponsor Shri S.K. Golcha pledged an amount of Rs. 5 lacs towards building a new court which the organizers hope to get operational before the tournament next year. All this augurs well for Squash in the Pink City.

FINAL RESULTS :

Boys U-11

Sumaer Sandhu beat Deepak Mishra 10-9, 9-2, 3-9, 1-9, 9-4

Boys U-15

Vikram Malhotra beat Sami Johnson 9-0, 9-6, 9-0

Boys U-17

Harinderpal Singh beat Sandeep Jhangra 9-7, 8-4, 10-8

Girls U-19

Joshna Chinappa beat Surbhi Mishra 9-2, 9-3, 9-1

Girls U-15

Deepika Pallikal beat Surbhi Mishra 9-4, 9-4, 9-3

Boys U-19

Saurav Ghosal beat Vikas Jhangra 9-2, 9-0, 9-0

Women's

Joshna Chinappa beat Mekhala Subedar 7-9, 9-1, 9-7, 9-4

Mens

Saurav Ghosal beat Gaurav Nandrajog 4-9, 9-0, 9-3, 9-4



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Lata Raju chainani along with (from left to right) Tabbi @ Yogendra Singh Anil Nayar, Jahangir Khan (WSF President) Rohan Juneja, Gaurav Juneja & Ritwik Bhattacharya

ALL INDIA INTER UNIVERSITY SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP

Dhiraj is Varsity Champ

(27/09/2004)

Just back after playing the Jaipur Open Dhiraj Nagpal rushed to the CCI straight from the airport to participate in Mumbai University Individual Championships and emerged victorious a couple of days later. Dhiraj's grouse is that he is never considered a serious contender in tournaments inspite of several good performances in the recent past. Having worked very hard on his fitness since the past six months Dhiraj brushed aside the challenge of the much fancied and top seeded Rushabh Vora in the semis and Ritesh Sharma in finals both in straight games to lift the varsity title. Earlier in the semi's Ritesh Sharma had beaten the second seeded Anurag Gill to make the finals.

Mumbai downs Delhi to lift Inter-University Title

The Mumbai University Squash team comprising of Supreet Singh, Dhiraj Nagpal, Anurag Gill, Rushabh Vora, Ritesh Sharma and Bipin Batra blanked out arch rivals and the defending champions Delhi University 5-0 to lift the All-India Inter University title. This rivalry between the two universities has been going on for some time and one expects it to continue when the two university teams renew their quest to become champions in the year 2005.

Announcing the official Squash Rackets of

(3 models arriving shortly)



Watch out for the next issue of
Prosquash for details

RED ALERT

AGE FUDGING - SRFI FINALLY WAKES UP

BUT WHAT ABOUT PARTHIBAN ?

The SRFI finally woke up from its deep slumber and at their recently held executive committee meeting decided to act on the very serious problem affecting Indian Squash- Age fudging. Four players from Dhampur, Imran Khan, Farman Khan, Paramjeet Singh, Ravi Dixit and one player from Rajasthan Karan Tharyamal were summoned to Chennai on the 13th September 2004 by the SRFI to undergo medical tests to verify their age. It is believed that similar tests were conducted a couple of years back and the results never saw the light of the day. This time around complete transparency is expected from the SRFI and hopefully the results will be made public through notification to all affiliated units rather than being held back to possibly serve their own interests.

Ironically there is controversy brewing over what is the correct age of SRFI's own home-grown blue eyed boy A. Parthiban or is it M. Parthiban (as he played under this name a couple of years back). It is rumoured that the SRFI has finally declared his age as hold your breath 16 years. This shocking news is creating deep anguish and resentment among the junior players all over the country. Partiban has been on the circuit for quite a while and records show that he has played various tournaments including the Junior Nationals in the under 17 category for the past two years i.e. 2002 and 2003. To suggest that he is 16 years old seems like a poor 'April Fools Day' joke.

Grapevine from Chennai seems to suggest that the SRFI with its base in Tamil Nadu have been struggling to produce a player of some reckoning from the state since the past few years and have failed miserably. (Saurav Ghosal and Harinder Sandhu are 'imports' from other states). Partiban was their best bet and since he came from a backward socio-economic background it was always going to be easy to manipulate his date of birth. With the world juniors around the corner a convenient date of birth was needed and it did not require much intelligence to decide - 11th December 1987. It would allow him to play almost all the tournaments of the calendar year and also make him eligible to play the next world juniors even if it was at someone else's cost. (If our information is correct his passport was made only last year before the Hong Kong Juniors). It is rumoured that Parthiban's age is closer to 19 years or even more.

Whatever may be the truth but the onus is now on the SRFI to get its act together and come out clean on this issue. The sports fraternity in India is already reeling under the effects of the 'doping' of the weight lifters at the Olympics with the 'Foreign Coaches' and their Indian

counterparts pointing an accusing finger at one another. But then don't we all know that not even a leaf can move in the SRFI headquarters without the Big Bosses approval.

This very serious development can have disastrous consequences for Indian Squash if not solved out asap. We cannot have two sets of rules for different people and believe that a similar medical test be conducted on Parthiban in a place other than Chennai (for obvious reasons as the SRFI and TNSRA are based there) This should be done under the supervision of officials from the Ministry of Sports and the results be made public as early as possible. This would be in the best interest of the game and its players.



M or A Parthiban ?

WORLD MENS RANKINGS OCTOBER 2004

Pos.	Player	From	Last Pos
1	Lee Beachill	ENG	2
2	Thierry Lincou	FRA	3
3	Peter Nicol	ENG	1
4	David Palmer	AUS	4
5	Nick Matthew	ENG	8

WORLD WOMENS RANKINGS OCTOBER 2004

Pos	Player	From	Last Pos
1	Rachael Grinham	AUS	1
2	Cassie Jackman	ENG	2
3	Vanessa Atkinson	NED	3
4	Natalie Grinham	AUS	5
5	Natabe Grainger	USA	4

FORTH COMING TOURNAMENTS 2004

- 13-17 Oct : Little Masters Championships : Willingdon Sports Club, Mum
- 29 Oct - 2 Nov : 2nd Junior Inter State : Mayo College, Ajmer
- 2 - 5 Nov : Sub Junior, Junior Nationals : Mayo College, Ajmer
- 15-21 Nov : Maharashtra State Open : Bombay Gym, Mumbai
- 21-27 Nov : Western India Squash Championship : CCI, Mumbai
- 2-11 Dec : National Singles, Doubles & Interstate : Chennai
- 13-17 Dec : WSF World Doubles Championships : Chennai
- 19-22 Dec : Natalia - SRFI Grand Final & Poona Open : Poona
- 23-26 Dec : Indian Masters Championships : Poona

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2, MONARCH CHAMBERS, GR. FLOOR, MAROL MAROSHI ROAD, ANDHERI (E) MUMBAI 400 059 TEL 2852 5568 / 2852 3433 FAX 2852 5589