

PROSQUASH

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Vol 10 No. 2 Issue No. 38
April 2006

KHAR GYMKHANA ISP MUMBAI OPEN SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP (OPEN DOUBLES & HANDICAP DOUBLES)

Sonu Mirani & Sashi Gupta emerges Supreme

(04/03/2006)



At the prize distribution function : Vicky Kalludi (Sponsor), Sonu Mirani (Winner, Handicap doubles), Chief Guest Bipin Bihari (Additional Commissioner of Police, Mumbai), Noreena (Vice-President, ISP), Sanjay Goyal (Socyc Gen., ISP), Mahendra Agarwal (Director, ISP), Shashi Gupta (Winner, Handicap doubles) & Ashish Gupta (President, ISP)

sponsored by Ashwini Jewelers, at the Khar Gymkhana squash courts. Having played their semi-final matches earlier in the day, stamina was the crucial aspect in the final. The younger partners were expected to do more of the running, but while Malhotra obliged, running down each ball and allowing Shirgaonkar to hit the winners, Nagpal was a bit sluggish and though Chotrani tried hard, it was just not enough for victory. Shirgaonkar and Malhotra prevailed 15-11, 8-15, 15-12, 15-11 to take home winner's purse of Rs 10,000, while the runner-up team had to be content with Rs 8,000.

In the semi-finals, the combination of Malhotra's youth and speed and Shirgaonkar's experience tilted the scales in their favour against Sachin Jadhav and Avinash Bhatija. However, the fancied duo of Dheeraj Nagpal and former National champion Manish Chotrani were made to struggle hard for every point and were pushed to the wire by touch-player Sanjay Goyal and the hard working Rohan Gracious.

Both the games were decided on the last point, thanks to Chotrani's sublime skills that emerged when the chips were down. Chotrani and Nagpal finally prevailed 17-16, 17-16 in the needle contest that lasted for more than an hour.

The handicap doubles final featured Bipin Batra and Avinash Bhatija against the pair of Shashi Gupta and Sonu Mirani, the latter pair prevailing 15-12, 12-15, 15-12.

Thanks to the fair handicapping, the finals and both the semi-finals were close fought affairs and went to three games.

At a grand Victory ceremony, chief guest Mr. Bipin Bihari (Additional commissioner of police, Mumbai) honoured the winners.

RESULTS

Finals :

Top 8 doubles : Neeraj Shirgaonkar & Vikram Malhotra bt Manish Chotrani & Dheeraj Nagpal 15-11, 8-15, 15-12, 15-11.

Handicap doubles : Shashi Gupta & Sonu Mirani bt Bipin Batra & Avinash Bhatija 15-12, 12-15, 15-12.

Semi-finals:

Top 8 doubles:

Neeraj Shirgaonkar & Vikram Malhotra bt Sachin Jadhav & Avinash Bhatija 15-12, 15-12;
Dheeraj Nagpal & Manish Chotrani bt Sanjay Goyal & Rohan Gracious 17-16, 17-16.

Handicap doubles:

Bipin Batra & Avinash Bhatija bt Ashish Gupta & Ashok Nagpal 15-13, 11-15, 15-13;
Shashi Gupta & Sonu Mirani bt Vijay Waghela & Ritesh Bajaj 12-15, 15-13, 15-7.

Neeraj Shirgaonkar and Vikram Malhotra emerged champions in the Top-8 Section of the Khar Gymkhana-ISP Mumbai Open Squash Championship sponsored by Ashwini Jewelers, at the Khar Gymkhana squash courts. They beat Manish Chotrani and his partner Dheeraj Nagpal in four sets.

It was a blend of youth and experience in both teams, but surprisingly the older halves of each team did most of the running. Former National champion Manish Chotrani and Dheeraj Nagpal, the top seeds, ended up on the losing side against Neeraj Shirgaonkar and Vikram Malhotra in the top eight doubles final of the Khar Gymkhana-ISP Mumbai Open Squash Championships.



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JOSHNA FELICITATED AT GR8! WOMEN ACHIEVERS 2006 AWARDS



Gr8!, the popular television glossy, felicitated 15 women from varied fields at the Gr8! Women Achievers 2006 night was held on Friday 17th February at the ITC Grand Maratha Lawns, Mumbai.

It was a night like no other, because it was a night dedicated to those who never saw the light of the day. The high wattage Aroushka Shankar, Ayesha Takia, Amrita Rao, Farah Khan, Ekta Kapoor, Amrita Rao & Joshna Chinappa were electrifying, glitterati like Pooja Bedi sparked with her special brand of irrepresible chutzpah, luminaries like the cotton saree clad Medha Patkar blinded with her bedrock commitment, legends like Sitara Devi dazzled with her wit. Others were Khushboo Sundar, Shailaja Kejrewal, Punita Arumugm, Jeelani Bano, Neeta Lulla and Geeta Piramal.

Celebrities like Kabir Bedi, Adam Bedi, Nisha Harale, Mahesh Bhatt, Jackie Shroff, Zaheer Abbas, Madhur Bhandarkar, Ashutosh Gowriker, Bhagyashree, Suchitra Krishnamurthy, Ramesh Sippy, Kiran Juneja, Tazat & Bina Aziz, Kim Sharma, Nikkii Aneja, Neena Gupta, Yukta Mukhey, Pooja Ghai, Narayani Shastri, Sudha Chandran, Archana Puran Singh, Ashok Pandit, Prem Chopra and many others were present at the occasion.

The Fashion show brought together a combination of A-list celebrities like no other. As they paraded Neeta Lulla creations, choreographed by Achala Sachdev, the ramp lit up with the sparkle of angel dust around fairies. Never soon a more electric combination of ramp walkers dazzling the evening rate appearance by mother daughter duos of politically inclined Shaina NC and mom Munira Chudasma, Zareen Khan (Feroz Khan's wife) & Farah, Ishita Arun & Ila Arun, Soni Razdan & Alia, Neeta Lulla & Nishka, Anu with Anushka



Joshna Chinappa along with Mahendra Agarwal (Director, ISP)

and Akansha. Then there were ravishing Sonali Rathor & Neena Gupta. Shristi Rya with her young gang from India Calling & Remix, Nigzar Z Khan & Shama Sikandar, Niharika - Yukta - Vida trio, Neeta Chopra & Sapna Mukherjee.

Informed Shashi Ranjan, Publisher Gr8! Magazine, "This is the fourth year in a row that we have felicitated women achievers in various fields for their contribution to their respective professions and society as a whole. Through this platform we recognize the achievements of women from a whole gamut of fields including Music, Television, Sports, Fashion, Literature, Dance, Journalism, Social Service, Film, Business & Advertising. In addition to this, a young achiever and a special honor was also bestowed."

Added Anu Ranjan, Co-Publisher Gr8!, "This year's felicitation was centered around our campaign against female foeticide called 'Bet!'"

SACHIKA HAS TO SHAKE OFF TWO CHALLENGERS



Sachika Balwani

Sachika Balwani has problem on hand. Anika Sharma and Saumya Karki have been playing her so often these past five years that they know all about her game. So one day the other two beat her on another Sachika wins and the pendulum keeps swinging. And so it was at the CCI and Bombay Gymkhana.

So how did she beat Saumya after the latter had the match wrapped up at one stage?"

I kept my cool and did not lose concentration. I was making her run and get exhausted. I, in turn, went for every ball. I have been

playing her since the age of 8.

So how did she lose to Anika? "Well I didn't really concentrate. But after I was finished I told myself I will now play my best in the other final."

Sachika had lost in the nationals at Chennai. "I came back began working hard on improving on my weakness." She had lost to Anika in the semis at CCI. A sixth standard student at Bombay Scottish she finds the teachers and principal's encouragement a boost. She gets emotional when one mentions about her getting the Raju Chainani award for the most promising junior. "Raju uncle and I were very close since I was eight years old. Especially on the coaching tours of Malaysia. We spent a lot of time talking. We would talk twice a day. He was a great guide for me." Sachika acknowledges the support of her parents but above all she hails her brother Ishaan as her hero. "I began playing thanks to him, without him I would not have achieved what I have." At the CCI, Sachika won the under-15 title but lost the under-13.

She says Anika is a good player and she had no regrets losing to her as she didn't focus enough. But in the under-15 final she learnt from her mistakes. "I knew she was not good in the front court and capitalized on that." In the under-13 she says "I was just producing my natural game." About the future she does not mind making sports her career. She wants to get the backhand to the right length. Her idols are Peter Marshall (whose double handed backhand she copies) and among Indians Alisha Mashruwalla and Joshna Chinappa.

"Joshna's made squash fraternity proud", she says.

TECHNICAL ADVICE ON SQUASH COURT FLOORS

It has come to our notice that some companies constructing Squash Courts are providing a finish to the floors that is not suitable for Indian conditions. Therefore, we feel obliged to provide relevant information to those considering getting new Squash Courts built. Ideally this information ought to be provided by the constructing companies, so that the clients can make an educated choice.

While 'finishing' wooden floors, specifications abroad provide for 'sealing' the floor with a 'sealant'. This is useful for preventing moisture seeping into the wood, thereby preventing discolouration and warping. The sealant leaves a smooth and glossy surface. However, the clients need to be informed that in India, there is enough dust in the atmosphere, even in air-conditioned premises, to leave the glossy surface slippery. Players struggle to find 'grip' and balance, and the ball 'shoots' i.e., it skids on contact with the floor. This makes it impossible to play quality Squash.

Therefore, it is best to leave the floor 'unsealed' - i.e. with the wood grain 'open'. Discolouration which occurs over time can be removed by hand sanding, generally required not before a year or more. Seasoned wood will not warp in Indian conditions. Should clients still choose to seal the wood, it will require regular and painstaking cleaning with a thinner to get anywhere near optimum playing conditions.

MANEK MATHUR PROPELS TRINITY TO TITLE (24/2/06)

BY PRADEEP YLIAJAKAR

Manek Mathur made a mark as a freshman for Trinity which won the US collegiate squash title for a record 8th year in a row. In the final they beat Princeton 5-4. Trinity were down 1-3 when Manek playing at No 5 won a close game against Nate Beck. That inspired his teammates to go on and finish off the aspirations of the challengers. Sahil Vora was another Indian who played for Trinity but he lost his game. An expert, Eric Wadhwa, was also on the winning mode at No 9 a dead rubber. Cyrus Appoo, son of Capt Jamshed Appoo was also on the Trinity team playing preliminary games.

Trinity, which has won 144 ties in a row and haven't lost since 1998. Bernardo Samper had been Trinity's star last year. For Sahil, it was the second time he tasted victory. Last year top Indian player Siddharth Suchde had finished on the losing Harvard side. This year too Harvard lost in the semis, but Suchde's show indicates he is favourite for the individual title. Mathur earned praise for being one of three freshmen who brought victory for Trinity. Mathur pulled out a marathon victory over Nate Beck to open the 2-1 lead. Mathur had several match-balls and an 8-4 lead in the third game, but Beck rallied all the way back to force a fourth game.

RESULTS

Scores of final Indian Players:

Sahil Vora lost to Hesham el Halaby 2-3

Manek Mathur bt Nate Beck 3-1

Apparently, our squash courts are causing quite a racket



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MSSA-ISP SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP (11/02/06)

Inaugural MSSA-ISP Squash Championship



At the prize distribution function from left to right : Joginder Singh, A.I.Singh, Abraham Toulse (Basketball Secy MSSA) Sarason Sequiera (Squash Secy MSSA), Sarjey Goyal (Soc. General, ISP), Shaji Kuttiani (Secy General MSSA), Ashish Gupta (President, ISP), Rizaz Mohd. and in front row: Aviroop Ghosal, Caran Arora, Pranay Merchant

Squash in Mumbai has taken a big step forward. An opportunity for the base of School children to take up Squash has arisen with Mumbai School Sports Association (MSSA) including Squash as its 19th discipline. MSSA is amongst the oldest associations in the world, with 113 years of efforts in promoting sports in schools.

With the initiative of Pradeep Vijaykar, MSSA and SRAM collaborated to organize the first Inier School Squash Tournament at the cricket Club of India from 8 to 11 February. ISP conducted the tournament. Twelve schools sent about 90 entries, and these numbers will rise with the plans for next tournaments already taking shape. Henceforth, the tournament will be conducted in the first week of February every year. There are plans to create a points system to enable positions to be determined for participating Schools.

In the tournament, Viraj Nayar and Saumya Karki emerged as vastly improved players. They won their respective event- Boys Under-15 and Girls Under-13. Abhishek Pradhan asserted his dominance over Mahesh Mangaonkar in the Boys Under-13 event, by defeating him again in five sets, making up from 1-6 in the fifth game. Ishan Advani won the Boys Under-11 title.

RESULTS

Boys under -11 and 9 years:

Ishan Advani (Cathedral & John Connon) bt Arjun Kochhar (Cathedral & John Connon) Score : 11-9, 11-2, 11-3.

Third Place: Aviroop Ghosal (Hiranandani Foundation).

Boys under-13:

Abhishek Pradhan (Don Bosco, Borivali) bt Mahesh Mangaonkar (Don Bosco, Borivali) Score : 11-7, 6-11, 9-11, 11-8, 11-8.

Third Place : Caran Arora (Cathedral & John Connon).

Boys under-15:

Viraj Nayar (Bombay International) bt Ness Billimoria (St.

Mary's ICSE) Score : 11-8, 11-9, 11-6.

Third Place: Pranay Merchant (Bombay International).

Girls under-13 and 11:

Sourmya Karki (Hiranandani Foundation) bt Anikita Sharma (A.V.M, Juhu) Score : 11-8, 11-4, 10-11, 11-4.

Third Place: Sachika Balvani (Bombay Scottish)

MADHU WELINGKAR - A LIFETIME IN SQUASH

PRADEEP VIJAYAKAR writes about Madhu Welinkar who broad-based squash in Georgetown Guyana and on coming home, has coached three generations of kids in Mumbai



Madhu Welinkar

At 76, he must be among the oldest active squash coaches in the country. That's Madhu Welinkar, who continues to teach young and old at the Willingdon Sports Club Mahalaxmi after being with the Cricket Club of India Academy for a long time.

Welinkar's squash saga began in West Indies where he was working as a structural engineer after having studied in the U.K. "I was member of the Georgetown Club in Guyana where I used to play squash. I began coaching youngsters there. I convinced them to have an additional court and I got it built back-to-back. But the attitudes towards juniors were the same as world over. The seniors wanted to play mornings and evenings kids could play only during off-peak hours. I got that set right having coaching on weekends. The Georgetown Cricket Club was next door. West Indies cricket stars Clive Lloyd and Roy Fredericks would come and play squash for fitness in between tours. They wanted their cricket club to have courts. So I got them built there. There was a Lindon Town Club a few kilometres away. I had another court built there. So in a short span there were four courts where there was just one earlier. A lot of youngsters came up from my coaching schemes so much so that the Guyana team of under-19 was the champion side in the south Caribbean." Welinkar came back to his roots, Mumbai and India, in 1948. "Naval Pandole suggested I coach the kids at the CCI. I agreed. I had done Level I in England but could not take the advanced degrees. The kids liked my approach." Welinkar has been coaching for over 17 years at the CCI. Among the players he has guided are Siddharth Suchde, the Vora kids--Sahil, Rushab and Mihir Sheth. Among the girls Alisha Mashruwalla, Rachita Vora, the Madraswalla girls are names that come to mind. Plus he has helped middle-aged players take to the game. "Their problems are different, one has to iron out the flaws and get them back to the basics so that they don't get injured because of faulty technique."

Welinkar's daughter, Rama, played at National level, reaching the finals of big events. She has gone to the U.K. Asked about Indian kids not playing the basic game and playing too many boasts and cross-courts, Welinkar says, "I agree. Indians have a greater flair for squash and like to play strokes. But today's game has changed. The racquets have changed. You need to hit the ball faster. Our kids play on hot courts where the ball does not die easily. When they go and play on air-conditioned courts they find the ball doesn't come more than 4-5 inches high and are in trouble. They have to be taught to expect this."

Mumbai had a shortage of coaches. One hopes the wisdom of Madhu Welinkar is used by a lot more kids than just those at Willingdon.

THE CLUB - ISP SQUASH CLASSIC (18/02/2006)
(MEN'S TOP 16, HANDICAP DOUBLES, JUNIORS U-15 / 19)


At the prize distribution ceremony from L to R standing : Dhiraj Nagpal (Winner, Mens Top 16), Aakash Borvankar (Winner, Boys U-15), Cyrus Vakli (Winner Boys U-19), Tushar Bambani & Mohammad Merchant (Winner, Doubles open), from L to R bottom Shiv Malhotra, Tushar Khanna (Director, The Club), Dinesh Khanna (M.D., The Club), Khalid A-H. Ansari (Chairman Emeritus, SRAM), Srikant Ruparel (Sr. Vice President, SRAM), Mahendra Agarwal (Director, ISP)

Following the inaugural MSSA Squash tournament, another first was scored when The Club organised its inaugural Squash tournament from 14 to 18 February.

This was the first time that The Club organized an Open Tournament within its premises, and it was remarkable that they chose squash as the discipline to make their debut.

The Club is one of the most prestigious properties, and its memberships are amongst the most sought after in the city. It is built over an area of 8 acres, it has 5 tennis courts, 2 swimming pools, health club, table tennis, bowling alley, fully equipped gymnasium and 2 fantastic glass back air-conditioned squash courts.

This was the 65th Tournament of the Indian Squash Professionals comprising of four categories, Juniors U-15, Juniors U-19, Invitational Top 16 and a Doubles Handicap. Over 180 entries were received. This was one of the most enjoyable tournaments, with participants, especially the juniors, being well looked after. The hospitality of The Club officials was outstanding and of very high standards. An interesting fact noted by several (delighted) participants was that this was the only tournament where lost belongings were actually found and returned to the owners!

As for the matches, there were plenty of riveting action! 'Old hands' Tushar Bhambani and Mohd. Merchant proved that they are the established masters of Handicap Doubles when they followed up on their win in the last such event at MCCC. Dhiraj Nagpal got his first taste of victory in the Men's section when he beat Neeraj Shirgaonkar in a tense five-setter. Akash Borvankar continued to display his improved Squash

when he beat another eager beaver- Pranay Merchant. Cyrus Vakli, now turning towards TV starcom demonstrated he is still the ultimate showman in Squash with his hilarious antics in the U-19 final, beating an upcoming Prateek Zaveri. Parnay Merchant and Viraj Nayar showed skill well beyond their tender years through their coordinated and lightning fast reflexes throughout the doubles event. Sidharth Samantray did well to knock out the more experienced Harjinder Singh from the Top-16 event.

RESULTS
Finals :

Top 16 : Dheeraj Nagpal bt Neeraj Shirgaonkar 3-11,11-8,7-11,11-8, 11-8

Boys U-19: Cyrus Vakli bt Prateek Zaveri 11-6, 12-10, 11-7

Boys U-15: Aakash Borvankar bt Pranay Merchant 11-3, 11-6, 12-11, 11-3

Handicap Doubles: Tushar Bhambani/Mohd Merchant bt Gopi mohite/Sunil Laichandani 15-12, 17-16.

Semi Finals:
Top 16 :

Dheeraj Nagpal bt A. I. Singh 11-4,11-3, 11-5;

Neeraj Shirgaonkar bt Sachin Jadhav 11-8, 11-5, 11-6.

Boys U-19:

Cyrus Vakli bt Sachin Ugade 11-9, 11-8,11-9;

Prateek Zaveri bt Aditya Grover 11-3, 11-2, 11-5.

Boys U-15 :

Pranay Merchant bt Viraj Nayar 11-1,11-3, 11-8;

Aakash Borvankar bt Ness Bliimoria 12-10,7-11, 11-3, 11-4.

Handicap Doubles:

Sunil Laichandani & Gopi Mohite bt Dheeraj Nagpal & Vijay Waghela 15-17, 17-14, 15-12;

Tushar Banbani & Mohammad Merchant bt Rajesh Rajani & Mahesh Chandani 9-15, 15-13, 15-9.



Khalid A-H. Ansari receiving bouquet from Dinesh Khanna (M.D. The Club) along with Shweta Bapat (Health Zone Manager, The Club)



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"THREE DECADES OF SERVICE TO SERVICES SQUASH".

Kishanlal Passi

Kishanlal Passi is the driving force of the Squash success which the Services players have attained in the past several years as individuals and as the Services Team in the Inter State National Championships. Illustrious players such as Arjan Singh-Ex National Champion, Anuj Kalia- ranked in National top-8 for over 5 years and the fittest player at the time, Akshay Joshi, Pradeep Singh, Shakti Singh, Rajamani and several other players who won laurels for the Services team had their skills honed by Kishanlal. Prosquash got the modest and reserved professional to reveal a few facts about himself-

Prosquash- How did you get introduced to Squash?

Kishanlal- In 1973, at the age of 23, I was appointed as a Squash Coach on probation for 6 months at National Defence Academy (NDA). Until then, I had not played Squash, since my main games were Badminton and Athletics. Since I was already fit, 400mts being my event, and with a background in Badminton, I took to squash easily, and after 6 months my position was confirmed.

Prosquash- How did you develop your skills as a player and Coach at Squash then?

Kishanlal- For 15 days in a month, I used to visit Mr. Shyamal Verma at the College of Military Engineering (CME). He gave me several tips and excellent guidance. I progressed as a player, ultimately meeting him in the Finals of CCI Western India Open in 1980. I lost. (Kishanlal reveals, for the first time, to Prosquash that he was actually nervous and feeling odd at the fact that he was trying to beat his coach!). Consequently, I improved as a coach as well, and was in a good position to help the cadets develop their skills.

Prosquash- Given that Services has had several National Champions and held the Inter State Title for many years, why has NDA stopped churning out top notch players?

Kishanlal- There might be other reasons, but one of the main factors is that now Cadets are required to participate in all sports. The opportunity to specialize is therefore no longer present.

(Note- An example of how policies of an institute can have unexpected detrimental effects. Rashtriya Indian Military School, Dehradun, prepares a majority of Cadets for NDA, and generally follows policies of NDA consequently. While many good players in the Services emerged from RIMC earlier, after Shakti Singh there are none presently or even on the horizon. Another policy aimed at excellence which could be useful here is one which makes 'Jacks of all trades, masters of one'.)

Prosquash- Tell us about your playing experiences?

Kishanlal- I've been Runner Up at the CCI Western India Open twice in the Pro event in 1980 and 1981, and several times in the Over 45 event. I've won several Titles in O-50 and O-55 event, including the Over 50 National Title in 2003 at Calcutta. In addition to Squash, I have pursued Tennis as well (my appointment in NDA was for coaching Squash and Tennis). I reached the Quarter Final of an ITF ranking tournament- Rajabhao Ranade Memorial Veteran Tennis Championship held at the Deccan Gymkhana Pune in November 2005! This was in the Over-55 event.

KARM KUMAR- DELHI'S SQUASH TALENT

Karm Kumar is a performer. His reserved mannerism is as deceptive as his squash shots, since hidden beneath is a determined and gritty fighter. A student of Shri Ram School DLF, he has accumulated a wealth of results at just 14 years of age. Coached by his Father Rahul Kumar, he now aims to make his mark in international events and is looking for a sponsor for the same.



Karm Kumar

Some of his major results-

- ✓ Delhi Open 2002- Semi Finalist U-11
- ✓ 10th DDA Open Tournament 2003- Runner-Up U-13
- ✓ Indian Junior Squash Open 2003, Pune- Runner-Up U-13
- ✓ Delhi Open Juniors 2004- Finalist U-13
- ✓ DDA Open 2004- Finalist U-13
- ✓ Indian Oil Open 2004- Semi Finalist U-13
- ✓ All India School Championships 2004- 3rd Position U-13
- ✓ Northern India Squash Champ 2004- Semi Finalist U-13
- ✓ Natalia SRFI Grand Final 2004, Pune- Runner Up U-13
- ✓ Rajasthan Open 2005- WINNER U-1
- ✓ Northern India 2005- Runner up U-15
- ✓ DDA Open 2005- WINNER U-15
- ✓ DDA Open 2005- Quarter Finalist U-17
- ✓ Junior Nationals Championships 2005- 4th U-15
- ✓ 62nd CCI Western India 2005- WINNER U-15
- ✓ 62nd CCI Western India 2005- Quarter Finalist U-17

DEERAV MOOLANI WINS U-15 TITLE AT PUNE

Deerav Moolani

Deerav Moolani who is a class IX student of Bishops School, is training at the Residency Club with Poona Squash Academy. In a tournament held at Poona Club Squash Courts from 7th January 11th January 2006, Deerav Moolani beat Rohan Vora in straight games 3-0. The scores were 9-3, 9-1, 10-9.

Deerav was unstoppable in the first two games winning them 9-3, 9-1. He showed excellent

court coverage and awareness and troubled Vora who was slow off the blocks. In the third game Vora gave stiff resistance against Moolani, but couldn't prevent him winning the game 10-9.

Deerav Moolani, who is Class IX student of Bishops School, started playing squash. He is coaching at Residency Club with Poona Squash Academy.

NRI WILLING TO BACK SQUASH

Ashish Law is a Squash enthusiast based in Los Angeles. He took great initiative to get Joshna Chinappa across to Los Angeles Athletic Club (LAAC) to play a PSA event. Prosquash is delighted to present an interview with him.

How did the project of getting Joshna to play at LA come about, and how did you come to know of Joshna Chinappa in the first place?

First of all, thanks to everybody who helped make this project successful. The contributions came from my friends in LA where I am settled, and also from friends in other parts of US. The squash pro at my club-LAAC has bent over backwards for bringing Josh to the club. LAAC is a premier sports club and some of the best squash players in the state of California play at this club. We are fortunate to see and learn from these players.

Joshna has done incredibly well as a junior squash player. The Indian government has acknowledged her accomplishments by appointing her as a brand ambassador. The Mittal Champions Trust has placed her at the top of their list, despite the fact that squash is not as popular as cricket or tennis. With so much action, it is unlikely for any Indian squash player not to have heard about her! ISP's website also keeps me updated about her latest achievements. She is a fighter on the court, a fine individual, and a role model for all kids of Indian origin.

What benefit will Joshna get from your sponsorship?

At LAAC we had a top ranked Mexican squash player who is currently ranked in the mid 50's in the world. While following his progress, it became clear how difficult it is to rise in the world rankings. In most tournaments, he plays the top seeds in the opening rounds and usually he is eliminated in the qualifying rounds or the first round. Joshna's ranking is also such that it is very difficult to rise in rankings. Based on her position, she probably will get eliminated in the qualifying rounds. With this sponsorship, the idea was to invite her to participate in some low profile professional tournaments and get to higher rounds. That way her rankings will become slightly better so that she starts the mid-level tournaments with a higher seeding. If she does well there, she can start competing at the highest level. At the same time, it is difficult for her parents to send her to every tournament outside the country - expenses quickly add up beyond control. Joshna does her part by toiling at the courts. It is our part to show a little (financial) support so that she can get to these tournaments.

Moreover, while winning a medal at the Asian games or World Cup is satisfying to the billion Indians, for us, it'll be satisfaction at yet another level, because we have made a positive contribution in the achievement, however little.

What's your story...Journey from India to USA? How did you get into squash?

Well, I followed the least-resistant path to the US school in Kolkata, then IIT Kharagpur, then to Columbus (Ohio) for graduate studies, and finally settled in LA with a job. I started playing squash when one of my roommates introduced me to the game. Having played cricket,

field hockey, basketball for my school and college, picking up this new game was not too difficult. I have to thank him for introducing this great game to me. Now I am a very passionate squash player and participate in organizing most tournaments at my club in LA.

What are your future plans for Indian squash? What do you think about ISP, Newsletter "Prosquash", website and our effort of promoting squash?

Staying so far away from India, it is difficult to make plans for Indian squash. In fact I'd like to know how and what NRIs residing in the US can do to promote Indian squash, apart from financial sponsorships. The problem in the US is that squash is not a popular sport, and moreover there are only a handful of Indians who play squash.

Quite frankly, I don't visit the ISP site too often and have missed reading the "Prosquash" newsletter, so I cannot comment on their popularity. From whatever little I know, this is the only squash site that promotes and provides exposure about Indian squash players. It'll be nice to do a little survey among NRIs to get ideas of what can be done at this site!

How many people play squash in your group?

There's an excellent set of squash players at our club and at all levels. The unfortunate part is that I am the only Indian who plays squash at my club. In fact, when I was trying to gather financial support for Joshna, I realized that there are only 3-4 active Indian squash players in the whole state of California!

What is your message to readers of ISP?

I'd like to invite more NRIs residing in the US to take initiative and support rising stars in India. These are our future hopes for winning medals in Asiads and Olympics and World cups. The message goes beyond squash: there are over a million Indians in the US. If every Indian starts allocating a few dollars every year for promoting sports in India, there are infinite ways the funds can be used for raising the bar. This project is a little way to demonstrate that NRIs don't only sit back over a few beers, discuss the problems of India and the US, and analyze why India cannot win a medal at the Olympics. We want to make a positive contribution towards that goal so that the Joshnas and Sanias can rise to the next level and put India in the medals map.

Any future plans to adopt more players from India?

I would love to carry on such kind of sponsorships for other players and for other sports as well. For example, I heard about the 3 year old kid from Orissa who runs marathons, and ought to have his name in the record books. We need to get kids like these to the US and let the Americans take care of the propaganda.

It will be difficult to ask for sponsorship more than once. In Joshna's case, all sponsors are my very close friends and acquaintances, and they mostly contributed this time because they liked the novel idea. But I may not get the same response if I ask them to contribute a second time. I hope that NRIs in other parts of US put similar localized efforts. Another issue is that coordinating such efforts is almost a full time commitment. With already an overfull schedule (job, family, kids' school, etc.) it is difficult to take on such projects on a regular basis. I hope some other sports enthusiast can help me in the future or maybe even form a little NRISA (NRI sports association) for improvement of sports in India.

Best wishes to Josh from all of us during her current US tour and for all future events.



Ashish Law

A HERO AMONGST US



Vikram Kumar Kalludi (Joint Secretary, ISP) receiving bouquet from D.C.M. Shri R.R. Patil along with Shri. A. N. Roy (Commissioner of Police, Mumbai)

ISP and the Squash fraternity are proud to have a hero amongst us - VIKRAM KALLUDI. That he has a heart of gold is well known from the generosity he has shown when sponsoring squash tournaments. What we learnt from the following incident is that he has guts of steel as well!

In a real life incident which appears to have been scripted in Bollywood, a couple of lads dressed in Burkhas looted Vikram Kalludi's jewellery shop. The mastermind of the heist, James Almeida (19) and Jagdish Dahya (19), co-conspirator had planned the robbery well in advance and procured weapons and conducted a visit and recon of the shop- Ashwini Jewellers at Lokhandwala. The plan worked- they managed to hold the shop employees at gunpoint and wipe the shop clean of jewellery worth 80 lakhs. However, luck was not on their side. While trying to escape with the loot in their getaway car stolen earlier, they could not move forward due to a traffic jam. They opted for an alternate road.

Meanwhile, the shop employees called up Kalludi, who lived just down the very road the criminals chose! Kalludi rushed to the road with his revolver and blocked the thieves' path. When they pointed their guns at Kalludi, he shot two rounds at them, injuring Almeida. However, they escaped on foot with some of the loot, while leaving some behind in the car.

Almeida however had to get admitted to Nanavati Hospital for getting his injuries treated. That led to the police finding out that Almeida was responsible for the robbery at Ashwini Jewellers. The loot and weapons were recovered, and the other accomplices in this and other crimes were also rounded up.

Vikram Kalludi was honoured by Deputy Chief Minister R. R. Patil and Police Commissioner A. N. Roy for his courage.

RAJASTHAN OPEN SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP ORGANIZERS MAKE AMENDS

The number of age fudging culprits is on the rise in Indian Squash, thanks to the patronage and encouragement by the governing body. Unable to produce genuine quality players due to its negative attitude, the only way out for the Chennai Federation was to induct players with dubious age and attempt getting some success to show. Obviously, such antics don't work, as there are no substitutes to hard work and positive attitude. Instead, what this actually resulted in was that deserving players

were unfairly denied their positions at tournaments which they would have attained without the age fudgers. As more and more players suffered, SRFI was under pressure to take some face saving measures and have one less front to handle at the courts where cases are going on against it. One such measure was to get age determination tests done on some of the unsuccessful players.

Sujat Barua, one of the recent imports, was found playing in an age group lower than he should have. He 'beat' Karm Kumar at the Rajasthan Open Squash Champion U-15 Final. Now that it is established that there was a discrepancy, not only is Sujat playing U-17 instead of U-15 in all tournaments, but the organizer of the Rajasthan Open are giving the Winners dues to Karm Kumar.

What remains to be seen is for how many decades Parthiban can maintain his 'Junior' status. His patron is not disputing that there is fudging in his date of birth, and even his name. One instance on record is that even though he was not doing anything remarkable in the Under-15 age group, he played Under-17 at the 2002 Maharashtra Open (and lost to Imran Khan) EVEN THOUGH HE WAS UNDER-15????? We know that his date of birth was changed from 11/12/1986 to 11/12/1987. If he were in the class of Adrian Ezra, Joshna Chinappa etc, one could justify his playing in higher age groups having won all there was to win in the actual age group. There are many instances where Parthiban has been confused about what age group to play in. Moreover, his entries to tournaments in Mumbai have always come without his date of birth.

By the way, there is a SRFI's blue-eyed coach who has apparently been confused about his age! More on this as soon as the procedure against him is completed!

COMMONWEALTH GAMES RESULTS

Men's Singles- England's Peter Nicol claimed his second Commonwealth Games Squash Singles gold medal after defeating Australia's top seed David Palmer in four thrilling games. 9-5 10-8-4-9-2.

Women's Singles- Australia's Natalie Grinham triumphed in the battle of the 'Squash Sisters' when she defeated her sister Rachael to win gold in the Women's Singles Squash final. Rachael, the Manchester bronze medallist and winner of the 2006 Australian Open in January had to settle for silver. 6-9, 1-9, 6-9

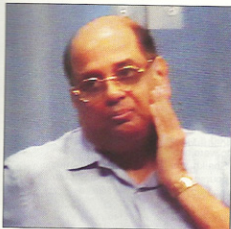
Men's Doubles- Squash duo Peter Nicol and Lee Beachill of England won gold in a fiery Men's Doubles Final against Australia's Stewart Boswell and Anthony Ricketts. 7-9, 9-7, 9-1, 10-8.

Women's Doubles- Australian sisters Natalie and Rachael Grinham won gold in the Women's Doubles Squash match, and have each won a medal in the Mixed Doubles, after they earlier won gold and silver respectively in the Women's Singles. They beat Shelly Kitchen and Tamsyn Leevy (NZ) 1-9, 9-1, 4-9, 9-3, 9-3.

In Mixed Doubles, Australia's Natalie Grinham and Joseph Kneipp took the gold medal after they defeated the No. 4 seeds, England's Vicky Botwright and James Willstrop. Natalie Grinham and Kneipp lost the first game to England 6-9 but came back very well in the following three games, 9-6, 9-5 and 9-6.

This is one of the greatest achievements for Kneipp's. He was one of the first foreigners amongst those still playing professional Squash to play in India, when he played in the Punjab open in 1989 at NIS Patiala. He was 15 then, and beat Pradeep Singh to win the Junior Title, and later that day almost beat the then India No-2 Ravinder Malik in the Men's Open final!

SRFI - AT IT AGAIN!



SRFI Chief - N. Ramachandran

Squash Rackets Federation of India (SRFI) Secretary General Mr. N. Ramachandran was certainly keen and interested that India is prominently represented, (officially or not) at the Commonwealth Games being held at Melbourne. But not by the players! By himself. While he was enjoying the games, the Squash fraternity back home was utterly disgusted at being left out for the second time. Last time, Mr. Ramachandran felt

that Indians were not good enough to be sent and no team was fielded. This time, he has refrained from commenting. We know though that as far as Joshna Chinappa is concerned, Mr. Ramachandran is on vindictive spree, as he himself indicated in an article in 'The Hindu' (which can be seen on www.ipsquash.com website). He kept her out of the Indian Team at the recent Asian Championships and fielded lesser players, and is now facing the music at the Chennai High Court for his antics disastrous for the players and the sport.

Such is the height of his audacity, that he has even sidelined the Government of India Observer for Squash. The first clause of the Roles and Responsibilities stipulated by the GOI for the observer states that the Observer should be involved with the selection process. While the previous Observer, Bhuvaneshwari Kumari was simultaneously an executive committee member of SRFI and hence redundant, SRFI ought to have involved Brigadier Raj Manchanda simply out of sheer respect for his stature, leave aside any GOI stipulation. Such disregard says it all about the attitude and motives of Mr. Ramachandran. Naturally, such tactics leave the country's representation in international events woefully at an individual's autocratic whims, be it Asian Championships, Commonwealth games or forthcoming selections in World Junior Open and other events.

STOP PRESS

While editing this article, Mr. Ramachandran has in fact gone ahead and admitted on NDTV that he did not send players to the Commonwealth Games because he feared if they lost in the 1st or 2nd rounds, he would be taken to task for wasting government money!

It is believed that he went to Melbourne in his capacity as President of the Indian Triathlon Federation (which is against GOI guidelines as one person may not hold office in two federations). We would like to know how many medal the Indians won in Triathlon. NONE! Going by Mr. Ramachandran's unique wisdom, only this times Commonwealth medal winners should be present in the next event at Delhi in 2010. In our limited wisdom, Mr. Ramachandran deserves a platinum medal simply for making such hilarious comments!

Nevertheless, we tried contacting him as well as his subordinates, hoping to find out why the Women's team at the Asian Championships in February 2006 did not consist of Joshna, Mekhla, and Deepali if medals are so keenly sought? How come the

only noteworthy player in it was Dipika Pallikal? And for the individual event, how does Mr. Ramachandran's wisdom justify sending A/M ? Parthiban (who lost in that fearsome 2nd round!), Naresh Kumar (who lost in that dreaded 1st round!!), while making Junior National Champion Sandeep Jangra sit at home, Harita Omprakash, Anvesha Reddy and Surbhi Mishra (All out in 1st round). As for saving Government money, Mr. Ramachandran seems to have done a fine job of it over the last few years- we hear there is an enquiry coming his way shortly!

Our best efforts to contact office bearers of SRFI failed as they remained unreachable.

India's first and only dedicated Professional player, Ritwik Bhattacharya was World Doubles Runner Up with Saurav Ghosal at the championships held at Chennai in 2004. A doubles team event was conducted at the Commonwealth Games. Joshna is the current world Junior No.-2 player, and Mixed Doubles events are being held as well. If Ramachandran is really capable of applying his mind positively, it isn't too difficult to figure out that Ritwik, Saurav and Joshna ought to have been sent. Besides, there were several other players who deserved to participate in the Individual event. That would have meant a justified and worthy representation for the Country's Squash. Our medal prospects were certainly higher than most other sports that have sent contingents. Even Mr. Jahangir Khan, President of the World Squash Federation, commented to 'The Week' magazine that Saurav and Ritwik stood a chance, and he had seen Joshna play and found her to be a good player.

Wondering for how long players will represent the country when the powers that be desire, and be dumped when they don't, we asked Ritwik and Joshna for their final comments while we prepare this article. Ritwik said he didn't want to dwell on the issue any further. 'I don't think there is much percentage in carrying this issue on. I'm more interested in working on my game. I want to spend the bulk of my energies on propelling my game forward and do what I love - Play'. Joshna regrets that due to SRFI's vendetta against her, Ritwik and Saurav lost out on their chance to represent India. With an 'old head on young shoulders', she said: "The whole fraternity of squash has to get their act together and do something as well".

Joshna has moved the Chennai High Court over the issue, and we eagerly wait to see how well Ramachandran's argument about chickening out for fear of not getting medals goes down with the court.

MAHARASHTRA TOP 8 INVITATION SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP

Indian Squash Professionals have announced yet another tournament, the Maharashtra Top 8 Invitation Squash Championship adding to the busy schedule of the Maharashtra Squash Calendar. The newly elected President of ISP, Mr. Ashish Gupta sounded very enthusiastic about the tournament which would determine the Top 8 players of Maharashtra. The tournament would be played for the first time on a Swiss draw format which would have all the participating players competing till the last day of the tournament. Manish Chotrani, Vikas Jangra, Supreet Singh, Sandeep Jangra, Vikram Malhotra, Rohan Gracias, Dheeraj Nagpal and Sidharth Samantray will be vying for top honors at this years championship. A similar tournament for junior players would also be introduced in time he added.

The first edition of these championships will be hosted by the Otters Club, Bandra between 6th to 8th April 2006.

Bombay squash gets a Shaikh-up



Raju Chainani along with Meherwan Daruwalla, Arif Paul, Akhil Behl and Asthana Brothers

Billimoria, the recently elected SRAM President, swung into action. The results will no doubt speak for themselves. The bureaucratic babus in the office are still going through the motions of preparing a file to put up a similar case. Perhaps, their plan will materialise at some stage by which time the next door paanwallah would be offering them free home delivery.

It is no secret that an attempt was made by the SRFI last year to have the Malaysian national coach, Major S. Maniam to conduct a clinic like the one Abdul Shaikh has just completed. But, thanks to our Delhi babu, it never came about. He was trying to avail of Maniam's services free of cost by using the Asian Squash Federation umbrella. He even announced dates of the course. If only he had offered to pay for Maniam's air-ticket and even a professional fee, he would probably have succeeded with his plans. But, as Kipling suggested, "If can be a very big word."

At the end of the day, something positive has happened in Bombay. People like Abdul Shaikh are one in a million. They want to give something back to the sport. They have no interest in the mysterious goings-on which have made Bombay squash famous. Their approach is direct and it achieves results.

Bombay Gymkhana had provided the courts free of charge. They need to be complimented for this and hopefully some other clubs in the metropolis will realise that such gestures help in developing the game. Meherwan Daruwalla and Cyrus Poncha, who were part of the course, are starting a coaching clinic for juniors from Monday 24th. At Rs. 300 per junior per month, it's a steal. So it does look like something good has come about from Abdul Shaikh's presence.

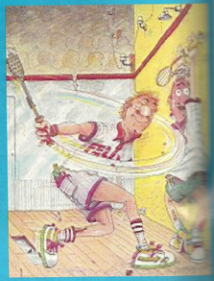
On Sunday evening there was a farewell dinner for Shaikh. The ambience was very good. Everybody was talking to everybody. Squash's famous couple, affectionately nicknamed "Beaky Nose and Thunderwoman" were conspicuous by their absence. Ramdas Kamat, the former SRAM Vice-President and elder statesman of the game, was a generous host. Even Harry Singh was there and as he floated around, it was obvious that he was relaxing. The speeches were short, the kebabs superb and for Abdul Shaikh, there was a small present Deepika Chandratreya did the honours. "To Sir, with love."

He came, he taught, he commanded respect. At the end of his clinic, Indian squash has ten more level-two coaches. Previously only Ananth Nayak and Yogendra Singh had such claim to fame. Now we have India's first qualified ladies coach in Deepika Chandratreya. Amongst the men, there's Fall Madon and Meherwan Daruwalla. Can anybody dare question their credentials? Even the designer-nosed former officials will have to bow to that Abdul Shaikh was slightly apprehensive at the start of his coaching clinic. But, as the week progressed, there developed a splendid working relationship with the nine men and one lady who were aspiring to become qualified coaches. This was no holiday for Shaikh who had flown down specially from Vancouver to conduct the course. He's coming back in September when his services are likely to be shared by Bombay and Madras.

Last Saturday, Bombay's club professionals joined in. They were shown the ropes by the newly qualified coaches with Abdul Shaikh acting as the Master of Ceremonies. This was practical, hands-on experience for the likes of Rajdeep Brar and Milan Khurana, the two representatives from the Services. Rajiv Reddy, who had come down from Madras for the clinic was most impressed. It was enough for him to suggest that the maestro's should visit Madras next time round.

For the last couple of years, the Squash Rackets Federation of India have had a topsy turvy programme, far from planned and punctuated by bungling officialdom. The need for somebody like Abdul Shaikh was on the anvil. Whilst some people were still thinking about it, Kalyan

Squash Humour



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POWER QUITS AT TOP



Jonathan Power

World no.1 Jonathon Power quits after exiting in quarters of Tournament of Champions just days after regaining his world no.1 status, a ranking he first held in July 1999, Jonathon Power has announced his retirement. He was the mercurial racket genius of his age-controversial, funny, exasperating, entertaining and brilliant with a racket in his hand and a ball to hit. He won the World Open in 1998 in Qatar, the Commonwealth Games Gold medal in 2002 and the British Open in 1999.

Power announced his retirement from the professional squash tour at the Tournament of Champions in New York. He will now assume the role of president of Squash Power LLC, an integrated squash

marketing and development company dedicated to growing the sport.

A legend in his sport, Power started playing squash at the age of 7 on the Canadian military base where his father was director of athletics. Since turning pro at age 16, he has won 32 Professional Squash Association Tour titles. Jonathon is the most successful North American player ever.

"Retiring has been a very difficult decision for me," said Power, "but I recognize that with my health being strong, I can use this next phase of my life as an active ambassador and catalyst for the growth of squash." Power will assume the position of president of SquashPower on April 1st 2006

About SquashPower

Founded in November, 2005, SquashPower, LLC, is an integrated squash marketing and development company headed by the current world # 1 squash professional, Jonathon Power. SquashPower is dedicated to ensuring the growth in youth and adult squash by focusing on education, competitive growth and player empowerment. For additional information please visit www.squashpower.com

source: squashplayer magazine

BUSA FINALS IN BIRMINGHAM

(05/02/2006)



Saurav Ghosal

I was a Leeds double at the BUSA finals in Birmingham, as Saurav Ghosal lived up to his top billing with a straight games win over Loughborough's Jethro Binns in the men's final, and Lauren Siddall reversed the result of the 2005 final with a five-game victory over Nottingham's defending champion Emma Beddoes.

RESULTS

Men's A Final :
Saurav Ghosal bt Jethro Binns 9/5,
9/2, 9/4

Women's A Final:
Lauren Siddall bt Emma Beddoes
8/9, 9/6, 9/1, 2/9, 9/1

INTERNATIONAL RESULTS

09/01/2006

WSF WORLD DOUBLES SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS
Men's : Anthony Rickotts & Stewart Boswell (AUS) bt [2] Dan Jensen & Joseph Kneipp (AUS) 7-9, 4-9, 9-4, 9-7, 9-5
Women's : [3/4] Shelley Kitchen & Tamsyn Leevey (NZL) bt [5/8] Robyn Cooper & Sarah Fitz-Gerald (AUS) 9-6, 10-8, 9-6

09/01/2006

Australian Open, Melbourne Sports & Aquatic Centre, Australia
Anthony Ricketts bt David Palmer 11-9, 11-8, 11-9

01/02/2006

Davenport Virginia Professional Squash Championship, USA
John White (SCO) bt Adrian Grant (ENG) 11-9, 11-6, 11-9

13/02/2006

BULER CHALLENGE CUP, Hong Kong
Bilal Zaman (PAK) bt Chris Ryder (ENG) 4-11, 11-9, 8-11, 11-10 (2-0), 11-8

21/02/2006

ASIAN SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS, Taiwan
Ong Beng Hee (MAS) bt Mohd Azlan I. (MAS) 9-2, 9-4, 10-8

21/02/2006

FRENCH JUNIOR OPEN SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIPS, France
Camille Serme (FRA) bt Soraya Renai (FRA) 9-5, 6-9, 10-8, 9-7

04/03/2006

SWISS OPEN, Switzerland
Omar Abdel Aziz (EGY) bt Jesse Engelbrecht 11-6, 11-2, 11-4

MENS RANKING MARCH 2006

POS	PLAYER	FROM	LAST POS
1 ↑	JONATHON POWER	CAN	2
2 ↓	DAVID PALMER	AUS	1
3 ↑	AMR SHABANA	EGY	3
4 ↑	THIERRY LINCOU	FRA	5
5 ↑	JAMES WILLSTROP	ENG	6
6 ↓	ANTHONY RICKETTS	AUS	4
7	PETER NICOL	ENG	7
8	LEE BEACHILL	ENG	8
9 ↑	JOHN WHITE	SCO	10
10 ↓	NICK MATTHEW	ENG	9

WOMENS RANKING MARCH 2006

POS	PLAYER	FROM	LAST POS
1	NICOL DAVID	MAS	1
2	VANESSA ATKINSON	NED	2
3	RACHAEL GRINHAM	AUS	3
4	NATALIE GRINHAM	AUS	4
5	VICKY BOTWRIGHT	ENG	5
6	NATALIE GRAINGER	USA	7
7	JENNY DUNCALF	ENG	8
8 ↓	LINDA ELRIANI	ENG	6
9 ↑	MADELINE PERRY	IRL	10
10 ↓	TANIA BAILEY	ENG	9

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FORTHCOMING TOURNAMENTS AND EVENTS

-  **KG-NECC Mumbai Open Squash Championship 2006 :** 8th to 12th April 2006, at Khar Gymkhana, Mumbai
-  **Penang International Junior championship :** 27th to 30th May 2006 at Malaysia
-  **Maharashtra Top 8 Invitational Squash Championship :** 6th to 8th April 2006 at Otters Club, Bandra
-  **Raju Chainani free Squash Coaching camp in Mumbai :** 24th April to 21st May 2006.
-  **Juhu Gymkhana handicap doubles :** 12th to 14th April 2006.
-  **Mlio All Star Junior Squash Championship :** 31st May to 4th June at Malaysia

Editorial Board: Mahendra Agarwal / Bruno Goveas / Noreena / Amitoj Singh / Vidya Rao

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