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Indian women achievers in sports

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Abstract

If you've ever heard references to the "Queen of Indian Track and Field" or "The Payyoli Express." Pilavullakandi Thekkeparambil Usha is most famous Indian and successful female athlete. For her extraordinary performance at the track and Field she bagged the above said awards.

She was born on 27th June 1964 at Payyoli a village in Kozhikode District of Kerala. She was affected by ill health in her early childhood days, but displayed the signs of a great athlete right from her primary schooldays.

Keywords: Women achievers, national school games, Asian track federation

Introduction

Yoga, Top most four Indian women achievers in sports First P T Usha when she was 12, the Kerala State Government began a Sports Division for Women at Kannur, and she was one of 40 girls to start training under Coach O.M. Nambiar. She first came into limelight in the year 1979 when at National School Games, she won the individual championship.

She made her debut (First) into the International Athletics when she participated in the Pakistan Open National Meet 1980 held at Karachi. She grabbed 4 Gold Medals in that Athletics Meet. In the year 1982, she took part in the World Junior Invitation Meet (which is now called World Junior Athletic Championship) held at Seoul. She managed to clinch Gold Medal in the 200m and Bronze Medal in the 100m race at the event. Afterwards, she started working intensely upon her performance and by the Los Angeles Olympics 1984 she had improved considerably.

At the Los Angeles Olympics, Usha won the 400m Hurdles heats but unfortunately lost the Bronze Medal in 400m Hurdles Final Round by a very minute margin of 1/100 second in a Photo Finish. Anyhow, her achievement was still historical in Indian context as she became the first Indian Woman Athlete ever to have entered the Final Round at Olympic Games. She clocked the race in 55.42 seconds which still stands as a National Record for the event in India.

Further, in the year 1985 she participated at the Asian Track and Field Championship held at Jakarta, Indonesia and grabbed 5 Gold Medals and 1 Bronze Medal at the championship. At Seoul Asian Games 1986, Usha clinched four Gold Medals in the 200m, 400m, 400m Hurdles and 4x400m Relay races. Unfortunately, she got her heel injured before the Seoul Olympic Games 1988 and still ran for the nation in the same condition, although couldn't fare well at the event.

She bounced back in the year 1989 at Asian Track Federation Meet held at Delhi, and clinched four Gold Medals and two Silver Medals at the meet. At this time, Usha wanted to declare her retirement but as a last innings she participated at Beijing Asian Games 1990 and despite not being fully prepared for the event, she grabbed three Silver Medals at the event.

She retired from Athletics and married V. Srinivasan in the year 1991, but to the surprise of everybody she made a sudden comeback in the year 1998 and won Bronze Medals in 200m and 400m races at the Asian Track Federation Meet held at Fukkowakka in Japan. At the age of 34 years, P.T. Usha improved her own timing in 200m race and set a new National Record, which was enough to prove the level of Athletic talent still lying inside her.



P.T Usha

Awards & Honours

To commemorate her excellent services to the nation through her consistent and determined efforts towards the sport of Athletics, She was honoured with the Arjuna Award in the year 1983 and Padma Shri award in the year 1985. Apart from it, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) named her the Sportsperson of the Century and the Sports Woman of the Millennium. Also, she was named the Greatest Woman Athlete at Jakarta Asian Athletic Meet 1985 and given the World Trophy for Best Athlete in the years 1985 and 1986. P.T. Usha went on to open her own school in 2002 called the Usha School of Athletics, training young athletes to do as she has done, simply, to be great!



Saina Nehwal

Saina Nehwal is one of the best known Indian Badminton players, and arguably the most promising female Indian Badminton player at the moment. Apart from upsetting some of the top seeded players in World Badminton, Saina has to her credit the achievement of being the first Indian woman to have entered the Quart Final round of Badminton event at the Olympic Games.

Saina Nehwal has been a role model to young women over the last few years. India's first shuttler to win a medal at Olympics in the quadrennial event, Saina has showed that with hard work and sheer dedication nothing is impossible. This young badminton player is currently ranked number 6 in the world by the Badminton World Federation on March 17, 1990; she has paved the way for many firsts in the world of badminton for India, including being the first Indian woman to reach the singles quarterfinals at the Olympics and first Indian to win the World Junior Badminton Championships.

Career

She started receiving training for badminton since the age of 8 years. Her father would take him to Lal Bahadur Stadium of Hyderabad at early morning at 4 am in his scooter. There she received coaching from Nani Prasad. Stadium was 25 km away from their house. Saina sometimes fall asleep at her father's back on scooter. So, to avoid this, her mother also started going with them on scooter. After, two hours of practice, Saina was dropped by her to the school. Further, Saina trained from S.M. Arif, who was the renowned instructor of that time. Then she was trained at Pullela Gopichand Academy.

National Badminton

After 5 years of major training, she made her debut in first international in India Satellite Tournament in year 2003, where she was in top 16. In 2003, she also won Junior Czech Open Tournament. She became the National Junior Champion in the year 2004, and won the title again in the year 2005. She was a runner up in the National Senior Championship 2005, and won the title in the year 2006, repeating the victory in the year 2007 again. Apart from these, she has won the All India Jr. Ranking Tournaments of the year 2005 held at Chennai, Cochin, Bangalore and Pune. She further won the All India Senior Ranking Tournament 2005 held at Mumbai, and also emerged as the winner at the National Games.

International Badminton

She made her International Debut in the year 2003 at the India Satellite tournament where she reached the top-16 round. The same year, she won the Junior Czech Open tournament. Further, she reached the Quarter Final at the Cheers Asian Satellite tournament 2004 held at Singapore. She got her first International success at the India Satellite tournament 2005 where she emerged as the winner of the tournament. After this, she also claimed the Bingo Bonanza Philippines Open title in the year 2006, and the India Satellite tournament 2006. She played at the All England Open 2007, and reached the Pre-Quarter Final round where she lost to World No. 3 player from China. She also reached the Quarter Final rounds at the Macau Open tournament 2007 and the Dutch Open tournament 2007. In the year 2008, Saina won the Chinese Taipei Grand Prix Gold tournament, and reached the Semi Final round of the LI NING China Masters Super Series tournament also. The same year, she created a history of the sorts when she became the First Indian Woman ever to reach the Quarter Final round of the Badminton event at the Olympic Games. At the Beijing Olympic Games 2008, Saina faced the 4th Seeded player and the World No. 6 Wang Chen from Hong Kong in the Pre-Quarter-Final match. Although in the Quarter Final match, she lost to Maria Kristin Yulianti of Indonesia by 28-26, 14-21, 15-21.

Major Upsets

Throughout her Badminton career so far, Saina has been able to topple some of the top Badminton players of the world in her tournaments. These players include Huaiwen XU, Julia Xian Pei of Malaysia, and the World No. 6 Wang Chen of Hong Kong.

She won the Superseries Title in year 2009. She also won Indian Open Grand Prix Title and was the quarterfinalist at World Championships in same year. The year 2010, brought a good success to Saina and she won many titles namely- India Open Grand Prix Gold Title, Indonesia Super Series, Singapore Super Series, reached the semifinals of All-England

Super Series, reached quarter finals of World Badminton Championship, bagged a Gold in Singles and silver medal in team event of Commonwealth games, and finally won Hong Kong Super Series. Jwala Gutta was the part of that team winning silver medal.

In 2011, she was troubled by injuries, but came very strongly by winning Swiss Open GP Gold Title. You can watch Saina Nehwal videos to get some practice of sessions of Badminton in Saina Style. Read more to learn all about Saina Nehwal.

Awards

- Arjuna Award in 2009
- Padma Shri Award 2010
- Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award 2010

She tells 'Smart Life' magazine. "When I joined the sport, I never thought of becoming World number one. It was only my mom's dream. But after achieving it, I am really very happy. And I feel lucky to become the first women shuttler to be no. 1 after Prakash Sir, who is a legend. I will rate this after the Olympic medal," she told PTI after her recent win.



Sania Mirza

The Sania mania is sweeping India. It is after a long time when a young person other than Sachin Tendulkar is making waves in the Indian sports circle. Sania Mirza is the new icon of Indian youth and sports. She is the first Indian women tennis player, who is knocking the door to reach on top of the tennis court. Sania Mirza has shown the rays of hopes for others to adopt tennis.

Born in Mumbai on November 15, 1986 to Imran and Nasima Mirza. Imran Mirza and Nasima would have never thought that their daughter would one day tread the same path as did Steffi Graf and Conchita Martinez. They had decided to make Sania a tennis star while watching Steffi Graf and Conchita Martinez battle it out. Sania had the passion for tennis at a very early age and started playing the game, when she was six years old. She attended Nasr School in Hyderabad and graduated from St. Mary's College. Trained by her father, Sania was motivated by her family to take the game seriously.

Career

She started practicing under CK Bhupati, Mahesh Bhupati's father and first started playing tennis at the Nizam club in Hyderabad. She learnt the professional game at Sinnet Tennis Academy in Secunderabad before finally moving to Ace Tennis Academy in the USA

Sania played her first international tournament in 1999 when she represented India at the World junior Championship at Jakarta. She has also appeared till the semifinal round of the French Open girls' doubles and in the girls' singles at Wimbledon where she suffered a second round defeat.

Sania Mirza took up tennis as her profession in 2003. She was a debutante in the India Fed Cup team held in April 2003. Her maiden event fetched her instant recognition, because she won all the three single matches. She went on to win the 2003 Wimbledon Championship Girls' Doubles title, by pairing up with Russia's Alisa Kleybanova. Sania didn't have to turn back thereafter. Soon, she became the highest ranked Indian female tennis player. She managed to acquire the 27th position in singles, while she was ranked 18th in the doubles event.

In 2004, Sania Mirza emerged as the runner-up at the Asian Tennis Championship. She holds the distinction of being the first Indian woman to make it to the Grand Slam tennis tournament. In the early 2005, she set a record by becoming the first Indian woman to enter the fourth round of a Grand Slam event at the 2005 US Open, by tasting victory over Mashona Washington, Maria Elena Camerin and Marion Bartoli. In the same year, Mirza managed to enter the third round of the Australian Open, but eventually lost to champion Serena Williams. The year 2006 proved to be a purple patch for Sania Mirza, as she notched up three top 10 wins of the year.

Sania Mirza won a silver medal in the Women's Singles event and a gold in the Mixed Doubles event (teamed up Leander Paes) at the 2006 Doha Asian Games. During the 2007 summer Hard Court season, Mirza came with best results of her careers. She finished eighth in the 2007 US Open. She was chosen to represent India at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games, in the Women's Singles and Doubles events. By winning the Mixed Doubles event at the 2009 Australian Open, with Mahesh Bhupathi, Mirza emerged as the first Indian woman to win a grand slam event. In the present time, Sania Mirza is the toast of the nation as exemplified by the growing brand endorsements and the spawning of a number of Sania fan sites in the net.

Wimbledon girl's doubles title was the turning point of Sania Mirza's tennis carrier. By winning the Wimbledon girl's doubles title Sania made her presence felt not only in the Indian tennis but also at the world level.

Achievements

First Indian woman to reach the fourth round of a Grand Slam tournament

First Indian woman to win a WTA singles title (Hyderabad Open in 2005)

WTA's Most Impressive Newcomer for the year 2005

Padma Shri Award in 2006

In a cricket obsessed country like India, tennis player Sania Mirza's hysterical fan following speaks volumes about her achievements. Mirza's meteoric rise to stardom has made her an inspiration for the young sports enthusiasts across the country. By becoming the first Indian woman to reach the third round of a Grand Slam tournament at the 2005 Australian Open, Mirza proved that tennis in India is not merely dominated by the male counterparts. She improved her Grand Slam performance by reaching the fourth round of the US Open in the same year.



Mary Kom

In the 2012 Olympics, Mary Kom became the first Indian women boxer to qualify and win a bronze medal in the 51 kg flyweight category of Boxing. She is currently ranked as Number. 4 in the Flyweight category of AIBA World Women's Ranking.

Born on 1st March 1983, Mangte Chungneijang Mary Kom is an Indian boxer from the northeast state of Manipur. She is also known as MC Mary Kom or Magnificent Mary. Mary Kom is famed as a five time World Boxing Champion and the only boxer to win a medal in every one of the six world championships.

Mary was born in Kangathei, Manipur. She did her schooling from Loktak Christian Model High School, Moirang till class VI and studied in St. Xavier Catholic School, Moirang till class VIII. She then completed her schooling from NIOS, Imphal and did her graduation from Churachandpur College. Mary Kom is a mother of twin sons, Rechungvar and Khupneivar; and is married to K Onler Kom. She had an eager interest in athletics since childhood and the success of Dingko Singh is what really inspired her to become a boxer.

Career

She was a quick learner, found that she had a natural gift for boxing, and wasn't scared of training like one of the boys. That was just the beginning of her winning streak! Mary Kom has taken home many international gold medals and honors.

Mary Kom's career started in 2000 after her victory in the Manipur state women's boxing championship and the regional championship in West Bengal. In 2001, she started competing at international level. She was only 18 years old when she made her international debut at the first AIBA Women's World Boxing Championship in United States, winning a silver medal in the 48 kg weight category. In 2002, she won a gold medal in the 45 kg weight class at the second AIBA Women's World Boxing Championship in Turkey. She also won a gold medal in the 45 kg weight category at the Witch Cup in Hungary in the same year.

In 2003, Mary Kom won a gold medal in the 46 kg weight class at the Asian Women's Boxing Championship in India and in 2004 she won a gold medal at the Women's Boxing World Cup in Norway. In 2005, she again won a gold medal at the Asian Women's Boxing Championship in Taiwan and the AIBA Women's World Boxing Championship in Russia both in the 46 kg weight class. In 2006, she won a gold medal at the Venus Women's Box Cup in Denmark and won gold again at the AIBA Women's World Boxing Championship in India.

After a one year break, Mary Kom returned in 2008 to win a silver medal at the Asian Women's Boxing Championship held in India and won a fourth successive gold medal at the AIBA

Women's World Boxing Championship in China, both were in the 46 kg weight category. In 2009 she won a gold medal at the Asian Indoor Games in Vietnam.

In 2010, Mary Kom won a gold medal at the Asian Women's Boxing Championship in Kazakhstan and her fifth consecutive gold medal in the AIBA Women's World Boxing Championship in Barbados. She competed in the 48 kg weight class because AIBA had discontinued using the 46 kg class. She also participated in the 51 kg weight class at the Asian Games and won a bronze medal.

In the 2010 Commonwealth Games held in Delhi, India. She had the honor of holding the Queen's Baton along with Vijender Singh for the opening ceremony run in the stadium. However, she did not compete as women's boxing event was not included in the Games. In 2011, she won a gold medal in the 48 kg weight class at the Asian Women's Cup in China. In 2012, she won a gold medal in the 51 kg weight class at the Asian Women's Boxing Championship in Mongolia.

The 2012 London Olympics brought her more respect and honor as she became the first Indian women boxer to qualify and win a bronze medal at the Olympics. She took part in the 51 kg weight category and also became the third Indian woman to win an individual medal at the Olympics.

In 2014 Asian Games, she won a gold medal and created history for India. She won the gold in the women's flyweight (48-52 kg) division which was her first gold medal in the Asian Games.

Mary is now a wife and mother of twin sons but her boxing dreams are still very much alive. Much to her amazing success, for the first time ever women's boxing will be included in the London 2012 Olympics, where Mary hopes to win her first Olympic gold.

Awards and recognitions

Arjuna Award (Boxing) in 2003

Padma Shree (Sports) in 2006

Contender for Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award in 2007

People of the Year - Limca Book of Records in 2007

CNN-IBN & Reliance Industries' Real Heroes Award in 2008

Pepsi MTV Youth Icon in 2008

'Magnificent Mary', AIBA in 2008

Felicitation by Zomi Students' Federation (ZSF) at New Lamka YPA Hall in 2008

Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award in 2009

International Boxing Association's Ambassador for Women's Boxing in 2009

Sportswoman of the year, Sahara Sports Award in 2010

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