

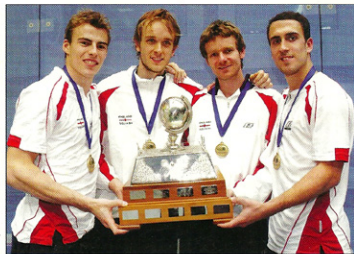
PROSQUASH

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WORLD MENS OPEN 2007

Up close to a world class event



Winning Australian team with their trophies

won for self, the World Open in Bermuda. But the news is not good in the Egypt camp. One feels sorry for them. No 2 Ramy Ashour is not playing, No 8 Wael El Hindi has a hip problem lost in the second round at Bermuda. No 5 Karim Darwish is having calf problems.

At the noon press conference one meets the players and officials. Indian players are hoping they play Holland rather than Wales in the knockout. Ritwik has beaten the Dutch No 2 Dylan.

In the evening opening ceremony, Mej Maniam the anchor, has the audience in splits with his jokes. He introduces all teams. Raja Randhir Singh, of the IOA, promises help to squash to get into the Olympics.

December 6 : India get off to a good start, beating Bermuda. The best two of Bermuda haven't come couldn't get time off as they spent it during the World Open they hosted. Egypt struggle against Finland. Mohammed Abbas and Amr Shabana drop a game to Henrik Mustonen and Ollie Tuominen who plays really well and recalls how he beat Amr in an u-14 event.

December 7 : It's India vs Pakistan in squash, always an unequal battle. But India have narrowed the gap. Farhan Mehboob is a notorious bad starter, drops a game to Siddharth Suchde. Sid doesn't finish the rallies Mehboob gets the chance

Pradeep Vijayakar's World Team Squash diary.

December 4 : On arrival at Chennai I check in at Presidency Club and rush to the Taj Connemara Hotel where one group of players is staying. One meets the local officials. Then one looks for the world champ Amr Shabana. Always best to start with a bang. One calls Amr. He is going out with his team for dinner, can I come at 11.30 p.m.? Isn't that late. I tell him next day 10.30 a.m.

December 5 : At 10.30 one meets Amr in room 405. It's a mess, I manage to get space on the sofa. He talks about getting stable, two back-to-back world events. But he wants to win it for his country having



Pradeep Vijayakar

Contd...2



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At the World Mens Open from L to R: Siddharth Suchde, Ritwik Bhattacharya, Saurav Ghosal and Gaurav Nanaraj

to finish and he wins the next three. Then comes the best match of all Saurav Ghosal vs Amir Atlas both fit players very mobile play all strokes play length the works. They beat each other at the Junior Asians here in 2005. Saurav is down match point and slips and there is a break. But he comes back stronger wins the next two. But in the decider luck doesn't go his way with some drops going to the tin. Amir wins and India lose 3-0 as Ritwik doesn't match Mansoor Zaman for stroke. One tells Mansoor about meeting his dad Qamar in the 1981 First Asians in Karachi when he was beaten by 18-year-old Jahangir Khan.

December 8 : India beat Kenya 3-0. Kenya have three people of Indian origin and they play good squash especially Hardeep Reel. They don't play much abroad except the Commonwealth Games. Wales beat Holland, which means India will meet Wales not Holland who they wanted to meet.

December 9 : It is knocked out but it's not India that is knocked out but Wales the No 9 seeds. Also Pakistan, seeded higher than India who crash to Holland. It's the greatest day for Indian squash for we have made the last eight and will get our best world placing in 40 years of the World Team Squash. Wales have two men in their late thirties. Ritwik beats David Evans even though he is playing the big points well. Ritwik is inspired by the presence of his parents and friend Neha Dhupia. Saurav Ghosal's youth is to be tested by the experience of Alex Gough, a World Open quarter-finalist. Saurav should have won the first game but loses on extra points. But it is good because Gough has been tired out. He still controls the rallies but loses two games. That's when he packs up with an injured hamstring. India have beaten Wales. It's a great day. Siddharth Suchde keeps the flag flying beating Jethro Binns.

Praise flows for Indian players' achievement. Pakistan coach Fahim Gul says he expected this and salutes Ghosal's reading of the game. He criticizes his own players for their apparent disinterest in doing well. SRFI secretary N Ramachandran announces a bonus of Rs 2.5 lakh to the Indians.

December 10 : India play Egypt in the last eight. World No 8 El Hindi is too good for Ritwik though the Indian tries his best to stay in the match by being on the 'T' which leads to many obstructions. Saurav against the World champ Shabana is a match where the speed of the Egyptian's shots catches Saurav by surprise. But the Indian does send him the wrong way on a couple of occasions. Siddharth Suchde tries his best against Mohammed Abbas but he confesses: "It's a different squash they play. The ball keeps coming back." We are looking in vain for Jonathan Power to play for Canada against Australia but he isn't playing. It's Australia vs Egypt and England vs France in the semis.

December 11 : India, looking for 5-6 positions, are not destined to do it. The strain of the previous days has been too much. They lose 3-0 to Canada even though Jonathan Power isn't playing. Saurav Ghosal does well to beat Shahrir Razik once a top 20 player. Razik, an Egyptian, has a bad record of behaviour and here too he gets a conduct stroke for throwing his racket. He also crashes a chair after Saurav wins the match. But Ritwik and Siddharth Suchde lose their matches.

In the semis, Egypt crash out to Australia. David Palmer beats Shabana with a great display of consistency. Mohammed Abbas proves Egypt's only winner beating Cameron Pilley. Karim Darwish finds Stewart Boswell a tough nut to crack. The fitness level is different between the two, the Aussie fresh till the end.

Just as staleness catches up with Shabana, so also with Gregory Gaultier who is beaten by Nick Mathew of England. Peter Barker No 4 is played ahead of No 3 Lee Beachill and he beats Renan Lavigne with a great display of basic strokeplay. So we will have a Ashes battle in squash.

I have another role to play besides writing. South African lady referee Cecil is being stalked by a European player. She seeks my help as a bodyguard! The stalker gets the message.



Ritwik Bhattacharya (India) v/s David Evans (Wales) at the World Mens Open.



Saurav Ghosal Vs Amir Atlas Khan at the World Mens Open 2007

December 12: It's cup final day. Who will win? England or Australia. The PSA rankings say it will be England who have better ranked players. The final goes as per rankings. David Palmer beats Nick Mathew after the latter reads his game for the greater part. But Palmer's penchant of playing the crucial points well takes him through. James Willstrop, who won the World Junior Open at these courts, beats Stewart Boswell who plays only as well as allowed. In the decider it is Peter Barker playing the crucial tie once again. He keeps it simple and Cameron Pilley is chasing the ball all over the court. Barker wins and so do England. They have reached the top and done the harder thing of staying there. Their support staff is very happy, coach Paul Carter and manager David Pearson have knit the team. No 3 Lee Beachill doesn't mind sitting out. He got the win in 2005 with Willstrop.

India lose to Holland who they thought they could beat. The Dutch are playing the most aggressive and spirited squash of the championship. The Indians have exhausted their reserves, climbing so many peaks isn't so easy.

Egypt also crash to France in the match for No 3 spot. France earn revenge for the 2005 Islamabad semi-final loss.

At the party Egyptian players are missing. The others are all out to have fun. South African Jesse Engelbrecht gets praise for winning 7 out of 7. They are the side to watch out for in future, Coach Richard Castle has a good programme going in Cape Town.

At the prize function Sarah Springman, the International Triathlon Federation president and Els Breda, the international hockey federation vice-president, promise to help squash realize its Olympic dream.

That will take time, at least another nine years. Time enough for Indian squash to work towards the top of the ladder squeezing as many players into the top 20 as possible. All possible provided the squash drain to the American universities is checked and a lucrative circuit beckons young Indians with plenty of corporate and television support.

Several kids and parents have come from Mumbai, Kolkata and Delhi to watch world class squash. Some kids like Mahesh Mangaonkar even got to knock with Greg Gaultier and six-year-old Vir Chotrani with David Palmer. Something must have rubbed off. We hope so.

FINALS :

England bt Australia 2-1:

Nick Mathew lost to David Palmer 9-11, 9-11, 11-7, 11-2, 4-11

James Willstrop bt Stewart Boswell 11-8, 11-7, 12-10

Peter Barker bt Cameron Pilley 11-6, 11-3, 11-8

PLAY-OFF (3-4):

France bt Egypt 2-0:

Gregory Gaultier bt Amr Shabana 11-2, 11-7, 9-11, 11-3

Thierry Lincou bt Wael El Hindi 11-4, 6-11, 11-5, 11-3

PLAY-OFF (5-6):

Malaysia bt Canada 2-1:

Azlan Bin Iskandar bt Shahir Razik 12-10, 13-11

Ong Beng Hee (Mal) bt Mathew Giuffre (Can) 11-7, 11-6, 11-7

PLAY OFF (7-8):

Netherlands bt India 2-0:

Laurens Jan Anjema bt Saurav Ghosal 13-11, 11-4, 11-4

Dylan Bennett bt Ritwik Bhattacharya 11-6, 11-4, 11-7

WORLD CHAMP IS HUNGRY FOR ANOTHER TITLE THIS TIME FOR HIS COUNTRY

Amr Shabana came saw but not conquer at 21st ICL World Men's Team Squash Championship. But he was happy to play in India for the first time. When told about Indian Squash Professionals' helping markers rise in social stature he said it was a great move. Are they rich, he asked. Excerpts from the interview.



Amr Shabana

How did it feel to be in India?

I had been wanting to come every since I heard about the place from people who came for the Mahindra Open in Mumbai. I don't know about Chennai.

What are his thoughts after winning four titles in five weeks?

The third world title is sweetest because I regained it since I last won in 2006. I wasn't surprised at the outcome but it was hard work.

What was the toughest?

The first-round tie against Stewart Boswell. I had to play good squash. I played smart squash, the best of my life.

What's the secret of Egypt's success?

We have had great role models like the late Gamal Awad who could beat Jahangir Khan. We aspire to beat those icons when we grow up. The players are a closely knit group. We have got the mentality for squash and the spontaneity.

What happens when they run into each other?

The one that plays better on that day wins. I have lost to teammates Karim Darwish and Wael Elhendy, not World No 2 Ramy Ashour though. He is injured, I hope God will help him recover soon.

Who are his idols?

Bruce Lee and Michael Jackson.

And in squash?

Any of our greats, like Amir Wagih our current coach. I have seen him

from my youth and respect his knowledge of the sport.

Are you aware of ISP's efforts to help the markers rise in social stature?

No I am happy to receive the ISP brochure. I hope they (markers) become rich.

JUNIOR NATIONAL SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP 2007

Death knell for Indian Squash?

(20/10/2007)

A lot can change in three years in our tiny world of Indian Squash. When the Junior National Championship was held in Ajmer in 2003, it was without doubt the best ever Junior tournament in Indian Squash history, as vouched for by all participants. The atmosphere was electric, with positive cheering from rival states backing their players. The players and parents were enthusiastic. The food stall arranged by the host school was a place for socializing and relaxing. Transport facility between the school and hotels made commuting easy and fun.

In total contrast, the Junior Nationals 2007 was a dull affair. What changed the entire atmosphere into a dull, gloomy and negative pall resembling a condolence meet was the one thing that didn't change- unfair seeding and draws by SRFI. Last time around, amongst other problems, a glaring example of draw fixing was that of Manek Mather (Maharashtra) being seeded below Naresh Kumar (UP/TN). Manek trounced Naresh. This time, the most blatant example was that of seedings of Gunraj Singh above Laxman Joshi, and in such a way that the two wouldn't play each other. Laxman has never lost to Gunraj, and had recently thrashed Gunraj in Jaipur 3-0. When Maharashtra protested, SRFI admitted to their guilt and altered the seeding so that at least the two would play a match. Sure enough, Laxman hammered Gunraj, handing him two games 9-0 each! Apparently, SRFI is trying to prop up Gunraj to admit him in the World Junior 2008 squad since Gunraj's Father is now writing nice letters to SRFI singing their praise! In fact, 'condolence' is an appropriate word here, since SRFI seems

determined to take Indian Squash to its grave. Squash in Chennai is as good as dead- SRFI shot itself in the foot, and the other foot as well, by attempting to promote Squash in Chennai where it felt it could control players to the point of slavery, and turning a blind eye to development of squash in the rest of India. As a result, the feeder routes from where it could force players to migrate to Chennai to be labeled as Tamil Nadu players are gone. The better players originating from Chennai were never given a positive and competitive environment within which to excel, hence there are no indigenous players left there either. Ravi Dixit, the most prominent case of age-fudging, lost to the well deserving Aditya Jagtap. Blue-eyed boy Ramit Tandon lost to Aditya in the Semi final.

Maharashtra does not even bother to send its best players for the state championships. Aditya and Vikram thought it more worthwhile to play the Belgian Junior Open than represent their state. The situation is a far cry from the once vibrant affair that the Inter School Championships were. But since Chennai, or even south India, has no schools where squash is played, SRFI discontinued the event and replaced it with Inter State as it could field teams from TN by importing players. A positive approach would have been to initiate and develop squash in schools in south India.

Soon, prominent imported players like Harinder and Parth will cross over from the Junior category. Ravi is now only good enough to play in Under-13 having lost to Aditya Jagtap. Ramit is probably disillusioned with the hollow promise Chennai holds, no other player is willing to migrate to Chennai, and one wonders what trick SRFI has left. In his reply to A.I.Singh's case, Mr. Ramachandran has stated that he is a State level player. Unless he is referring to an inebriated state, perhaps he could try winning an under-11 title. He would not even have to fudge his age, we will accept his mental age as appropriate for the purpose!

Problems created by SRFI at the Junior Nationals

1. There was no Criteria for seeding in general.
2. Ravi Dixit (TN) played in the U17 category even though he had passed Class 12.
3. Gunraj Singh (RA) was seeded above Laxman Joshi (MAH), even though Gunraj had never beaten Laxman and had just lost to him in the previous SRFI tournament in Ajmer with score 3-0. (SRFI accepted its fault and changed the draw so at least the two played. Gunraj lost, two games being 9-0, 9-0
4. Karan Tharyamal (RAJ) was allowed to play when he has been guilty of furnishing three different proofs of age.
5. Deepak Mishra (DEL) was being allowed to play in the U13 category for the third year in succession.
6. Aditya Khatri (DEL) who's results and record was far superior to Rajat Agarwal (MAH) was seeded behind him in the U11 category. Again, SRFI admitted its mistake and changed the seedings.
7. No criteria for seeding in the U11 category in addition to the above anomaly.
8. Maharashtra players where the seedings were established by the Inter State Order given by the SRAM were given draws which did not conform to their Maharashtra rankings.
9. Tushar Kothari (TN), who has no track record at all has been seeded 5/8 in the U15.
10. No SRFI action w.r.t. Ravi Dixit: the SRAM has furnished contrary evidence to the SRFI already with respect to his age discrepancy.
11. Whether they had collected the proofs of age of all the participants including Dhananjay Singh (MP), Tushar Kothari (TN), all the Dhampur boys, Paramjit Singh(TN), Ravi Dixit(TN), Karan Tharyamal (RAJ), and if so, why were the proofs not made available to us despite requests.
12. If they were going by the Passport, then why was Sujat Barua not allowed to play in the U17 category even though he could according to the passport date of birth.
13. Karm Kumar (DEL) was always being targeted and given bad draws. He has consistently been made to play one of the top two seeds in every SRFI tournament, despite being amongst the top six players. Surely this cannot be a coincidence in early rounds.
14. How the Girls U15 seedings holds. Results of Sachika Balwani, Aparajita, Ankita Sharma were put in perspective.
15. In various draws if placings were made upto 16, no care has been exercised to ensure that the placings are consistent with results over the last 12 month period.
16. We don't have a National Ranking system (that's simple to explain- Mr. Ramachandran can count only till 3).
17. Anaka seeded above Soumya Karki in the Girls U15. Whether the criteria consistent with the other draws could not be explained by SRFI.
18. Even if they allowed Ravi Dixit to play the U17 why was he seeded above Aditya Jagtap is the criteria consistent with the other draws.
19. The top two Chandigarh U15 boys slated to play each other in the first round, as well several other players from same state.

RESULTS

FINALS :

- Boys U-11:** Yohan Pandole (Mah) bt Roshan Kanna (TN) 7-9 10-9-3-2-9;
Boys U-13: Kush Kumar (Del) bt Deepak Mishra (Del) 7-9 8-10 10-9-2-9-1;
Boys U-15: Mahesh Manganekar (Mah) bt Abhishek Pradhan (Mah) 8-10 9-5 9-1 7-9-9-1
Boys U-17: Aditya Jagtap (Mah) bt Ravi Dixit (TN) 4-9 9-4 0-9 9-5 9-3;
Boys U-19: Harinder Pal Singh (TN) bt Parth Sharma (TN) 9-7 3-9 7-9-5 9-7
Girls U-11: Pankhuri Malhotra (Del) bt Adya Advani (Del) 9-1 9-4-9-1;
Girls U-13: Urvashi Joshi (Mah) bt Disha (Raj) 9-0 9-1-9-4;
Girls U-15: Anaka Alankamrny (TN) bt Saumya Karki (Mah) 9-0 9-4-9-6;
Girls U-17: Harita Omprakash (TN) bt Dheeya Somaiya (MP) 4-9 9-3 7-9 9-4 9-0;
Girls U-19: Dipika Pallikal (TN) bt V Anwesha Reddy (TN) 9-7 10-8 9-6

C.C.I. WESTERN INDIA OPEN SQUASH

Ritwik, Joshna retain titles

(18/11/2007)

Top seeds Ritwik Bhattacharya and Joshna Chinappa lived up to their reputations when they retained the Men's Open and Women's titles, respectively, in the 64th CCI-Western India Open Squash Championship, co-sponsored by Lifebuoy, at the CCI.

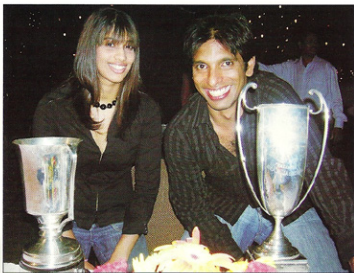
Formidable Bhattacharya showed who is the boss with a 9-7, 9-1, 9-2 triumph over second seed Sandeep Jangra in a final that lasted just 26 minutes.

Bhattacharya, ranked No. 72 in the world, took time to settle down at the start as Jangra kept pace until the latter half of the opening game. But Bhattacharya was soon focused for the rest of the match as Jangra looked helpless.

Joshna Chinappa overcame England's Mandy Kennedy for the second time in two months following a 3-0 victory in the women's final.

Chinappa, who beat former junior England player Kennedy in the HSBC Maharashtra State Open at the Bombay Gymkhana not too long ago, won 9-5, 9-5, 9-2 in a tie that lasted 35 minutes.

Top seed Saumya Karki lived up to her top billing and helped herself to a double crown. Seeded No.1 in the girls' under-19 and under-15



Joshna Chinappa with Ritwik Bhattacharya at the party of CCI Western India Open Squash

categories, 14-year-old Karki was the toast of the finals day as she romped to impressive wins for a double delight.

Karki first demolished unseeded Urvashi Joshi 9-1, 9-2, 9-0 for the under-19 title, and later took a little longer to overcome fourth seed Namrata Purohit 9-5, 9-1, 9-3 for the under-15 crown to complete a rewarding day.

Top seed Arun Kochhar did not have it as easy and was forced to toil for the boys' under-13 title in a pulsating championship round against second seed Raghav Mehrotra.

Kochhar, who surged to a comfortable 2-0 advantage and looked set to settle the issue without much ado, surprisingly endured a strong challenge from Mehrotra who brilliantly came back into the match to force the decider.

But Mehrotra lost his way in the fifth and final game as Kochhar took an early lead and held on to seal a 9-5, 9-5, 4-9, 5-9, 9-4 victory.

RESULTS

FINALS :

- Men's Open:** Ritwik Bhattacharya bt Sandeep Jangra 9-7, 9-1, 9-2.
Women: Joshna Chinappa (Chennai) bt Mandy Kennedy (England) 9-5, 9-5, 9-2.
Boys U-19: Vikram Malhotra bt Aditya Jagtap 9-5, 9-1, 9-5
Boys U-17: Aditya Jagtap bt Abhishek Pradhan 9-2, 9-7, 9-4.
Boys U-15: Abhishek Pradhan bt Mahesh Manganekar 9-4, 9-2, 9-4
Boys U-13: Arjun Kochhar bt Raghav Mehrotra 9-5, 9-5, 4-9, 5-9, 9-4
Boys U-11: Yohan Pandole bt Sandeep Paswan 9-3, 9-0, 9-3.
Girls U-19: Saumya Karki bt Urvashi Joshi 9-1, 9-2, 9-0.
Girls U-15: Saumya Karki bt Namrata Purohit 9-5, 9-1, 9-3.
Boys & Girls U-9: Ben Kennedy bt Ivan Phillip 9-2, 8-10, 9-3, 9-5.
Professionals: C. Gomez (Mexico) bt Rohit More 9-6, 4-9, 9-5, 9-5.
Over-55: Kishan Lal bt Raj Manchanda 9-2, 4-9, 9-2, 9-3.

ALL SEMIFINALS :

- Men's Open :**
 Sandeep Jangra bt Vikram Malhotra 9-4, 9-0, 9-1;
 Ritwik Bhattacharya bt Manish Chotrani 9-1, 9-4, 9-3.
Women :
 Joshna Chinappa (Chennai) bt Shweta Yadav 9-0, 9-1, 9-0;
 Mandy Kennedy (England) bt Saumya Karki 9-6, 9-4, 9-6.
Boys U-19 :
 Aditya Jagtap bt Aditya Gupta 9-2, 9-0, 9-1;
 Vikram Malhotra bt Abhinav Sinha 9-0, 9-0, 9-1.
Boys U-17 :
 Abhishek Pradhan bt Mahesh Manganekar 9-8, 9-4, 9-3.
Boys U-15 :
 Abhishek Pradhan bt Caran Arora 9-6, 9-0, 9-0;
 Mahesh Manganekar bt Vrishabh Kotian 9-1, 9-6, 9-1.
Boys U-13 :
 Arjun Kochhar bt Yohan Pandole 9-3, 9-4, 8-10, 9-1;
 Raghav Mehrotra bt Ishaan Advani 9-3, 9-4, 8-10, 9-3.
Boys U-11 :
 Sandeep Paswan bt Rajat Agarwal 3-9, 9-4, 9-7, 10-8;
 Yohan Pandole bt Yohan Surti 9-1, 9-0, 9-5.
Girls U-19 :
 Urvashi Joshi bt Namrata Purohit 9-7, 9-0, 2-9, 6-9, 9-2;
Girls U-15 :
 Saumya Karki bt Vasha Pandey 9-0, 9-0, 9-0;
 Namrata Purohit bt Urvashi Joshi 9-2, 9-4, 9-1.
Boys and Girls U-9:
 Ivan Phillip bt Siddhant Iyer 9-4, 9-10, 9-4, 9-3;
 Ben Kennedy bt Dev Variani 9-4, 4-9, 9-7, 9-4.

MUMBAI UNIVERSITY INTER - COLLEGIATE SQUASH

Vikram Triumphs

(14/11/2007)



Vikram Malhotra receiving trophy from Prof. Gillies (Vice Chancellor City University, London) and Dr. Indu Shahani (Principal, H R College) along with Professor P. K. Singh.

As expected the top seed Vikram Malhotra clinched the title defeating the third seed Dhiraj Nagpal in straight sets of the Mumbai University's Inter-Collegiate squash Championship 2007 hosted by HR College and organized by the Indian Squash Professionals and played at Police Gymkhana.

The 17-year-old was favourite to triumph as his ranking was far superior to his senior counterpart. The first two sets were smooth sailing for him but in the third set Nagpal tried to fight back but failed to take the match in the fourth set. This has been a lucky first time for Malhotra who managed to defeat last year's winner Dhiraj Nagpal 11-8, 11-8, 12-10.

RESULTS

FINALS :

Vikram Malhotra (HR College) bt Dhiraj Nagpal (HR College) 11-8, 11-8, 12-10 (3-0)

3RD - 4TH PLACE:

Cyrus Vakil (HR College) bt Arun Sharma (Lokmanya Tilak) 11-6, 11-8, 6-11, 11-8 (3-1)

SEMI FINAL:

Vikram Malhotra (HR College) bt Arun Sharma (Lokmanya Tilak) 11-5, 11-5, 11-9, (3-0)

Dhiraj Nagpal (HR College) bt Cyrus Vakil (HR College) 11-8, 11-4, 11-7 (3-0)

QUARTER FINAL:

Vikram Malhotra (HR College) bt Kaushil Shah (NM College) 11-1, 11-3, 11-5, (3-0)

Arun Sharma (Lokmanya Tilak College) bt Ridesh Sejpal (Ruia College) 11-3, 11-0, 11-3, (3-0)

Cyrus Vakil (HR College) bt Jaisingh Thori (Seth Hirachand Mudda College) 11-9, 11-8, 11-9, (3-0)

Dhiraj Nagpal (HR College) bt Shallesh Mishra (Lokmanya Tilak) 11-5, 11-4, 11-7, (3-0)

ALL INDIA INTER UNIVERSITY SQUASH

Malhotra win singles, Delhi bags team event

(21/11/2007)

University's top seed Vikram Malhotra beat compatriot and fellow college student second seed Dhiraj Nagpal three games to nil in the men's singles finals while Delhi bagged the team events title beating Mumbai University 3-2 in the All India Inter University Squash Tournament co-sponsored by Avon Cycles Ltd and Orra organized by the Sports Council of H. R. College, in association with the University of Mumbai, in collaboration with the Indian Squash Professional and played at the CCI Courts, Churchgate.

Vikram Malhotra received no resistance from opponent Dhiraj Nagpal although he suffering a hamstring during the previous match. Delhi University third seed Suhail Kapoor received a walkover from his colleague Siddharth Sharma.

In the team event finals, Delhi University proved tough competition for Mumbai University, but lacked the same luster in the finals. Vikram Malhotra of Mumbai University beat Siddharth Sharma of Delhi University in three sets, 9-0, 9-0, 9-0 beginning the finals with a bang.

Uday Dass of Delhi University received tough competition from Mumbai boy Siddharth Samantray, but eventually winning it 9-7, 9-1, making the score 1-1. Prateek Chalia of Delhi University lost to Arun Sharma of Mumbai in a see saw match, 6-9, 9-3, 7-9, 3-9. Suhail Kapoor took Dhiraj Nagpal down to claim the game 9-3, 9-1, 9-0.

Chief Guest of the evening Prof. Gillies (Vice Chancellor City University, London) and Dr. Indu Shahani (Principal, H R College) give away the medals & trophies to all the winners.

This is the 82nd tournament organised by Indian Squash Professionals.



All winners with the offico bearers of SRAM and H.R. College

RESULTS

INDIVIDUAL FINALS :

Vikram Malhotra bt Dhiraj Nagpal 9-1, 9-2, 9-0 (3-0)

TEAM EVENT FINALS :

Delhi University bt Mumbai University (3-2)

- 1-Siddharth Sharma lost to Vikram Malhotra 0-9, 0-9, 0-9 (0-3)
 4-Uday Das bt Siddharth Samantray 4-9, 9-7, 9-7, 9-1 (3-1)
 5-Prateek Chalia lost to Arun Sharma 6-9, 9-3, 7-9, 3-9 (3-1)
 2-Sohail Kapoor bt Dhiraj Nagpal 9-3, 9-1, 9-0 (3-0)
 3-Gunraj Singh bt Cyrus Vakli 9-7, 10-8, 4-9, 3-9, 9-3 (3-2)

TEAM EVENT 3RD PLACE :

University Pune bt Punjab University (3-0)

- 1-Nikhil bt Karan Singhel 9-4, 9-1, 9-5 (3-0)
 4-Sachin bt Vinay Thakur
 5-Ashish bt Ankush Gupta 9-1, 9-0, 9-0 (3-0)

INDIVIDUAL SEMIFINALS :

Vikram Malhotra (Mum) bt Suhail Kapoor (Delhi) 9-4,10-8, 9-3 (3-0)
 Dhiraj Nagpal (Mum) bt Siddharth Sharma (Delhi) 9-4,3-9,9-4,9-7(3-1)

TEAM EVENT SEMIFINALS :

Delhi University bt Punjab University (4-0)

- 1-Siddharth Sharma bt Karan Singhel 9-0, 9-0, 9-2, (3-0)
 4-Uday Dass bt Vinay Thakur 9-3, 9-3, 9-4 (3-0)
 5-Prateek Chalia bt Ankush Gupta 9-0, 9-1, 9-1 (3-0)
 2-Suhail Kapoor bt Abhilakshya 9-3, 9-3, 9-3 (3-0)

Mumbai University bt Pune University (3-1)

- 1-Vikram Malhotra bt Nikhil Ajaj 9-0, 9-0, 9-0 (3-0)
 4-Arun Sharma bt Sachin Arun 9-2, 4-9, 9-4, 9-5 (3-1)
 5-Jai Singh Thori lost to Ashish Sudhakar 2-9, 2-9, 1-9 (0-3)
 2-Cyrus Vakli bt Angad Marva 9-7, 8-9, 9-2, 3-9, 9-6 (3-2)

ADITYA IAGTAP WINS JUST REWARDS

It would have been a travesty of justice if Mumbai lad Aditya Jagtap had not crossed the final frontier by winning the national title in the U-17 ranks of the Junior National Squash Championship at Ajmer's Mayo College. For he had done all the hard work, his parents Ravi and Anupama had sent him to several tournaments for exposure and he had justified their efforts by winning the German Open and getting the No 2 spot in the Nordic Open in Sweden to be ranked No 6 in the European rankings. The triumph was a result of a tactical play, says Aditya in the interview. Excerpts.

By Pradeep Vijayakar



Aditya Jagtap

It must have been a topsy turvy final?

It was I won 3-2 against Tamil nadu's Ravi Dixit. The match could have easily gone the other way. I had to overcome a block, the defeat at the hands of Dixit in the U-15 final last year.

So how was the lead-up to this event?

I had won the German Open and reached the Nordic Open final. But I was happiest about having given Vikram Malhotra a tough fight in the U-19 final at Matunga Gymkhana.

What were the inputs for the triumph?

My parents' encouragement, definitely. Then the coaching of AI Singh.

Also coaching stints with Neil Harvey and Amir Waghi of Egypt who coaches top nations in the Gulf.

What turned the match in your favour after you were 1-2 down?

Ravi was playing in good rhythm. I tried to break that. In the initial stages Ravi was in control and I made many unforced errors. As the match progressed, I found my rhythm back and I tried to keep the ball deep and wide. I started lobbing the ball more and slowed down the pace. He began mistakes even though he was 4-0 up in the fourth and leading by 2-1 sets.

The win must have wiped out the disappointment of last year's defeat?

Indeed. But it was my own fault. After beating Ramit Tandon in the semis I got overexcited as Ramit had been unbeaten for five consecutive nationals. I just not perform well against Ravi in the final of U-15. It was as if I had shot my bolt, as they say.

So that made you extra careful this time around?

I worked hard and was hungry for my maiden national title. I am grateful to Vikram Malhotra and Sandeep Jangra for sparring with me and improving my game.

NSE SUPER SATELLITE SQUASH CHAMPIONSHIP

Top seed Ritwik Bhattacharya survived a few tense moments before beating fourth seed Pakistan's Bilal Zaman in a five-game thriller to clinch the NSC Super Satellite Squash championship in Kuala Lumpur.

Ritwik got the better of Zaman 11-6 9-11 9-11 11-9 11-9 in 45 minutes to win the USD 7,000 tournament.



Ritwik Bhattacharya

"It is a really special day for me. He was playing really well and it was a tough match but I am happy to have come through," Ritwik told PTI from Kuala Lumpur.

The former national champion, who endured an 85-minute five-game semi-final yesterday, said he could have won more comfortably but for some umpiring errors.

"I was 10-9 up in the third game but a winner was not given. So got a bit unlucky there. Then the fourth and fifth games turned out to be really close. We were tied 9-9 in both the games but I pulled it off from there on," he said, recalling the winning moments.

The 29-year-old, whose career was in doldrums after a knee injury forced him out for five months earlier this year, said he was back to full fitness and was prepared to endure the longest of matches.

"It's becoming a trend for me now to play five-gamers but the good thing is that I am winning and I feel nice about my fitness level," he said.

"My game has improved as well because I don't take winning and losing all that seriously any more. I just go out there and enjoy myself. Earlier it was exactly the opposite. I put too much pressure on myself... kept watching the videos of the matches I lost and that affected me negatively," he recalled.

Source : The Hindu

CARAN HOPES TO CLIMB THE SQUASH LADDER



Caran Arora

PRADEEP VIJAYAKAR talks to a rising star

Player of the year 2007 of CCI's Squash Academy, Caran is slowly zeroing on the title in the under-15 ranks. The son of CCI player Raj, he was member of the gold-winning Maharashtra U-15 Team that won the Inter State Squash Championships in Ajmer in October 2007. He was also semi-finalist of the 64th CCI Western India Open. Squash he says has taught him the value of hard work and how to tide over difficulties. Excerpts from the interview

Why did you pick squash as a sport?

I was often at the courts watching my dad play. It seemed like a lot of fun. For some reason it appealed to me and when I

began hitting the ball consistently, it was a source of great joy. I've loved it ever since.

How long did it take you to play good squash and who guided you?

Well, I've been playing for several years now and would like to believe that I'm still some distance from playing 'good squash'. I'd say that it took me about two years to be playing some reasonably competitive squash. In the initial years the guidance came mainly from my dad and my first coach, Al Singh.

Your hero? Indian and International

On the Indian front, both Ritwik (Bhattacharya) and Sid (Suchde); Ritwik because of his amazing attitude, his courage and spirit. He's always smiling and seems to have a lot of fun. Sid, because of his ability to work hard and I also marvel at how he has balanced his academics and his sport.

From the PSA players, Nick Mathew is my favorite. His amazing backhand, his lethal drop and his rock solid temperament all stand out. I've seen him play some really tight games, both in England and in Chennai and it's fantastic how he responds to pressure, so consistently. He is a gritty chap.

What has been your best squash achievement so far?

It would have to be my third place finish at the German Open in Gerlingen, a Super Series event last year. I was unseeded and beat a number of fancied players before losing to the top seed in a five setter in the semi finals.

Which are the titles that you felt got away?

Well, at this same event in Germany, I thought I was playing some fairly good squash. The semi final was very tight. In the finals I would have played Mahesh Mangaonkar, who I have not yet beaten, but for some reason I felt that I was ready to do battle with him then. Another one which was fairly close was against Mahesh at the Juhu event last year in the finals. After sharing the first two games, we were 9-9 in the 3rd. But all this is behind me now.

What did you learn from watching the World Teams Event?

A host of things - different attacking strokes, the detailed preparation, the importance of fitness and flexibility. The choice of shots and the

importance of length. The temperament of these players. I saw the Egyptian Mohammed Abbas warm up for at least half an hour before his match.

What are your ambitions in squash and beyond?

To be the best player that I can be something that I learnt from Neil Harvey. I'd like to train hard and play hard and have fun along the way. A top class international education is a priority. Hopefully become the India No.1 some day and take it from there.

Who have been your guiding lights along the way?

My mum and my dad. They have been hugely supportive. On the court, I've had the good fortune of having spent time with many special people. The ones that come readily to mind are Neil Harvey, Al Singh, Ritwik and Amit Chinal. Currently I train with Temo Gomez and Rohit More.

What has squash given you?

A lot. It has given me a lot of joy; I'd like to believe that it has given me discipline, it has taught me to win and to lose and to keep a sense of humor. It has taught me the importance of hard work and of dealing with difficulties. It has taught me how to give attention to the details; it has highlighted the importance of preparation. Like any other sport, squash teaches you something all the time. I really love this game.

CARAN'S WINS

- ✓ **October 2004** : Sai Shipping Junior Squash Tournament for Boys U-11, Mumbai
- ✓ **October 2004** : Sai Shipping Junior Squash Tournament for Boys U-13, Mumbai
- ✓ **April 2006** : Speed 97 1st Leg, Mumbai
- ✓ **December 2007** : Rosenthal Cup Boys U-15 event at the Bombay Gymkhana

JSW ALL-INDIA SCHOOLS & JUNIOR COLLEGE CHAMPIONSHIP

Saumya wins double crown & Laxman Joshi wins U-19 title

(07/10/2007)

Thirteen-year-old Saumya Karki of Hiranandani School, Thane, bagged the girls under-19 and girls under-15 titles at the Rs 1.30 lakh prize money and JSW Steel Ltd. Sponsored JSW All-India Schools & Junior College Championship, at the Jindal Squash Academy, Vasind. Also Kalyan's Agarwal College Laxman Joshi finished the boys under-19 champion beating H R College, Cyrus Vakil comprehensively 9-4, 9-2, 9-4. Fifteen year old Abhishek Pradhan, from Don Bosco, Borivli, bagged the Boys under-17 & under-15 titles.

Saumya Karki, who was the top seed in the girls under-19 age group, easily beat second seed Anju Sharma of Jindal Vidya Mandir 9-3, 9-2, 9-2. This was Saumya's second title in the girls U-19 in 2007. Last month she won the U-19 title in the All India Little Masters Squash Championship. In the Girls U-15 final also she beat Anju Sharma 9-2, 9-0, 9-2. This was the Saumya's fifth U-15 title of the year. Saumya pocketed Rs 8000 for her win in the girls Under-15 category and Rs 10,000 for winning the girls Under-19 category.

The boys Under-19 final was a straight forward affair with Laxman Joshi outclassing Cyrus Vakil. Joshi, seeded one, was

head and shoulders above his opponent Vakil, seeded two. Vakil managed to sneak in four points in the first game but after that Joshi took control to romp home 9-4, 9-2, 9-4. Joshi emerged richer by Rs 10,000 while Vakil was handed Rs 5,000.

The Chief guest of the evening R. C. Sharma (Vice President, JSW Steel Ltd.) gave away the prizes to all the winners.

RESULTS

ALL FINALS:

Boys U-19 : 1-Laxman Joshi (Agarwal College, Kalyan) bt 2-Cyrus Vakil (HR College) 9-4, 9-2, 9-4.

Boys U-17 : 1-Abhishek Pradhan (Don Bosco, Borivli) bt Abhinav Sinha (Wadia College, Pune) 9-4, 9-5, 9-0.

Boys U-15 : 1-Abhishek Pradhan (Don Bosco, Borivli) bt Vrishab Kotian (Don Bosco, Borivli) 9-0, 9-1, 9-2.

Boys U-13 : 1-Rahil Fazelbhoj (Springfield School) bt Jaganath Kyute (Saraswati School) 9-0, 9-5, 9-4.

Boys U-11 : 1-Yohan Pandole (Cathedral School) bt 3-Sandeep Paswan (Jindal School) 9-3, 10-8, 9-4.

Girls U-19 : 1-Saumya Karki (Hiranandani School, Thane) bt Anju Sharma (Jindal School) 9-3, 9-2, 9-2.

Girls U-15 : 1-Saumya Karki (Hiranandani School, Thane) bt 2-Anju Sharma (Jindal School) 9-2, 9-0, 9-2.

Girls U-13 : 1-Urvashi Joshi (Jindal School) bt 2-Shweta Yadav (Jindal School) 9-2, 9-2, 9-4.

Open U-9 : 2-Siddhant Iyer (Singhania School) bt 1-Ivan Phillips 3-9, 6-9, 9-1, 9-5, 9-5.

ALL SEMIFINALS:

Boys U-19 : 2-Cyrus Vakil (H R College) bt 4-Sujat Barua (H R College) 4-9, 9-5, 9-1, 9-2;

1-Laxman Joshi (Agarwal College, Kalyan) bt 3-Abhinav Sinha (Wadia College, Pune) 9-0, 9-0, 9-1.

Boys U-17 : Abhinav Sinha (Wadia College, Pune), bt Vrishab Kotian (Don Bosco, Borivli) 9-6, 9-1, 9-2;

1- Abhishek Pradhan (Don Bosco, Borivli) bt 4-Javed Mohd. 9-2, 9-0, 9-3.

Boys U-15 : 1-Abhishek Pradhan (Don Bosco, Borivli) bt 3-Shashi Pandey (Jindal School) 9-5, 9-1, 9-2;

Vrishab Kotian (Don Bosco, Borivli) bt Rahil Fazelbhoj (Springfield School) 9-7, 9-4, 9-5.

Boys U-13 : Jaganath Kyute (Saraswati School) bt Nishikant Khapre (Jindal School) 9-7, 9-1, 9-5;

1-Rahil Fazelbhoj (Springfield School) bt 4-Akhillesh Yadav (Bhaskar School, Ambivali) 9-3, 9-0, 9-2.

Boys U-11 : 3-Sandeep Paswan (Jindal School) bt Aditya Singh (Ryan International) 7-9, 9-7, 9-7, 10-8;

1-Yohan Pandole (Cathedral School) bt 4-Yohan Surti (St. Mary's School, Pune) 9-5, 9-4, 9-2.

Girls U-19 : 1-Saumya Karki (Hiranandani School, Thane) bt 4-Nikita Emanuel (Tilak College) 9-0, 9-0, 9-1;

Anju Sharma (Jindal School) bt 2-Rinki Soni (Jindal School) 8-10, 10-8, 9-1, 9-1.

Girls U-15 : 1-Saumya Karki (Hiranandani School, Thane) bt Shweta Yadav (Jindal School) 9-0, 9-0, 9-1;

2-Anju Sharma (Jindal School) bt Urvashi Joshi (Jindal School) 6-9, 9-6, 9-2, 9-1.

Girls U-13 : 1-Urvashi Joshi (Jindal School) bt Aishwarya Kulkarni (Hiranandani School, Thane) 9-0, 9-0, 9-3;

2-Shweta Yadav (Jindal School) bt 4-Ruchi Mishra (Jindal School) 9-3, 9-6, 9-3.

Open U-9 : 1-Ivan Phillips bt Dev Vazirani (Bombay Scottish) 9-6, 6-9, 9-5, 9-2

2-Siddhant Iyer (Singhania School) bt 3-Ardehl Ivan (Hiranandani School) 9-3, 9-2, 0-9, 9-4



Winners showing off their trophies

MSSA-NIKE 3RD INTER SCHOOL CHAMPIONSHIP

Abhishek wins school squash title

(09/12/2007)

Top seed Abhishek Pradhan of Don Bosco, Borivali beat Rahil Fazelbhoj of Springfield High school to win the Boys u-16 title of the MSSA Nike Annual Inter School squash tournament organized by Indian Squash Professionals played at Bombay Gymkhana. In the girls U/16 top seed Ankita Sharma of Arya Vidya Mandir, Juhu beat Namrata Purohit of Arya Vidya Mandir, Bandra 11-7 11-7 11-4. Yohann Surti of St.Mary's ICSE bagged the Bourmvita Confidence Champion award, he collected the cash prize of Rs 5000.

It was an easy three games win for Abhishek Pradhan as the scoreline suggests. Abhishek had the ability to win all sorts of points with ease, whether in front or back of the court. Rahil Fazelbhoj was made to run all over the court and did not have any clue to win over the points. After the match Abhishek Pradhan had a praise of word for Rahil Fazelbhoj said he is a very talented player but lacks in experience and maturity, later on he will be a force in the competition.



Winners along with Sponsor, MSSA officials, Sanjay Goyal (Sec. Gen ISP), Imroz Pathan, Joginder Singh and Sunil Bhandari (Coaches)

In the girls U/16 top seed Ankita Sharma 14 year ninth standard student also had an easy victory over Namrata Purohit in three straight games. Namrata did give a fight to Ankita but could not match her speed. In the first two games Ankita took an early big lead which helped her to win the games easily, but in the third game Namrata lost her focus on the game and Ankita finished her demolishing act to win 11-4.

Yohann Surti who bagged the Bournvita Confidence Champion is a nine year old 4th standard student is trained by his own father, who is also a regular squash player from Bombay Gymkhana who participates in the city club's tournaments. Yohann Surti lost to Kunj Rawani in the boys U/11 9-11 2-11 7-11.

RESULTS

FINALS:

- Boys U-11:** Kunj Rawani by Yohann Surti 11-9, 11-2, 11-7
- Boys U-9:** Dev Vazirani (Bombay Scottish) bt Chaitanya Mehra (Cathedral & John Connon) 11-1, 11-4, 11-1
- Boys U-13:** Arjun Kochhar (Cathedral & John Connon) bt Raghav Mehrotra (Cathedral & John Connon) 11-7, 11-8, 11-0
- Boys U-16:** Abhishek Pradhan (1) (Don Bosco Borivalli) beat Rahul Fazalbhoy (3) (Spring field high school) 11-1, 11-4, 11-7
- Girls U-13:** Jui Kalgutkar (St. Anthony's) bt Gayatri Raheja (Dhirubhai Ambani) 13-11, 11-1, 11-0
- Girls U-16:** Ankita Sharma (AVM Juhu) bt Namrata Purohit (AVM Bandra) 11-7, 11-7, 11-4

ALL SEMIFINALS:

- BOYS U-11:**
Surti Yohann (St. Mary's I.C.S.E) bt Harsh Vadhna (Arya Vidya Mandir (Bandra)) 11-8, 11-8, 11-5
Kunj Rawani (Don Bosco (Borivalli)) bt Viraj Nadkarni (Cathedral & John Connon) 11-4, 7-11, 11-6
- BOYS U-13:**
Kochhar Arjun (Cathedral & John Connon) bt Armaan Shaikh (Campion School) 11-5, 11-5, 11-5
Raghav Mehrotra (Cathedral & John Connon) bt Yohan Pandole (Cathedral & John Connon) 2-11, 4-11, 12-10, 4-11
- BOYS U-16:**
Abhishek Pradhan (Do Bosco (Borivalli)) bt Naman Jiandani (Arya Vidya Mandir (Bandra)) 11-4, 11-8, 11-4
Rahul Fazalbhoy (Springfield High School) bt Vishabh Kotian (Do Bosco (Borivalli)) 11-6, 11-5, 9-11
- GIRLS U-13:**
Jui Vinay Kalgutkar (St. Anthony Girl's (Chembur)) bt Meghana Haryani (Bombay Scottish (Mahim)) 11-0, 11-1
Gayatri Raheja (Dhirubhai Ambani Int.) bt Parikh Kunashini (Cathedral & John Connon) 11-0, 11-3, 11-1
- BOYS U-9:**
Dev Vazirani (Bombay Scottish (Mahim)) bt Aayush Bhansali (Cathedral & John Connon) 11-6, 11-5
Chaitanya Mehra (Cathedral & John Connon) bt Jehangir Kambata (Cathedral & John Connon) 11-9, 14-12, 10-12, 11-5
- GIRLS U-16:**
Namrata Purohit (Arya Vidya Mandir (Bandra)) bt Aggarwal Khushi (Cathedral & John Connon) 11-4, 11-2
Ankita Sharma (Arya Vidya Mandir (Juhu)) bt Sanjna Merchant (Bombay International) 11-3, 11-4, 11-3

THEY HOPE TO MAKE JINDAL PROUD



Sandeep Paswan

PRO-SQUASH spoke to two promising kids from the Jindal Squash Academy, Sandeep Paswan and Urvasi Joshi

S ANDEEP PASWAN

Tell us about how you took up squash?

At the Jindal Squash Academy, I saw my friends playing squash. I was swimming nearby. But I was not aware of the game I used to go for

swimming. I began playing squash and found that it is a captivating game.

How do you balance training with studies?

I train for two hours in the evening and the remaining time is for studies.

What do you attribute your progress to?

It is because of my coach, Sunil Verma. The proper way of concentration and coaching is taught to us. He looks after training sessions including the diet and adds tips on the skills for defeating the opponent.

What is your ambition?

To be national champion and represent the country at international level.

What are your other interests apart from squash?

I love watching cartoons and swimming.

URVASHI JOSHI



Urvasi Joshi

What made you take up squash?

First it was my brother Laxman who played the game and it was he who encouraged me to take it up.

Squash and studies, how do you manage both?

I train in evening from 5 p.m to 8 p.m then for an hour I study.

What is your secret of your improvement?

Nothing except what I learn from my guru Sunil Verma and his wife Shanti.

Does squash run in the family?

Yes, my brother Laxman is a top under-17 player.

What is your ambition?

To make Jindal Academy proud of me and later to play for India.

What are your other interests apart from squash?

I also play table-tennis and listen to music.

**FROM THE COLLECTION OF ARTICLE WRITTEN
BY LATE RAJU CHAINANI FROM 1971-2001**

Asian invasion in America

Article in Mid-day (1/8/1999)



Raju Chainani

NEW YORK, July 31 : TWO sporting legends have been in the news during the last few days. Rod Laver had a heart attack and Jack Nicklaus has called in some experts to look into an apparent fraud in his Golden Bear Inc.

Whilst all this has taken up space in the main papers like The New York Times, Jahangir Khan's arrival at Princeton as coach of the Pakistan junior men's squash team hasn't even got a line.

Yes, Tom Jones, the editor of Squash News, who is based in Rhode Island and runs a very good circuit, was quite pepped up about the legendary player coming down in an official capacity.

Jahangir has intentions of vying for the post of Vice-president at the next AGM of the World Squash Federation in November. His colleague Qamar Zaman tried his luck at becoming Vice-president of the Asian Squash Federation two weeks ago at Kuala Lumpur but managed the least number of votes.

Jahangir is a different kettle of fish. The debate still rages as to who is the best player of all time. Jahangir never won the world junior title but had six World Opens and 10 British Opens to go alongside. Jansher was world junior champion in 1988, has eight World Opens under his belt and six British Opens.

Jahangir, the man with the classic backhand and an allround game pitted against the superfit Jansher. Perhaps it was poetic justice that the final scoreline between them stood at 21 wins apiece.

With the exception of Jansher, no other player has won the World junior and senior title. Australia's Chris Robertson (champion in 1984) got to number two on the PSA list, Egypt's Ahmed Barada who won at Christchurch in 1994 had made the top five but that's as far as they have got. Chris Dittmar lost two World Junior finals and it was to be a similar story for him in the men's.

Junior squash has come a long way in the last two decades. It's happening in all the five continents. To see it do so in a state better

known for its Dodgers Stadium is extraordinary. Talk about baseball, basketball, the Goodwill Games and it's all acceptable.

But squash? A relatively unknown racket sport making a big splash at Princeton University. The all-glass court is being set up in the Jadwin Gymnasium which has a seating capacity of 3,000. It's not been designed for Nadia Commence. Instead the world will be watching what looks to be an Asian invasion.

KHALID ATLAS FINDS TALENT WAITING TO BE TAPPED



Khalid Atlas Khan coaching the kids at Club Millennium, Juhu

Pradeep Vijayakar interviews Pakistani Khalid Atlas Khan who was brought by ISP and SRAM to coach the Mumbai kids at Club Millennium ahead of the British and Scottish Junior Open events.

Mumbai's squash kids were lucky to get the guidance of Pakistani Khalid Atlas ahead of the British and Scottish Junior Opens in the new year. Member of two World title-winning Pakistan junior sides and elder brother of Amir, who plays at No 2 for Pakistan, Khalid Atlas says he had to correct basic mistakes of most of the kids but sees a lot of talent in them to reach the top. Excerpts from the interview.

How did your coaching trip materialize?

I came here for the ISP's 75th Squash Carnival last year ans was runners-up title. ISP and SRAM officials thought I should come again for coaching the kids of Maharashtra. I came in September-October and saw the talent at the Junior Nationals at Ajmer.

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What has been your international record?

Well, I was No 1 player of two Pakistan teams that won the World Juniors in Chennai 2002 and Pakistan 2004. I was ranked 81 in PSA. But because of financial problems I couldn't play much on the circuit or for the Pakistan senior team and had to turn to coaching to earn money.

Where have you coached?

I have usually stayed on to coach in most countries after playing an event there. Kuwait is the longest I have stayed and coached. Badr Hussaini their No 1 and his brother Nasser have been coached by me at their clubs.

How did you find the talent in Mumbai?

Some good talent I saw but they couldn't train continuously as some of them went to watch the World Team event in Chennai.

Your brother Amir played for Pakistan there but they finished 11th.

Amir is one of five brothers all proud sons of Atlas Khan, who coaches in Peshawar and was sports officer of the PIA. Eldest is Naveed, followed by Khalid, Adil, Amir and Danish, who is the Asian u-15 champ. Inshallah with good health and play Amir will top the squash ladder.

What did you tell your players?

I saw most of them had basic flaws. I tried to lessen them. I stressed the right style for strokeplay, when to hit, how to hit, body language etc.

Who were the players to impress?

Ankita Sharma, Aditya Jagtap came only for two days but he is hard-working and has a future. There's Abhishek Pradhan, Imran Pathan, Waqar Pathan, Sujat Barua.

So you see a bright future for the kids?

Definitely if they work hard.

AWARD FOR DICKY

An Indian figured at the World Squash Awards arranged by Peter Nicol's Events Management in London last week. It was Mumbai-born writer Dicky Rutnagar who received was the lifetime achievement award along with Heather McKay a former women's world champ from Australia. Dicky shifted to London in the 60s and has been covering count cricket and squash for Daily Telegraph till 2005.

Egyptian Amr Shabana was player of the year and Nicol David among women The most best young payer among men was Ramy Ashour and among women Camille Serme. Shelley Kitchen of NZ was named the most improved player.

INTERNATIONAL RESULTS ALL FINALS**02/11/2007: CLUB SPORTIF, CANADA**

Shahier Razik bt Miguel Angel Rodriguez 11-3, 10-11, 11-10, 11-10

07/11/2007: WOMEN'S IRAN OPEN, RASHT

Carla Khan bt Donna Urquhart 9-4, 9-1, 5-9, 9-7

09/11/2007: COASTAL CONTACTS JERICO OPEN, CANADA

Shahier Razik bt Matthew Giuffre 11-9, 11-7, 11-1

10/11/2007: BALTIMORE CUP, USA

Yasser El Halaby bt Julian Illingworth 7-11, 11-1, 11-2, 9-11, 11-4

11/11/2007: HONG KONG OPEN, CATHAY PACIFIC

Amr Shabana bt Gregory Gaultier 10-11, 11-3, 11-6, 11-10

17/11/2007: 25th SANTIAGO OPEN, SPAIN

Davide Bianchetti bt Julien Balbo 11-7, 6-11, 11-6, 11-4

18/11/2007: POLISH OPEN, KRAKOW

Romain Tenant bt Steve Coppinger 11-2, 12-10, 11-6

18/11/2007: PAKISTAN OPEN

Aamir Atlas Khan bt Mansoor Zaman 11-2, 11-5, 11-7

27/11/2007: KENYA PARKLANDS OPEN, KENYA

Andrew Wagin bt Eddie Charlton 11-8, 11-13, 11-6, 9-11, 11-6

01/12/2007: WEYMULLER OPEN

Natalie Grainger bt Jenny Duncalf 9-3, 9-4, 9-6

4/12/2007: ENDURANCE WORLD OPEN

Amr Shabana bt Gregory Gaultier 11-7, 11-4, 11-6

MENS RANKING DECEMBER 2007

RANK	PLAYER	COUNTRY
1	Amr Shabana	EGY
2	Ramy Ashour	EGY
3	Gregory Gaultier	FRA
47	Saurav Ghosal	IND
63	Ritwik Bhattacharya	IND
130	Gaurav Nandrajod	IND
137	Harinder Pal Sandhu	IND
151	Naresh Kumar	IND
156	Siddharth Suchde	IND
171	Parth Sharma	IND

WOMENS RANKING DECEMBER 2007

RANK	PLAYER	COUNTRY
1	Nicol David	MAS
2	Natalie Grinham	AUS
3	Rachael Grinham	AUS
4	Natalie Grainger	USA
5	Tania Bailey	ENG
44	Joshna Chinappa	IND
64	Deepika Pallikal	IND
131	Anwesha Reddy	IND
159	Surbhi Mishra	IND

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