ANNIVERSARY 75th BWF 1934 - 2009

International Badminton

... the first 75 years



Badminton World Federation
Stadium Badminton Kuala Lumpur
Batu 31/2, Jalan Cheras
56000, Kuala Lumpur
Malaysia
Tel: +6 03 9283 7155/6155/2155
Fax: +6 03 9284 7155
bwf@internationalbadminton.org

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Celebrating 75 Years of Badminton

Dear Colleagues in Sport

It gives me great pleasure to enclose our 75th anniversary book - ***"International Badminton – the First 75 Years"*** to mark our anniversary year.

This book has captured many wonderful stories and experiences - stories that embody the spirit of badminton and its unique features that bring people together from all walks of life.

In this volume, it is easy to see the passion, personalities and achievements of the athletes past and present, our technical officials, our administrators and the leadership of those who have organized, developed and showcased badminton on the world stage.

Since Barcelona 1992, badminton has been an Olympic Games sport, and in August 2008, the most successful badminton event was witnessed in Beijing with 50 NOCs represented in the sport. As we look towards London 2012 and beyond to Rio de Janeiro 2016, we all look to greater achievements as our sport and the BWF develops and grows to meet the challenges at the highest levels.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our *colleagues in badminton* – firstly our Members, our Council, administrators and officials, the players and fans, the media and most importantly, our sponsors who have supported us all the way.

I also wish to acknowledge and thank our *colleagues in sport* at the international level with whom we share so much. We all exist in our various roles because we are passionate about our sport, and we aim to better society and community through sport. Whilst we may compete on and off the field of play, there is thread, a common bond that links us together.

My sincere thanks to the editorial team of this volume, and in particular to acknowledge Richard Eaton and Ronnie Rowan for their terrific work and to thank Vice President Torsten Berg who has been managing the project.

Finally, from all of us at the BWF, I wish to take this opportunity to wish you a happy and safe Festive Season and a prosperous and successful 2010.

DR KANG YOUNG JOONG
PRESIDENT

International Badminton

... the first 75 years



Foreword by Dr Kang, BWF President



By any measure, 75 years is a significant milestone in the life of an organisation, and it has given me great pleasure to view the pages of this anniversary book and to reflect on the rich and diverse history of our sport. In this volume it is easy to see the passion, personalities, and achievements of the players, and the leadership of those who have sought to organise, develop and showcase badminton on the world stage.

As the BWF celebrates 75 years and we reflect on our achievements, one thing is certain – nothing is permanent except change. Laws and rules of the game have changed, the name of the Federation has changed and the organisation has evolved from a mere nine founding members on 5 July 1934 to the present membership of 166.

And if the BWF and the sport are both to develop further, to innovate, and remain relevant to new generations who will grow up in a different world, then we need to look for and embrace change in a strategic way.

The sport and the BWF has been fortunate to have talented and passionate people over the years, not only on court, but off it – in the BWF and in leadership among its member organisations.

It was talented and passionate leaders who brought two competing elements back together in 1981 through a reunification process between the then International Badminton Federation (IBF) and the World Badminton Federation (WBF).

Achievements like this paved the way for years of stability and significant growth, and eventually for badminton's debut as a medal sport at the Barcelona Olympic Games.

Since that very special year, 1992, we have seen a huge change in the presentation of badminton at successive Olympic Games, culminating in the most successful and technically competent delivery of badminton so far, at Beijing in August 2008.

Talented players from 50 nations competed there, a number which was a significant increase from the 28 and 32 nations which competed in the 2000 and 2004 Games.

These developments are largely due to the combined work of each of the 166 BWF member nations, the continental confederations, and our own BWF council members and staff who have developed the sport and the systems in which it operates.



The key ingredient in any organisation's success is its people, and our members are a critical component in the growth and development of badminton, as is the BWF council in guiding our activities across a four-year Olympic cycle.

The changes we see documented in this volume could not have been implemented without the support of our membership and the broader badminton community. Special mention must be given to the thousands and thousands of volunteers who sacrifice their weekends to administer and officiate, or to coach our talented youth in the technical side of badminton, or train them for the physical and psychological demands of competition.

I also want to thank the fans and sponsors who have supported badminton all the way, and of course those star players who offer a potent mix of talent, passion, and personality nearly every week of the year. With a calendar of events increasing annually, we have to say thanks for the support of sponsors and fans in choosing badminton as their number one in the world of sport.

This book has captured many wonderful stories and experiences: stories that embody the spirit of sport and its unique characteristics of bringing people together from all walks of life.

It is not just about winning or losing, it is a lot more than that. It is about team-mates turned life partners, administrators who have dedicated their life to badminton, conflicting parties joining hands for the greater good of the sport, and much more.

My sincere thanks to all past presidents, life members, and past and present Council members for their tireless work in getting us to where we are now. Our responsibility is to build on their successes and reach new levels for future generations of players.

My thanks also to the editorial team which has worked tirelessly in tight time frames to bring together this wonderful book.

Happy 75th anniversary!

KANG YOUNG-JOONG

Contents

The way ahead for badminton
by Lu Shengrong
The former BWF President has a message for the sport's administrators 8

The battledore transformed
A HISTORY OF EARLY BADMINTON
The colourful pre-history of badminton, until its organisation in 1934. 12

Sir George Thomas



A Galaxy of Stars 500BC–1932 18

First Person **Sir George Thomas**
A ROCKET AND A SLOW WOBBLER
How the founding father used to play. 20

What needs to be done
by Li Lingwei
One of badminton's greats talks about the the role and future of women. 22

Eddy Choong

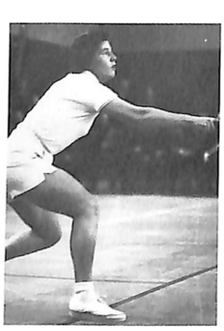


First Person **Eddy Choong**
IT'S LOVE THAT COUNTS, NOT TITLES
One of badminton's most inspirational legends describes what gives the sport its unique and transcendent quality. 24

A Galaxy of Stars 1934–1955 26

Mr Badminton – Herbert Scheele
How the sport's organiser for 40 years was not quite the man he appeared. 28

Judy Hashman



First Person **Judy Hashman, née Devlin**
AFTER ALL THESE YEARS THE SILVER STILL FEELS LIKE VELVET
One of the all-time greats explains how badminton was before money entered the game. 32

Women in badminton – the way forward
by Nora Perry, twice former world champion turned BWF councillor 34

The re-unification of badminton
HOW THE SPORT WAS HEALED
by Sir Craig Reedie, the BWF Life Vice President and IOC executive board member.
The story of how the sport avoided disastrous conflict, and his part in its recovery. 36

Noriko Takagi



First Person **Noriko Takagi**
HOW THE GREAT JUDY CAME TO RETIREMENT
A Japanese great describes her rivalry and respect for Devlin-Hashman. 38

Hollywood made badminton popular in the USA
by Niels Rasmussen
The up-and-down progress of badminton in the USA 40

Hiroe Yuki



The munificent five
The men who gave their names to badminton trophies. 44

A Galaxy of Stars 1956–1979 46

First Person **Hiroe Yuki**
THE CUP WHICH BECAME PERMANENT
One of the Japanese pioneers writes of how her breakthrough came. 48

Richard Purser



First Person **Richard Purser**
THE EYES HAVE IT
Seeing the funny side, from one of sport's characters. 49

From woollen balls to widespread popularity
ANCIENT TO MODERN IN INDIA
by Prakash Padukone
All about the famous academy in Bangalore 50

The Olympic dream – How the games were won
by Sir Craig Reedie
How badminton achieved its greatest triumph by the man who did most to make it happen 54

Li Lingwei



First Person **Li Lingwei**
WHY I HID FROM THE QUEEN
Comedy and tears in a legend's breakthrough moment. 58

Giving the players a voice
THE STORY OF THE BADMINTON PLAYERS FEDERATION
by Stephen Baddeley
The former European and Commonwealth champion and former acting Chief Executive of Sport England. 60

Badminton's most golden moment
by Richard Eaton, a badminton writer for three decades
How it wowed the world on its Olympic debut. 64

Puzant Kassabian



The Olympic gold medalists
Picture parade of champions at the five Games 68

First Person **Puzant Kassabian**
THE AWARD WHICH TOOK 25 YEARS
The award which took 25 years to be delivered. 72

The story of coaching
by Lee Jae Bok
Changes from England to Korea and beyond, seen by one of the world's cosmopolitan coaches 74

A Galaxy of Stars 1980–1988 78

The story of court officials
by Tom Marrs
The people who make world's great competitions tick, explained by the All-England championships' long-time director. 80

Nora Perry



First Person **Nora Perry**
IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS WHICH COUNT
By the woman who works at the top – and at the grass roots. 84

From Kent to Kuala Lumpur
by Torsten Berg, BWF Vice-President
The story of the big geographical and political move. 88

It began in the back bedroom
MEMORIES OF IBF'S FIRST PROFESSIONAL
by Ronnie Rowan, former IBF General Secretary
How the sport's first professional administrator saw a big step forward. 92

Cheltenham remembered
THE IBF IN ITS LAST DECADE
by Neil Cameron, former IBF chief executive
Memories of the sport's progress up until its big move. 96

A Galaxy of Stars 1989–1999 100

From 9 to 166: the family grows
by Torsten Berg, BWF Vice President
The story of the spread of nations 102

It goes to 21 – The story of scoring
The story of scoring, and how it helped changed the sport 106

Charoen Wattanasin



Developing badminton – how the training centres work
by Gunther Huber, BWF Director of Development
How the modern game is raising standards 110

First Person **Charoen Wattanasin**
THE KING AND THE MAGIC WORLD
A tale of royalty from one of badminton's best known names 112

Rings of gold – Beijing Olympic review
The best Games for badminton. 114

On the road with badminton
by Raphael Sachetat
Life on tour for a photo-journo 118

Seeking a bigger audience
HOW BADMINTON IS MAKING THE MOST OF THE MEDIA
How the BWF is communicating with the world. 120

Making the most of the market
by Thomas Lund, BWF Chief Operating Officer
and Stuart Borrie, BWF Secretary General
How to become commercially more effective 124

Badminton accelerates into the future
HOW THE BWF IS DEVELOPING.
Taking the game forward with the new BWF council 126

A Galaxy of Stars 2000–2009 130

The five continental confederations
How power is devolved – Africa, Asia, Europe, Pan-America and Oceania. 132

Those who are steering the sport
BWF councillors – the faces of those at the rudder. 144

First Person **Lu Shengrong**
WHY BADMINTON IS GAINING OLYMPIC RESPECT
How badminton is gaining Olympic respect, and how the former IBF President helped badminton to get it 146

The IBF (BWF) Presidents
The figureheads, from inter-war years to the digital era. 148

The Family 2009
The worldwide spread of nations. 150

Acknowledgements
The writers, photographers, organisers and helpers who made this publication possible. 158



Lu Shengrong

The way ahead for badminton

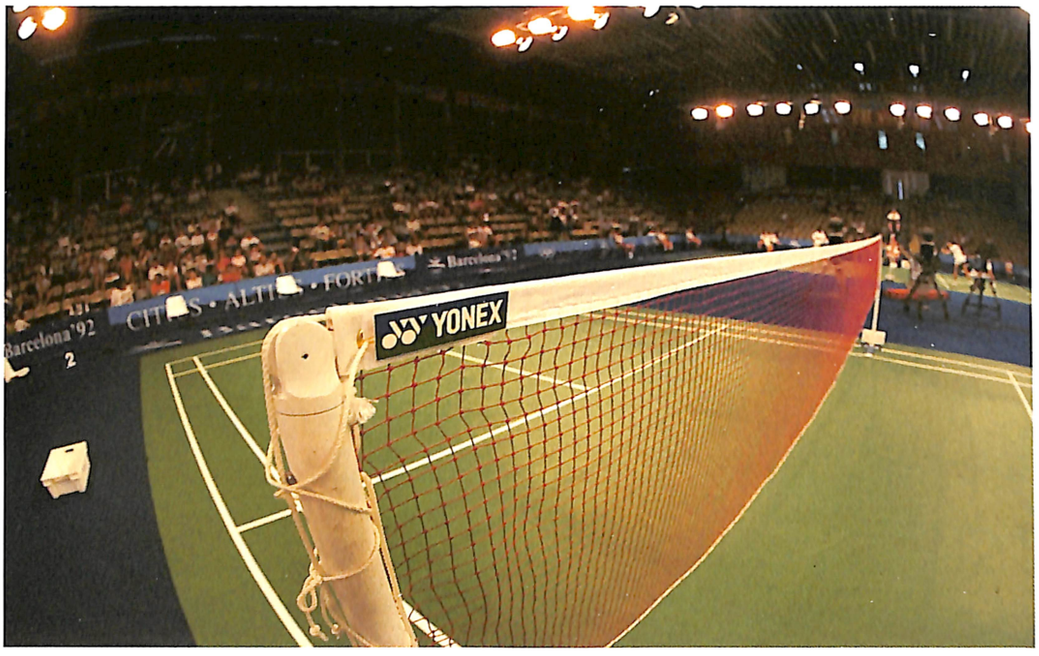
by Lu Shengrong

Former IOC member, BWF Hall of Fame member, former IBF President.



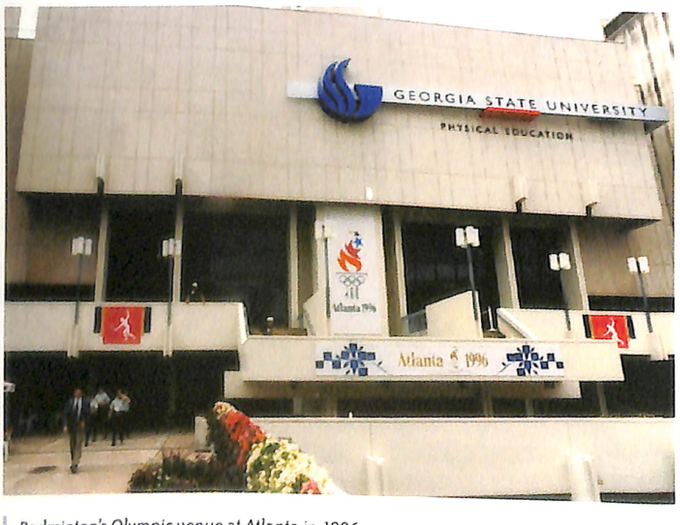
***Lu Shengrong** in the 2008 Olympic torch relay.*

The most important thing that has happened to badminton has been its inclusion in the Olympics, and I would like to write about its progress in the 17 years since it became part of the Games – and about the contribution it can continue to make.



The Barcelona venue in 1992.

Barcelona in 1992 was significant because it was badminton's first Games, but for me it really started in Atlanta, by which time I was President of the IBF (as it was then). I really enjoyed the Games and later became part of the Olympic movement; my contribution has been in trying to gain recognition for badminton in the sports world.



Badminton's Olympic venue at Atlanta in 1996.

It may help us to remember that badminton is still a youngster in the Olympic movement. Although the Games in London in 2012 will be the 30th, for badminton they will be only the sixth. It is also young compared with many sports which entered the Olympics long ago. But our sport is now growing up and becoming mature. It is moving in the right direction and I am proud of that.

I felt the importance of the Olympics all the more after becoming an IOC member. I sensed the importance of the opportunities they offer – for people outside the movement as well as inside.

That is because the purpose of the Olympics is not only for sport but for people's education, and for the harmony of the world, for the peace of the world. People need peace and they love harmony. That's what we all need, especially today.

So at the Olympic Games we fight for titles, but not only for titles – we fight to be a real person. Sport can offer this opportunity.

"People need peace and they love harmony. That's what we all need, especially today."



Madame Lu, as IBF President, with Juan Antonio Samaranch, then IOC President.

Recently we had a celebration lunch for 75 years of badminton, at which I spoke, saying that international sports organisations are not just governing bodies, but service bodies too. The BWF is one of these, providing young people around the globe with unparalleled opportunities to gain professional training, to participate in international competitions, and even to achieve their dreams of becoming world and Olympic champions – to build up healthy and happy lives.

The young need to be properly trained in sport, to be properly educated in sport. And as administrators we need to know not only about sport, not only about providing opportunities for young people to play, but how to be real men and women.

Real men and women

By hard work and with consistency, we have made great achievements in this. I would like to offer my gratitude to the friends of each generation for their consistent devotion, hard work, and contributions to the badminton movement. Without the torch relay of achievement they have created with their collective wisdom and dedication, we would not enjoy the glory we have today.

Badminton now, compared with before it joined the Olympics, fulfils young people more. I am proud to have been involved in this. I learned a lot from players and athletes during my service as an administrator.



'Real men and real women' – and some great players among them here. You may spot Kim Dong-Moon and Ra Kyung-Min among these Korean supporters.

You must first educate yourself

I learned that we are not only trying to teach and provide opportunities for players to play, and to make them professional, but to influence their way of life through the Olympic spirit. We have a responsibility not only to make the sport grow, but make it grow properly.

If you are to do this, and if you are to grow as an administrator, you must first educate yourself. You must be a good role model for the athletes. Only then can you really ask them to be better trained and educated.



Mme Lu with friends from world sports circle – Hein Verbruggen, member of the IOC (left) and Richard Pound, then President of WADA (right).

I would hate for any President to compete with other people selfishly, just to get what he or she wants. Or to use money, or to use ways of cheating to gain that position, or any other high post. It would be the same as an athlete using doping. There is no difference.

I believe that today very few people still try to put their own interests first, or use improper methods to get into the highest positions. And I hope that no-one in our sport would ever do this. I am glad that we had a 75th anniversary celebration where the President, the council, and the administration, all of them, are only serving the athletes.

Maybe I am not very intelligent compared with some people, but I know how to behave myself. I hate unhealthy ways of gaining a position. I don't like to compete with other people. Instead I try to work well with other people.

"I would hate for any President to compete with other people selfishly, just to get what he or she wants."



Lu Shengrong speaks!



Lu Shengrong with several Federation stalwarts (from left to right) Arthur Jones, Neil Cameron, Tom Bacher, and Titus Kurniadi.

"the newly elected council ... will have a very bright future. That's my hope and belief."

This I learned – and I was educated through the Olympics. In this I don't want to make myself out as exceptional. I was fortunate to be the President of the IBF.

But I do also know that people never care much about a President or an administration. Players are the ones who influence young people, and they are the ones who attract the attention. We administrators don't need our photos occupying many pages in magazines.

I was also happy to attend the 2009 Annual General Meeting, which was very successful, and I am glad to applaud the direction which the President and the newly elected council is taking. It will have a very bright future. That's my hope and belief.

It is right to have confidence in this council, because no-one can stop history moving onwards. In the short term there may be obstacles. In the long run though, I believe the sport of badminton will have a very, very good future.

People keep asking me – do you think badminton will be in danger at the Olympic Games? I say no. It is an increasingly popular sport in many different countries, a sport for old and young as well as for high level players, and spectacular to watch.

And so I have confidence, because badminton has established itself in the Olympic movement: I don't think anyone will kick it out.





'Players are the ones who influence young people' – and their emotions here will have done exactly that: Miyuki Maeda (left) and Satoko Suetsana in the women's doubles, and Lee Hyo-jung and Lee Yong-Dae (on floor) in the mixed doubles.

The battledore transformed

A HISTORY OF EARLY BADMINTON

It can be a good thing if origins are shrouded in mystery. It can create reasons to ponder one's identity, and occasionally to change one's view of it. It may also help clarify one's direction.



Korean shuttlecock kicking.

Did our game begin where and when its rules were written? Or elsewhere, a long time before that? Did it begin when battledores became rackets, or when there was a net across which to hit a shuttlecock? Or was the shuttlecock itself the crucial artefact in the evolution of the sport we organise today?

But maybe artefacts are not the only important things. Maybe the purpose to which they have been put is significant too. Shuttlecocks were kept up in the air more than 2,000 times by an aristocrat and a friend at Badminton House in England in the 1830's, we are told. If this was one of the game's defining moments, as the sport's name suggests, then a co-operative ingredient was contained in it.

These indoor activities, at the Duke of Beaufort's country home in Gloucestershire, evolved quickly, perhaps with a piece of string which became a net, then certainly with informal codes of play, and soon afterwards with a set of rules. If it is these which are badminton-defining, then we have a slightly different view of how it emerged.

These and other overlapping mysteries may make us more aware of the character of our sport. They may offer insights into how much of its identity originates from China and other parts of the Far East, which is where shuttlecock games probably began, and how much from India, which had a major role in a unifying moment, or how much from Britain, where the sport was first administered and then transformed.

These considerations were implicit in a paradigm shift of history described in the 2000 Olympic Games programme in Sydney, which pointed out that "before Badminton House, there was poona, and before poona, there was jeu de volant, and before that, battledore and shuttlecock, and, before that, Ti Jian Zi."

As long ago as 500 BC the Chinese were playing this, sometimes referred to as Ti Jianji, a shuttle-kicking game which can be played co-operatively or competitively.



Hanetsuki game, Japan.



Shuttlecock and Battledore (Hanetsuki game).

It remains unclear whether this led to battledore and shuttlecock, two people hitting a shuttlecock backwards and forwards as many times as they could without allowing it to hit the ground, which seems to have begun roughly five centuries later in China, Japan, India, Siam and Greece – though it seems very possible.

How the shuttlecock originated and spread to so many different countries so long ago remains even more mysterious, though theories abound. They include suggestions that it was an inspiration caused by the feathers on arrows which make stable flight possible, or a development from quill pens stuck into cork stands, or the need to construct something which is easier to strike, initially at least, than a feather ball.

What is certain is there were many different types and sizes, with very varying weights. And what seems likely is that shuttle-kicking led to Ti Jianji, which is still played for competition and for training, and then to another game with a net which was the ancestor of badminton.

For these reasons the birth of the modern game took place in the southernmost province of China, Guangdong, according to the late Ken Brock, the IBF historian. It is there that a game, Wang-jian, was played with a net, though with different shuttles from badminton, and of varying types – some with quite long feathers set in a base of sheepskin weighted with small coins!

That is a forerunner of 20th century developments in China, says Brock, in which the State Commission for Physical Culture approved Jianqui as a formal sport, publishing rules similar to badminton's, except that it is played three a side.

None of this would have happened without the emergence of battledores or ancient bats, which developed all over the world – in America and Europe as well as the Far East. In ancient Greece battledore and shuttlecock is at least 2,000 years old.

Some battledores were rectangular short-handled affairs, others round- or oval-headed; later vellum-covered, frame-headed ones became popular, though quite when and where they started is unknown.

A few of the battledores used in Badminton House in the nineteenth century are still kept there: they are half a metre long, have a leathered covered shaft with a circular vellum-covered head, and when the shuttle impacts it is extremely noisy.

Certainly battledore and shuttlecock was played by peasants in England in the 17th century; it also developed into a popular children's game. It became a favourite pastime of the noble and leisure classes in other European countries, becoming known as jeu de volant.

Women, it seems, have had an affinity with badminton from its pre-history, and the game appears to have crossed class divisions more quickly than many others too.

"Before Badminton House, there was poona, and before poona, there was jeu de volant, and before that, battledore and shuttlecock, and, before that, Ti Jian Zi."



Badminton House, the Duke of Beaufort's country house, after which the sport is named. Here battledore and shuttlecock started to evolve into badminton.

Scenes of nobility or royalty, or of pretty girls holding bats and rackets and strange looking shuttles, often posing on lawns, have been painted by artists from all over Europe, Scandinavia and the Far East, while from America come sketches of play in colonial times.

By 1860 a London toy dealer, Isaac Spratt, published a booklet called "Badminton battledore – a new game", and sold something which may have been a modification of what children played at Badminton House.

The game did begin there, but in a slightly different way, according to Sir George Thomas, the IBF founder-President, who played at Badminton House. It all started sometime between 1863 and 1868 on a rainy day when there was a house party, he says, but claims it was visitors rather than the children of the Duke who created it.



Battledore and shuttlecock, similar to that played at Badminton House in the 1850's.

It was formalised, according to former All-England champion S.M. Massey in his 1911 coaching manual, by John Baldwin, a batter of shuttlecocks at the Duke's house, a multi-talented sportsman, and a compiler of rules for other games. He may have done this for badminton.

More likely though is that the change from battledore to badminton happened gradually and not just in one place. It was in India where poona, a game rather closer to modern badminton, developed.

Because it was fast and competitive, it became popular with British army officers stationed at the city of Pune. Its rules, arguably the first badminton rules, were written there in 1873.

So badminton can claim to be a year or two older than lawn tennis. It did not develop as quickly as tennis but it became popular enough as an outdoor amusement for The Times of India to run a piece in which the Bishop of Madras protests against it as a threat to Christian worship, both in his city and in Calcutta! But in Bombay, allegedly they were "more virtuous"!

It was played indoors at Karachi in 1870, and it was apparently there that an hour-glass shaped court developed, where two doors opened into the centre of each side of a room, creating a recess in the court.

Outdoor badminton predominated. But when imperial soldiers returned to Britain they took it with them and a more serious version developed indoors, with clubs springing up in the resorts and spas of southern England, in Folkestone, Teignmouth, Bath, Southampton, Bognor Regis, and Guildford. Singles was often regarded as a selfish game and some clubs played triples and quadruples – as people did in China.



Vellum-covered battledores.

Rackets featuring strings across an oval frame were first used to play tennis-like games in the 15th century. They were also used for poona, and once they were brought to England they went through rapid evolution.

An expanding market brought hand-crafted, gut-strung wooden rackets at low prices, though further major changes with metal framed rackets did not come till after world war two, and the strengthening and lightening synthetic materials, which enabled players to hit much harder, changing the sport, emerged only in the 1970's and 1980's.

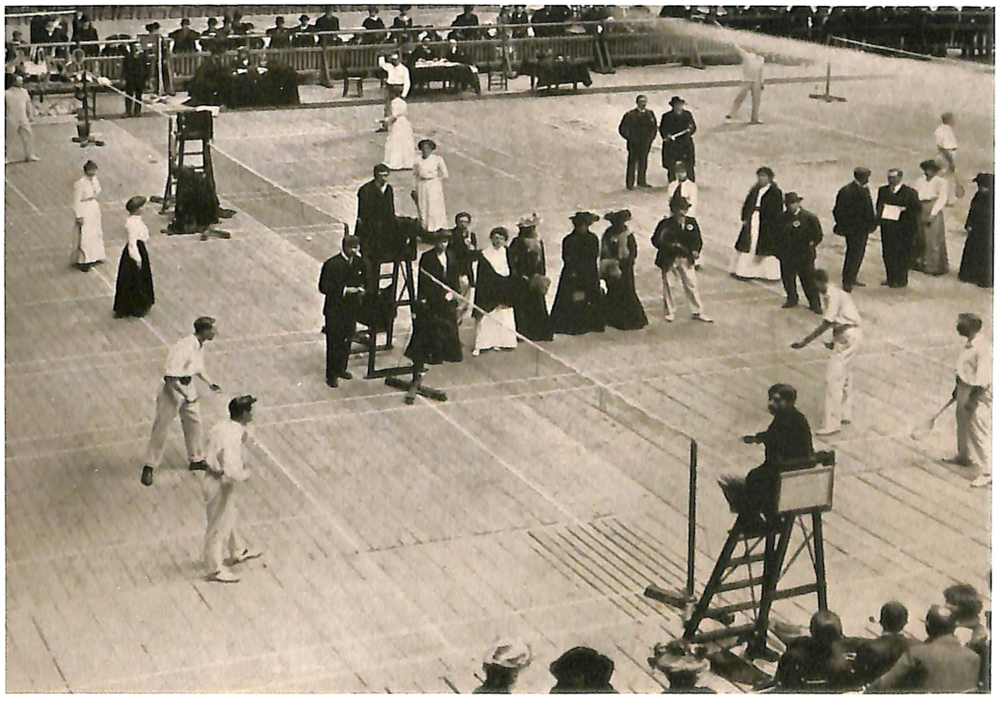
But before modern badminton could emerge, it had to be standardised, something which required a governing body. This emerged in 1893 at Southsea, a coastal suburb of Portsmouth, with the inception of the Badminton Association, with Colonel S.C.C. Dolby as its President, with 14 clubs and uniform rules.

Within five years badminton had its first open tournament, at Guildford, though still with an hour-glass court, the legacy of its Indian origins, something which survived until a General Shakspear proposed its abolition in 1901.

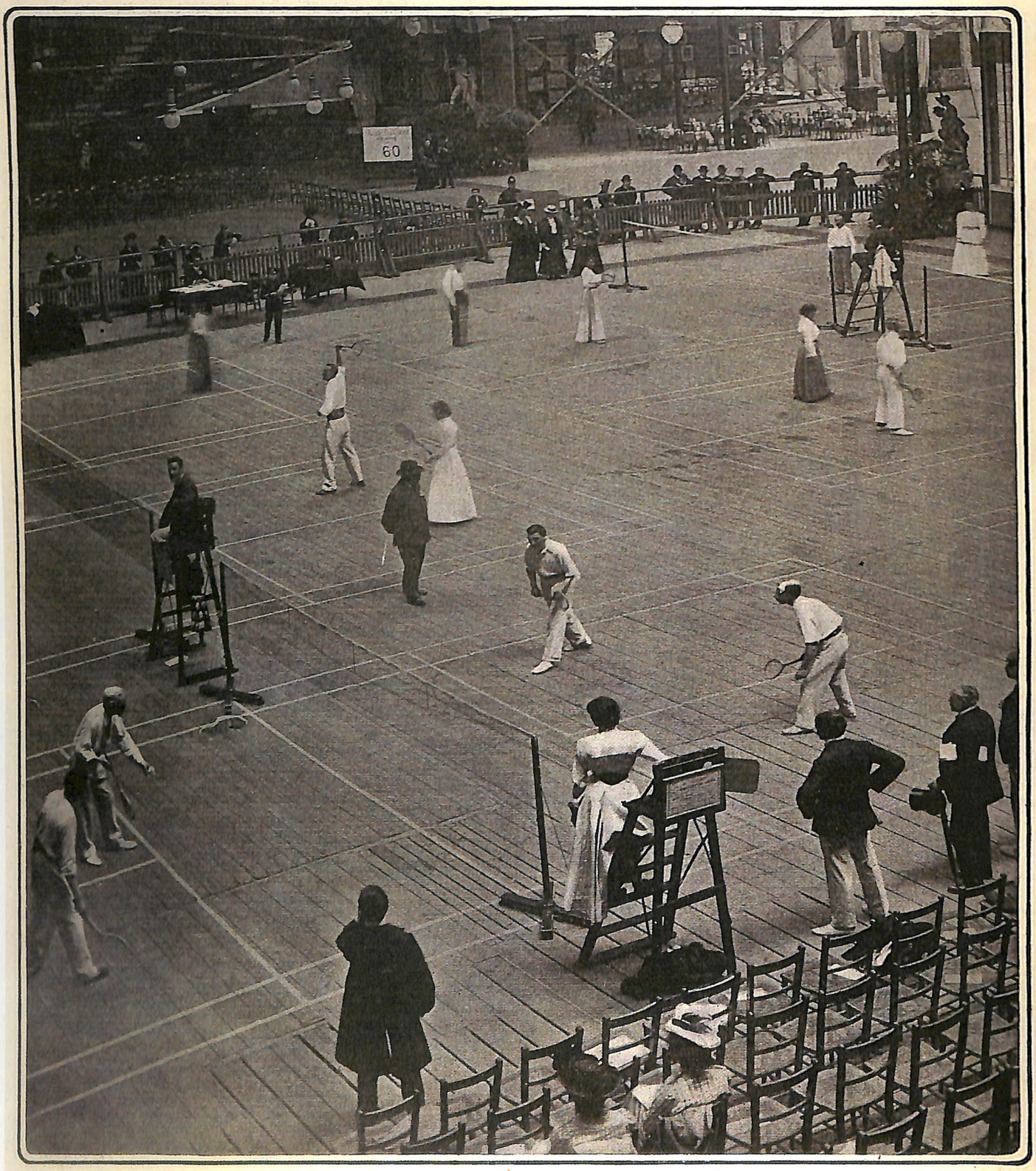
By then badminton not only had a rectangular court, but a more evolved set of rules, a reasonable organisation, and players who were more athletic and skilled. Within another ten years the number of clubs had increased tenfold. By 1911 there were 325.

Nine months before the 20th century opened its bloody curtain, the first All-England championships took place. It was not evident that this modest one-day event, held at the London Scottish Drill Hall, and including a lady with a coloured and elaborate hat which was said to be worth a point or two as a distraction, would for a while become a peacetime idyll and the world's best-known tournament. Daylight was regarded as ideal for matches so most badminton took place in the afternoons, and it was only people of leisure who competed on weekdays. But it quickly became so popular that purpose-built halls began to spring up. By 1908 the London Hall in North Kensington had artificial lighting, the precursor of a change which revolutionised access to the sport.

"Within five years badminton had its first open tournament, at Guildford, though still with an hour-glass court, the legacy of its Indian origins, something which survived until a General Shakspear proposed its abolition in 1901."



The All-England championships 1902.



THE INTERNATIONAL BADMINTON TOURNAMENT AT THE CRYSTAL PALACE

The old-fashioned game of badminton is rapidly becoming a serious rival to ping-pong. To all intents and purposes it is tennis played with a shuttlecook instead of with a ball. It can be played in a large room or out-of-doors, and two, three, four, six, or





First Row—Miss Taylor, Mrs. Fairbanks, H. Close, F. Fairbanks, E. Chesterton, G. A. Thomas, S. M. Massey, C. Meyer, A. Legrand, F. S. Davis, Mrs. Yeo Thomas, B. G. Narischkine, J. Richardson, C. Dudfield Willis. *Second Row*—Miss Thomas, Miss Touleau, Miss Larminie, Mrs. Dudfield Willis, Miss Radeglia, Mrs. Taylor, Mrs. Douglas. *Third Row*—Major Savage, H. Comyn, J. Yeo Thomas, W. Taylor.

Two pictures of English players touring in Dieppe in 1908.

Organised badminton soon spread beyond the British Isles. By 1907 it reached South Africa, British Columbia, New York and even the Falkland Islands. It was soon played in France, but it was a while before the sport caught on in the rest of Europe.

It reached a peak in Britain in the 1920's and spread to North America and Scandinavia, with Denmark and Canada making the biggest strides. The quality of play in Denmark rose sharply from 1930 onwards when clubs built their own halls, mostly through co-operative community effort. By 1935 Copenhagen Badminton Club had nearly a thousand members, and by the late 1930's the Danes were among the leading nations.

Being a top badminton player had become an expensive business, but the amateur tradition was so strongly ingrained that it prevented most people from trying to earn money at the game. Nevertheless for a pioneering few the temptation of turning pro and becoming a full-time coach was irresistible, which was what Frank Devlin, the pioneering Irishman did in 1931.

By the mid-thirties the game began to attract significant audiences in the USA, thanks partly to the clown prince of badminton, Ken Davidson, a Scottish international, Yorkshire cricketer, and a trick-shot expert with a zany sense of humour who went to live in New York. About 3,000 came to a world professional title match.

With such great overseas development it was no longer appropriate for the Badminton Association, an English body, to run the sport and so the International Badminton Federation was formed in 1934, the founder members being England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales, and Denmark, Holland, France, Canada, and New Zealand. How the nine multiplied into more than 160 is a story which Torsten Berg takes up in forthcoming pages. Meanwhile, we require a footnote with perspective.

It might have been another year before Malaysia and India were formally involved with the IBF, and longer before Japan, Indonesia and China did so, but this should not lead to any assumptions that pre-1934 little was happening in the Far East.

There may have been an enormous amount of talent in Asia "smouldering unseen and unsuspected," according to Brock. There seems little doubt that he was right.

RICHARD EATON



IBF President Ian Palmer presents Ken Brock with the Meritorious Service Award in the late eighties.

A Galaxy of Stars 500BC–1932

Badminton's evolution has been a mixture of the gradual and the sudden, the little-observed and the brilliantly visible. And so we show it in two contrasting ways – events in a time-line, and great stars in a galaxy.

From shuttle-kicking in China to battledore-wielding at Badminton House, and from World Championships all over the globe to Olympic Games in five cities, badminton has been moving forward for more than two millennia. However the greatest acceleration has taken place in the last two decades.

Great players came initially from Denmark, England, and Malaysia, and then in great numbers from Indonesia, Korea, and especially China.

We have selected images of some of the best here and in a sequence of six double pages through the book.

500BC



Kick-shuttle played in China and other parts of the Far East.

1000–1500

Battledore and shuttlecock played in China, Greece and parts of the Far East.

1500

Battledore and shuttlecock played in Europe.

1830



Battledore and shuttlecock tried at Badminton House, Gloucestershire, England.

1856–59

Badminton House game converted into badminton with a net, with John Baldwin formalising some rules.

1860

Toy dealer in London, Isaac Spratt, offers the game of Badminton-Battledore for sale.

1867



Poona played in India.

1877

Poona leads to a badminton code of conduct drawn up in India.

1882

Badminton club formed in South Africa.

1879–82

Soldiers returning from India help cause formation of clubs in England.

1887



Badminton in India.

1890

Badminton reaches Canada.

1893

The Badminton Association formed to administer the game internationally from England.

1895

Badminton reaches Germany.

1897

First badminton club in India.

1898

First Open tournament, Guildford, England.

1899



The All England championships begin.



Olde rackets in the English archive, early 20th century.

1901

Hour-glass court abolished.

1900

Badminton reaches New Zealand.

1929

Badminton reaches Japan.

1925

Badminton starts in Denmark.

1920's

Badminton reaches Indonesia via Singaporean merchants.

1919

Badminton reaches Malaya via British trading posts.

1931

Netherlands Badminton Bond founded.

continued on page 26

1908



An England group touring in Dieppe, France in 1908.

1925–31



Frank Devlin of Ireland is the second most successful player ever at the All-England Open Championships, with 18 titles between 1925 and 1931. Six of them were men's singles titles and there were three triple titles – in 1926, 1927 and 1929. Devlin was included in the Hall of Fame in 1997, together with his daughter Judy Devlin Hashman.

1932



Ralph Nichols, All-England men's singles champion five times, 1932, 1934, 1936, 1937, 1938, men's doubles champion three times 1936–8.

First Person

Sir George Thomas



***George Thomas** as a young man.*

A ROCKET AND A SLOW WOBBLER

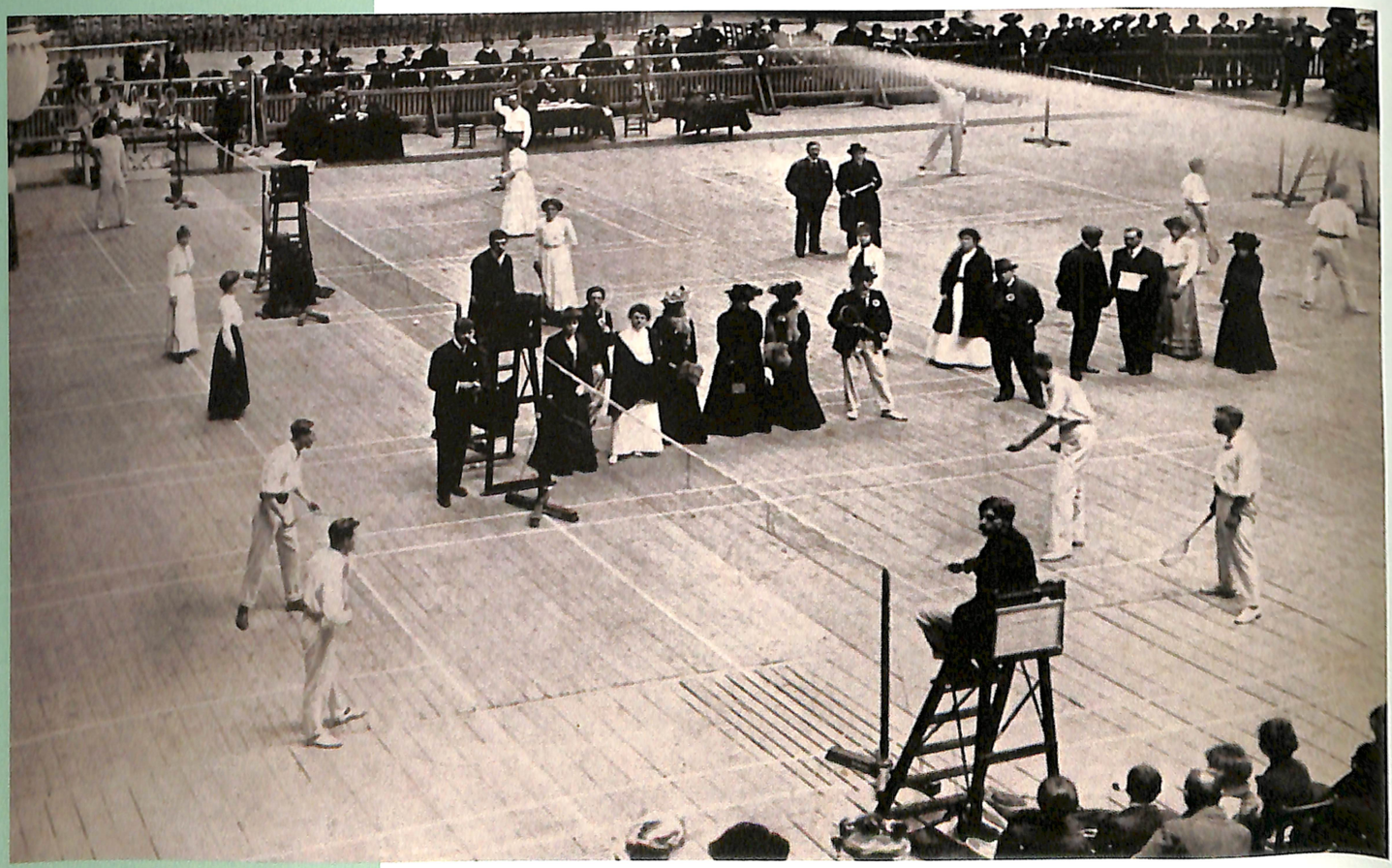
(reprinted from the book *Far Fly The Birds* by the late Ken Brock, the IBF historian)

One of my chief badminton regrets is that I was not present at the inaugural tournament in 1899, for it would have been pleasant to hold a complete record for the series, but actually I did not start to play the game until the winter of 1899-1900.

It was in my first season when a fellow member of the Southsea Club whose prospective partner had failed him, persuaded me to enter with him in the doubles. I did so with a degree of trepidation becoming in a novice, but as luck would have it – thanks to a small entry, a bye, and the very obliging play of our first opponents – we reached the semi-finals, before being well and truly dealt with by the ultimate winners, S. Collier and H.L. Mellersh.

It was not possible to mark out the courts overnight, and using paint or whitewash would have resulted in a glorious mess. So when I turned up at the hall I found a couple of committee men putting the finishing touches to the lines with chalk. Needless to say these needed frequent repairs in the course of the day, and though they were moderately straight at the start they were definitely wayward at the end.

There were four courts in a row, the one at each end being overhung for about half the width by a gallery so low that the shuttles were constantly hitting it, though the vogue for high clearing had not yet become established.



The All England championships in 1902, when George Thomas was 21.



Sir George Thomas with the Thomas Cup.



Sir George Thomas presenting the Thomas Cup to Wong Peng Soon, of Malaysia.



Sir George Thomas was also a Grand Master at chess.

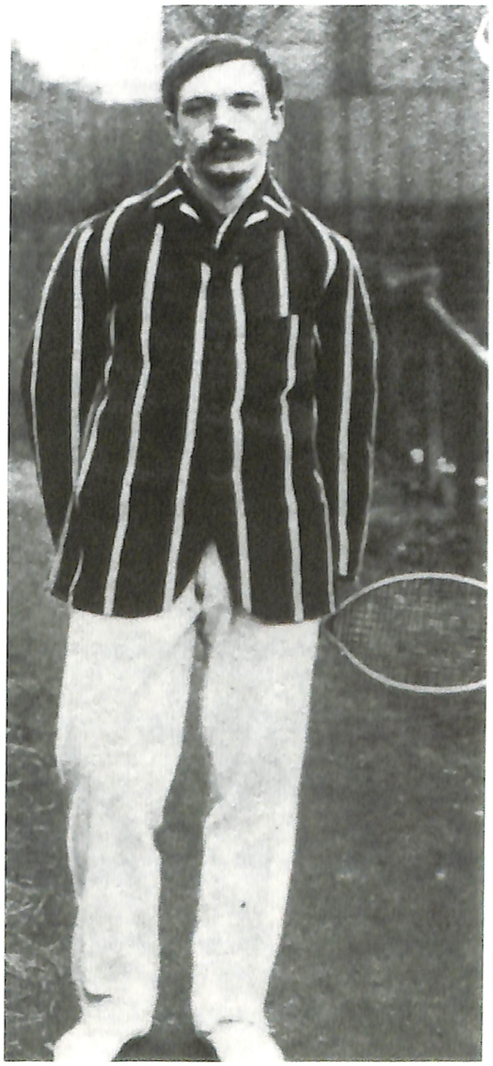
Singles were included in 1900 and at that time the court for singles was as wide as for doubles but shorter, the long service for doubles being the baseline for singles. The difficulty of serving against an opponent with winning strokes can easily be imagined. The need for change was quickly apparent when, during the final of the ladies singles, Miss E.W. Thomson and Miss E. Moseley put each other out 14 times in succession without scoring. The present narrower full length court was introduced before the next season.

The old hour-glass court, three feet narrower at the net than the greater part of its length, was also abolished after this tournament. As a shot was not allowed to pass outside the posts they were continued upwards for about five feet above the level of the net, looking rather like anaemic rugby posts.

At the start of the match Mr J.H.E. Hart, the shuttle dispenser in chief, would offer the players their choice between a 'rocket' and a 'slow wobbler', and having chosen, it was played with for so long as it retained almost all of its feathers and some semblance of its original shape.

It is hard to say how good the cracks were in 1900, but three of the winners that year held their position at the forefront for many subsequent years – S.M.Massey, Miss Lucas, and Miss Thomson, the latter at their zenith, two of the greatest players the game has ever produced.

"At the start of the match ... the shuttle dispenser in chief would offer the players their choice between a 'rocket' and a 'slow wobbler'"



Sir George Thomas in 1908.

What needs to be done

by Li Lingwei



Li Lingwei *World women's singles champion, 1983, 1989, world women's doubles champion 1985, winner of IOC Women and Sport trophy for Asia, member of the IOC Olympic Programme Commission, member of the BWF Hall of Fame, BWF council member.*

It is a hot topic. The percentage of women on the council went down at the BWF elections in 2009, which was a surprise. Gentlemen offer both hands in support for women. And yet this happened.

It needs to be said that it is not only in badminton that this has taken place but in other sports too. It is a worldwide, multi-sport, long-lasting task to increase and improve the roles of women.

Women have achieved at least 20 percent participation in the BWF council in the past. According to the recommendation from the IOC, the female percentage should be 25 percent. So the fact that this time we are very much lower is not good. Despite this we have done many things to encourage females, on court and off court.

Compared to other sports, badminton is achieving a lot of positive goals, in women's participation for example, and with equal prize money. And it is the same with participation at events. So on court badminton's equality achievements are good. And personally speaking, as a female player from China, we have enjoyed more success than the boys!

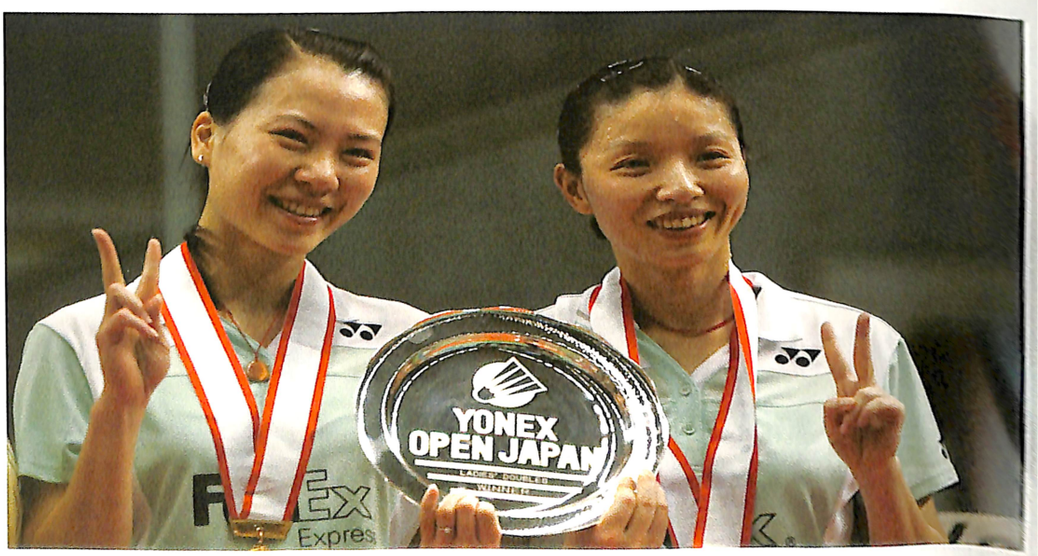
Relatively, women have had results as good as the men. But in the Olympic programme, from an IOC perspective, it's very much a matter of ambition to have female participation in all areas, off and on court.

So badminton still has to meet the requirements of the IOC, to make the sport more global and to have more participation and more equal pariticipation all over the world.

Compared to other sports, badminton is quite good. But in the administration it is different. And at present there are no executives or members of the board who are female.

Before the BWF annual general meeting, Torsten Berg sent a letter to all members to encourage them to adopt more female candidates. But unfortunately, and to my surprise, the result was less female councillors. So we have to face the reality. It means that there are more challenges and more work.

"... you have to improve yourself, and say 'I want to do that', ... You have to grab the opportunity, once the opportunity comes."



Yang Wei and Zhang Jiewen win the Japan Open 2007



Susi Susanti, in the Hall of Fame, 2004.

Why has this happened? I think that there are lots of reasons.

As women we have to work harder because we have so many roles to play – mother, daughter or wife – so most of us are in a very challenging situation. We have to work harder than men, otherwise we can't achieve our goals.

Even if a woman gets on to the board and occupies an important position, she may find it difficult to carry out the role because she is not qualified. And so you have external challenges if you are a female.

For these reasons it can be difficult to achieve a certain percentage of women as a target. It can be difficult for women to carry on, or to improve. But it is important that they do.

As I discovered, after retirement as a female player, you have to improve yourself, and say 'I want to do that', and 'I want to do this'. You have to grab the opportunity, once the opportunity comes. But on the other hand you also have to be prepared to become qualified.

You can't just say okay, we want to have a certain percentage of women. That percentage has to involve qualified people.

Sometimes we really need help. We need men to play a positive role and not a negative one. If they fight to hold a position, it is difficult for men also to offer help – or for women to get a better position and to improve. It's good for the gent not only to say we must help women and have a better environment. But sometimes it is a challenge to do it.



Gisela Hoffmann in her days as EBU General Secretary with EBU President Stan Mitchell



Lene Køppen – world women's singles champion while already a quailified dentist.



Indonesian supporter at the Sydney Olympics in 2000.

I totally agree that it is good for men to help. But there are different situations in different countries, which all have different cultures. Sometimes we have to respect those cultures. Sometimes we have to do things step by step. We cannot achieve a goal overnight. And so it can be a long task.

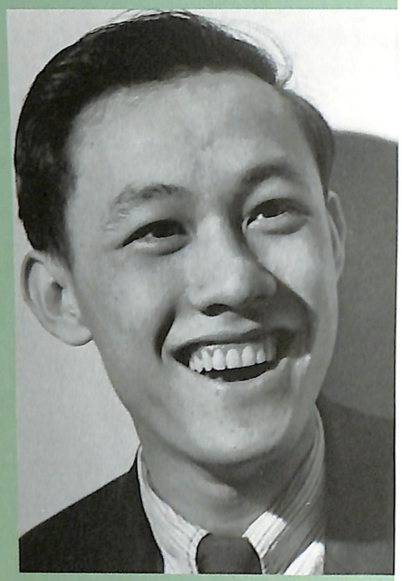
However I do feel more optimistic about the new council. We really need new blood, new ideas, and new concepts. At the same time we very much rely on former council members and leaders who have contributed to the BWF and the IBF.

Although there are many new council members, some of them have been working in international sports or in badminton for many years. So we have known each other for many years. They have held different positions and therefore have different perspectives.

We rely on experienced contributions very much, but we also need new ideas and newcomers. We need a balance of both.

First Person

Eddy Choong



Eddy Choong, *of Malaysia, when he burst onto the scene in 1951.*

Hall of Fame award winner,
Herbert Scheele award winner,
multiple All-England champion.

IT'S LOVE THAT COUNTS, NOT TITLES

(reprinted from the book *Far Fly The Birds* by the late Ken Brock, the IBF historian)

I arrived in England in 1950 to do medicine and to read law, but all that is now long forgotten. Badminton I found instead – not with my head but with my heart.

With my eyes I saw and with my heart I felt the wonder of the game, and the worth of the people in the game. Sad to say – but true to life – in sport one must conquer for any of our ideas or dreams to be heard or realised.

Fortunately I found love for the game early, when I first won the All-England men's doubles title in 1951 with my brother David. In the nine years I was in England I was in 12 All-England finals and won seven titles, four singles and three doubles with David.

Badminton has taken me three times round the world and by the time I went home to Penang in Malaysia I had won more than 75 international titles from 12 countries and more than 350 titles worldwide.

These achievements were great in their time but for me today they are memories like a shooting star (and there are millions of them) that has shot up high in the sky with all its brilliance, but will surely fall with the rising sun.



Great champions from different hemispheres – Erland Kops and Eddy Choong.

I gained my feelings for the game of badminton and memories, good as well as bad, from the people who have taken this great game from the backyards, beaches and hills to the great international halls of the world. The dream, the work, the dedication and the sweat of all these badminton people – one and all, big and small, gave me this love for badminton until, I am sure, my dying days.



Long reach and long flannels – Eddy Choong in his heyday.



Eddy Choong with Mme Lu.

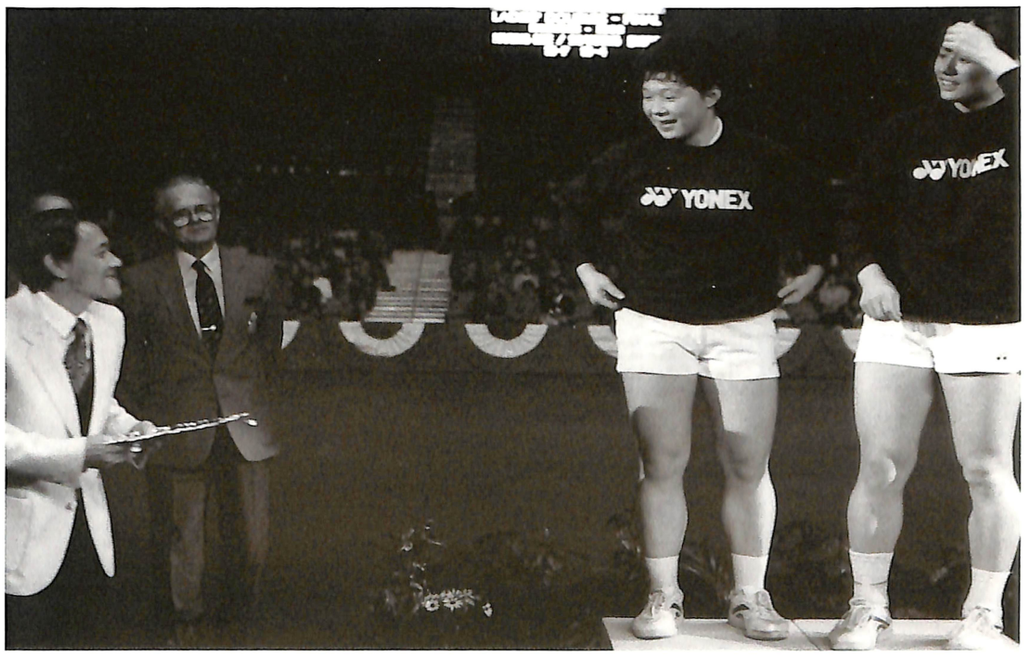
Badminton love, badminton people are my best memories, not cups and titles.

It is only from people that you can receive love back and make it grow and become ever stronger. So thank you, my fellow badminton greats, for the best memories. Please do keep the love light burning when I am gone, for I will always be with you, maybe not in the flesh, but certainly in the spirit wherever there is badminton. Hot and cold, yin and yang, my memories of badminton are about attitude.

Sport has rules and laws, unlike war, which has none. No champion is worth his salt if after getting there no-one wants to talk to him. Even with today's prize money, all or some of it will go, but the bad memories will not.

Great champions should try to leave some of their goodness behind for the young as well as their sport, for really great things take many generations to achieve. Always remember that there are millions of stars and individually they are not important. But together with the other stars they might hope to light up some parts of the night.

"Badminton love, badminton people are my best memories, not cups and titles."



Eddy Choong presents All-England trophies to Korea's Chung So-Young and Chung Myung-Hee.

However great we might think we are, we should always remember to leave behind the night light, or footsteps in the sand of life, so that others may learn and benefit from them.

However big we may think our footsteps are, it is but a moment before the sea of life will wash them all away. Nothing is really for ever and badminton champions should remember to tell themselves this. But the spirit of badminton is for ever.



Eddy Choong with Ray Stevens, England's top player of the early eighties.

A Galaxy of Stars 1934–1955

1934

International Badminton Federation formed by nine nations with Sir George Thomas the first President.



Malayan, Indian, and Hong Kong Badminton Associations founded.

1936



4 Madeira Avenue, Bromley, Herbert Scheele's home and IBF's first office, from 1936 onwards.

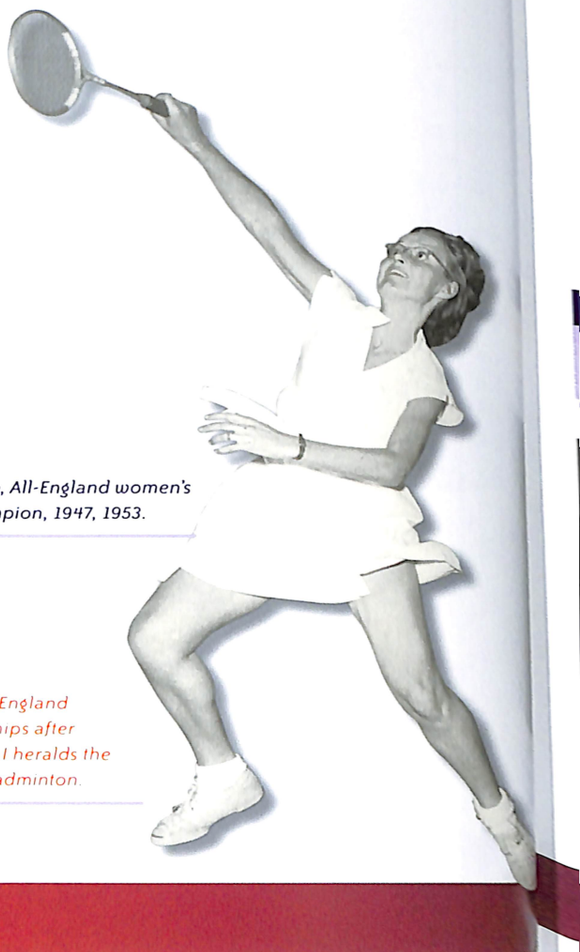
Frank Devlin tours Far East.

American and Swedish Badminton Associations founded.

1947

Marie Ussing, All-England women's singles champion, 1947, 1953.

The first All-England championships after World War II heralds the revival of badminton.



continued from page 19

1935

Badminton reaches China.

1938

The first international competition is Australia playing New Zealand for the Whyte Trophy.



Herbert Scheele becomes IBF honorary secretary.



1940

Sir George Thomas presents a trophy to the IBF for an international team event

1946

Japan's Badminton Association formed

1948



Kirsten Thorndahl, All-England women's singles champion 19 women's doubles champion four times, 1947, 1950, 1951, 1957, mixed doubles champion five times, 1948, 1955, 1957, 1960, 1961.

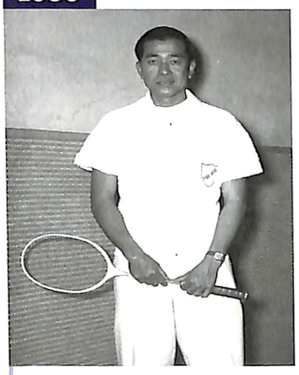
1949

Malaya wins the first Thomas Cup competition.



David Freeman, All-England men's singles champion 1949.

1950



Wong Peng Soon, All-England men's singles champion 1950, 1951, 1952, 1955.



Eddy Choong, All-England hero of the fifties.



Tonny Ahm, winner of eleven All-England titles between 1947 and 1952 – two women's singles, five women's doubles, and four mixed doubles.

1951

Badminton Association of Indonesia formed.

1952



Iris Cooley, three times All-England women's doubles champion in the fifties, here with her husband, Bill Rogers.

Plastic shuttles become permitted.

1954



Judy Devlin-Hashman, All-England women's singles champion 1954, 1957–8, 1960–64, 1966–7, women's doubles champion 1954, 1956, 1960, 1961, 1962, 1963, 1966.

Sue Devlin-Peard, All-England women's doubles champion 1956, 1960–1, 1963, 1966.

1955



Finn Kobberø and Kirsten Thorndahl, All-England mixed doubles champions four times, 1955, 1957, 1960, 1961.



Margaret Varner, All-England women's singles champion 1955–6, women's doubles champion 1958.

continued on page 46

Mr Badminton – Herbert Scheele

Herbert Scheele is remembered as a man who got world badminton moving back in the 1930's. He knew almost all there was to know about the sport, helped quadruple its size in nearly four decades of monumentally devoted service to the governing body, and lent his name to an award for special contributions to it. Yet he was not quite the person he appeared.



Herbert Scheele

Renowned for diligently administering an expanding international sport with little and sometimes no payment, for refereeing tournaments all over the world with tough-minded fairness, and for organising everything with ruthless efficiency, he lived – amazingly – in something close to chaos.

Those who visited him at his home in Bromley would wonder with amusement how someone with the tidiest of minds could survive amidst a flurry of paper, pencils, folders, files, magazines, memos, books, biros, cases, correcting fluid, letters, envelopes, erasers, elastic bands and staples, but most of all paper - paper, paper, paper.

Though the world was his ambit, Scheele administered it all from the living room and the dining room in a Victorian semi-detached house in suburban Kent. Superficially it suggested that the furthest limit of its owner's existence could be commuting to London from a catchment dormitory.

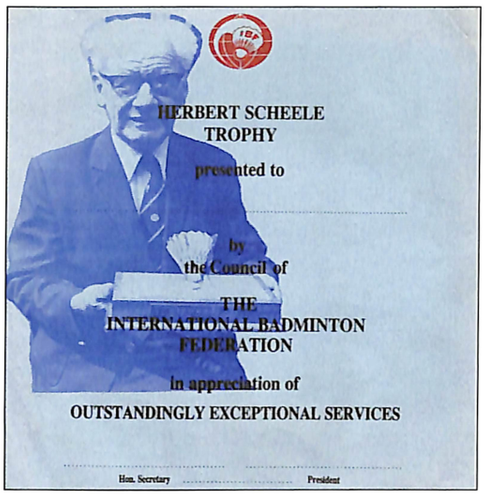


Herbert Scheele's semi-detached home, at 4 Maderia Avenue.

"... a man with exceptional knowledge, devotion to duty, courage, and singleness of purpose."

In fact, as IBF secretary from 1938 to 1976, Scheele travelled to dozens of countries, spoke excellent German, learned a little Danish, had a smattering of other languages, confronted some of the sport's most intractable international problems, and developed a reputation for fairness, firmness, and self-denying effort.

Tributes tell of one of the greatest of administrators, of a man with exceptional knowledge, devotion to duty, courage, and singleness of purpose. He was certainly the outstanding figure in badminton for 38 years.



The Herbert Scheele award certificate as originally introduced – note the IBF logo of the time.



Stellan Mohlin gets the Herbert Scheele Award from Betty Scheele.

And yet the only help he received was from his wife Betty – only, because the tasks they performed would ordinarily have required an entire secretariat. They each did the work of two people so assiduously that records, information and materials overflowed inelegantly into the other downstairs room as well, then into the spare bedrooms upstairs and eventually into the garden shed.

For this unorthodoxy they were given some expenses, though they were fairly nominal. It is hard for us to comprehend, in these professional days, how much of their own finances and effort they invested in the leisure, pleasure and fulfilment of badminton players everywhere. The couple had no children.

After the second world war Scheele added to his commitments. He restarted the IBF handbook almost single-handedly, producing a remarkable 400-page edition, and also edited the Badminton Gazette, an English publication which was a unique source of information and entertainment.

He also became the first paid secretary of the Badminton Association of England in 1945. But paid was an exaggeration. He did it mostly out of love, and many grew to love him in return. Others certainly respected him, for he tolerated no nonsense.

He was tough and he could be brusque. He had little time for foolishness or incompetence, still less for lateness, particularly at the All-England championships, the world's top tournament in those days, which he refereed for 33 years. Friend or not, it made no difference - if you were 20 minutes late you would be scratched.



Lene Køppen with Herbert Scheele.

And yet he had a way with many people. It was said that he could speak to an Indonesian official, an English umpire, a Malaysian player, or a Danish team leader and get a positive response from all of them.

To him, the game and the players always came first and he would never subordinate them to his own requirements, or those of the media, or even of spectators.

But this could make him dogmatic. He did not, for instance, always have a vision of how television and sponsorship were starting to become important for badminton's progress.

Once when a TV producer wanted to discover whether a match might be scheduled before 3pm, so that badminton had a chance of preceding football and getting on air, Scheele replied: "This tournament is for the players and that's the only thing which matters. I'm not interested in the BBC or anything else."



Times were different. Herbert Scheele's desk was often surrounded by smoke. Here, Mr Badminton converses with a cigar-puffing legend, Erland Kops.

There were other paradoxes. Scheele ran things with a semi-military discipline, yet his appearance could be unkempt. His hair, once described as "leonine", did indeed look as though it could grow into a mane, while flecks of ash sometimes fell from the cigarette in his mouth on to his clothes.

When you approached his desk it could be surrounded by clouds of smoke. Rarely was it surrounded by many people, however, because issues were usually dealt with so pithily.

He was not afraid to disappoint people, in the cause of fairness, and would not be intimidated. He would judge things and tell of them as he saw it.

One famous former player said of him: "At our age you could be a bit disrespectful, but now I realise just how much we owed him. He was the father of badminton, not just in England but worldwide." Another said: "I loved him to bits, but he could be severe."

Scheele's knowledge of the laws, history, and rules and regulations was unsurpassed, making him invaluable to countries and council members almost everywhere. He acquired such a reputation for reliability and integrity that he was asked to referee tournaments in many countries.

This meant that sometimes he would have to work in conditions which were adverse. Everything was done in an amateur way in those days; tournaments often had to be got ready and run just by Herbert and Betty.

They devoted so much of themselves to badminton that Betty continued to keep a close contact with the sport for more than a quarter of a century after she was widowed.

This two-person team would make the draw, using an ancient typewriter, and do the seedings based on their own research and judgements. A typical scene was Betty calling out: "Herbert, this machine isn't very good – you'll have to slow down!"

Work in different countries could inevitably bring misunderstanding and conflict too. But no-one could have predicted the traumatic incident in 1967 when Scheele halted the Thomas Cup tie between Indonesia and Malaysia at the Istora Senayan in Jakarta, and then, after the home team declined to restart, awarded victory to the visitors.

"He was the father of badminton, not just in England but worldwide."

It happened as the visitors were poised to win, with spectators "shouting, waving, booing, stamping, letting off flash bulbs", according to Scheele. When it reached a level he regarded as unfair, he took a decision which caused fury among thousands of people.

The description of the noise does not sound very different from what happens during many passionate Thomas Cup ties these days, and so one wonders, more than 40 years later, whether a referee would make a similar decision now.

Scheele was, like all of us, partly a product of his own time and place, and may have been influenced by the hush with which some Europeans, in those days at least, tended to watch Wimbledon and other big racket sports events.



Betty Scheele maintained her love of badminton long after her husband's death. Here, she is with Madame Lu, IBF President, and Park Joo-Bong, Olympic gold medalist.



Herbert Scheele outside Buckingham Palace with wife Betty, after receiving an OBE award.

Times have changed in epoch-making ways, empires have faded, nation-building has gathered pace, and attitudes have transformed. But unpopular though Scheele became for this confrontational decision, his courage was undeniable. Nor could one deny his many achievements.

During his time, IBF membership rose from 14 to 55, the Thomas and Uber Cups team competitions were initiated, and the World Championships, which started the year after he resigned, were planned. The question of open badminton was also discussed.

Scheele showed a different kind of courage when, hampered by a serious back problem, he discharged himself from hospital to make his 25th appearance at the All-England championships. Although the affliction remained, he continued travelling around the world, sometimes limping from his referee's table to arbitrate, congratulate, or commiserate with players.

When presented with a silver salver by the IBF for a quarter of a century's devoted work, Scheele expressed pleasure that badminton had been included in both the Asian and Commonwealth Games. This was something he thought would lead to entry into the Olympics. He was very right.

His retirement in 1976 – not long before the IBF and the WBF split asunder – was never quite a full retirement, because he was not made that way, and because he became an advisory Vice President to the IBF until his death in 1981.

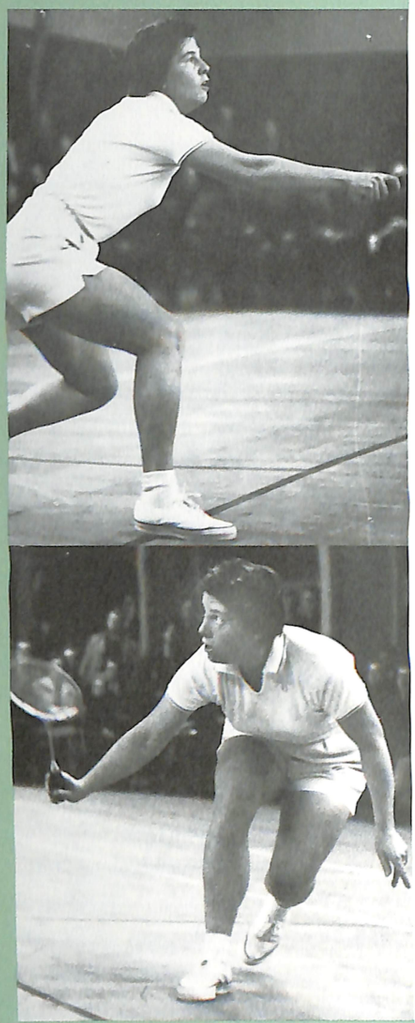
You always felt there might be something signal about his passing. Four months after receiving the Order of the British Empire from the Queen at Buckingham Palace, an occasion of life-defining joy for him, he died. Almost exactly as the 1981 All-England men's singles final got under way – on time of course, and perhaps he sensed that – he was gone.

RICHARD EATON



The Herbert Scheele Trophy.

Judy Hashman, née Devlin



***Judy Hashman** in her prime.*

Winner of 17 All-England titles, 83 titles worldwide, and the leading player in three successive Uber Cup winning United States teams.

AFTER ALL THESE YEARS THE SILVER STILL FEELS LIKE VELVET

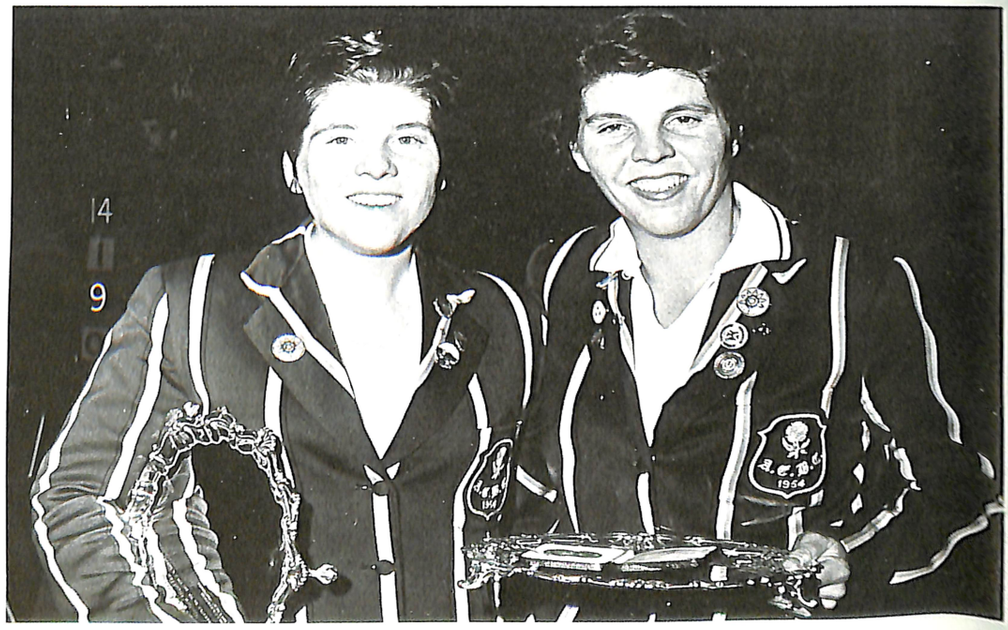
My memories of the All-England championships go back 55 years – and off court how different everything was then!

Where to begin describing it? Encircling the entire Empress Hall arena to find an open door? Staying in an unheated hotel room so that a shirt washed after play on Wednesday was still sodden on Saturday? Travelling the underground from central London to Wembley in the rush hour and having to stand all the way? Walking the long distance from the station to the arena carrying a heavy suitcase in one hand and rackets in the other? There were no sports bags then. Not able to find anywhere open for an evening meal when we returned to Piccadilly at 11pm? Having to persuade the hotel porter to unlock a bathroom to get a relaxing bath after play? They had all been cleaned and then locked for the night. Worrying about breaking a string in one of only two rackets? They had both been strung six months earlier and used throughout the season. No practice courts, or even a net to hit over anywhere, so it was a matter of going on cold? Cold it certainly was – as the floor was laid on solid ice. There was virtually no heat in the arena at all.

Prior to all this there had been a 24-hour transatlantic flight from Baltimore to New York to Boston in a propeller-driven plane, to either Newfoundland or Nova Scotia, to Iceland, to Scotland, to London, and then upon arrival an enforced two to three days rest to allow for jet-lag, and especially the more debilitating ankle swelling, to subside.

So there was never any doubt that 100 percent effort would be made 100 percent of the time on court, to try to balance and justify to oneself the many inconveniences. One comment after my initial win was incredulous that I ran for everything all of the time. Why not? It was my only chance to get warm!

Over the 13 years I played at the top level, certain moments stand out. Oddly, perhaps my first singles and doubles are not among them.



Sisters Judy and Sue Devlin – champions together.



Judy Hashman, the only badminton player invited into the International Women's Sports Hall of Fame in New York, 2008.

The year my sister Sue and I won the doubles trophy outright, 1961, is of massive importance to me. Surprisingly for us we actually went on court confidently, and when we led by a game and ten-something, and under no pressure, we both almost lost our breath and dared not look at each other.

Our father's outright singles, doubles and mixed trophies had stood on the sideboard at home all our lives and now we were about to add our own. Fantastic.

1957 brought another massive occasion for me. Despite a cracked coccyx I managed to prevent the trophy from being won outright by Margaret Varner. In Uber Cup year, Sue and I won the doubles as well. By 1960 that singles trophy became mine to keep, and I saw that the names on it reflected back to my father's era – Mrs Barrett, Mrs Uber, the Kingsbury sisters.

All these years later, when my fingers caress the silver bowl, there is a magic to it. The silver feels like velvet and I touch it with a reverence.

Other occasions created huge fascination and excitement. Erland Kops had to alter his entire game, and unerringly stuck to his defensive plan to overcome Tan Aik Huang in the 1967 final.



Judy Hashman pictured with Eddy Choong (left), another of the sport's legends and Maurice Robinson, a top coach.

Some considered it dull. It was a connoisseur's final. Natural attacking tendencies had to be submerged by a second game of brilliant and sustained control of the shuttle and no flair.

The swansong of Finn Kobbero and Hammergaard Hansen also brought massive control, as they almost never lifted the shuttle, but played a neutral game which thwarted their young and agile opponents, who invariably got fed up, lifted the shuttle and lost the point.

I also hold in high esteem the tactics of Wong Peng Soon in 1955, his final visit. At an exhibition in Sheffield he lulled the young upstart Eddy Choong into a false sense of security, by appearing to tire in the long rallies and losing. A short time later Peng Soon won the All-England 15-10 in the third with no evidence of tiredness.

These four men all showed a second game of high class, a great achievement.

My memories are immense over the years. I met my husband Dick at the All-England in 1958 and we reached the mixed semi-finals together some years later: different emotions altogether.

Mostly the memories are good, a few were bad, and some are hazy. Throughout there was a desire by me to display the sport as perfectly as possible, and to the best of my ability while studying or working full time.

The chance to devote myself to the game was never possible, and I wonder whether, in this respect, today's players realise their good fortune.



Judy Hashman – clear-headed and forthright.

Women in badminton – the way forward

by Nora Perry



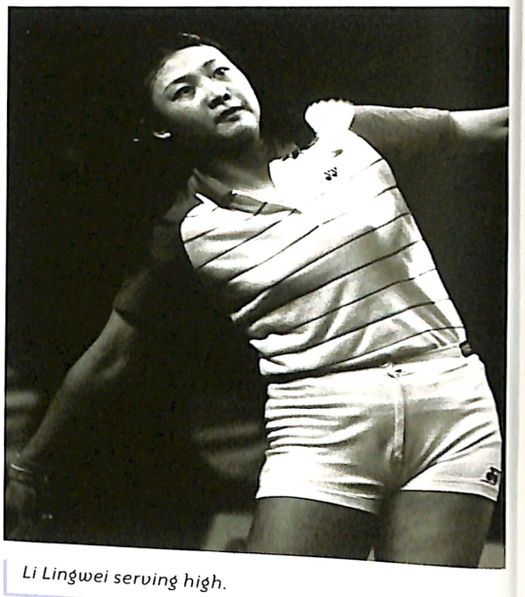
Nora Perry *Former world women's doubles and mixed doubles champion, former All-England women's doubles and mixed doubles champion, member of the World Badminton Hall of Fame, BWF council member.*

It is very important that women get more of a say in how badminton is run. From an ethical viewpoint it is only fair that they should, and from a political point of view it is essential.

The IOC encourages its sports to create equality between men and women, and expects the same of itself. Also, women have a great deal of talent to contribute and it is a waste if they are not able to.

So it is a shame we don't have more women on the BWF council. We had four on the previous council, but the 2009–13 council has dropped back to only two – myself, from England, and Li Lingwei from China. Was it politics which played a role in this? I am not sure.

I am also on the BWF's IOC committee, as is Li Lingwei. Torsten Berg chairs it and I shall support him in any way I can. The issue of equality will be one which will be addressed but there may be some areas which people find difficult to change. It may take another cycle before they can let go, and say she is able to do things, or he is able to do things, and the sport can move forwards.



Li Lingwei serving high.

One of the problems with gender equality in badminton is that only too rarely does Asia put anyone forward who is a woman. Apart from Li Lingwei, there has been Lu Shengrong, who was Li Lingwei's mentor, and Bang Soo-Hyun, but few others.

China has realised that there is an opportunity to put a woman in. But I still can't see India or Malaysia doing it, nor Indonesia.

In the playing arena women, and especially Asian women, are quite well represented. But in officialdom – on council, they are omitted and among court officials, and referees they are badly under-represented.



Lene Køppen, a world champion and an optimistic force for women.

Working towards 50:50

Having said that, the IOC, which is selling ideas about the quota of women which ought to be achieved, have found it difficult themselves and have not even reached their own target. In fact so far they have only 17 women in the IOC.

I don't believe there are fewer women than men who can do the job on the IOC. But are they given an opportunity? That's the key. Is it the case that it is men who prefer to do the job? And that women prefer to do this and that, bits and pieces only?

That is why I have so much admiration for the chair of UK Sport, Sue Campbell, because she's bucked the trend. She's gone out and done it. She had a lot of problems early on.

People were not very nice to her, and there were bullies. Men can sometimes be like that.

When that happens, it becomes a matter of whether you can stay in the game. I have the greatest respect for her. She's a leading example for women, who has shown that they can do it.

I would like to take members of the BWF's executive board to meet Sue Campbell and to go and look at the site for the 2012 Olympic Games in London. I have put forward this suggestion, because the BWF's executive board will be meeting at the 100th All-England championships in March 2010 in Birmingham – which is not far from London.



Sue Campbell, chair of UK Sport.

If it works out, they will not be coming to the All-England, meeting and then just watching the championships – it would become a bigger thing, a very positive thing, and something they will remember. Then when they return for the Olympics two years later they will remember what it was like and it may make them feel a bit special. As I say, the offer has gone out.

In my role as the chair of the Women in Sport working group, the first thing I have done is to send a letter to all nations asking for information about court officials and women line judges, accredited umpires and referees from each nation, to learn how far women are behind.

The second thing I would like to do is to help develop two tournaments – one in Japan and one in China – which are women's only tournaments. And to have women's only officials. It would be new but I think the idea would be sell-able. I want to try and look towards having Uber Cup events with women only officials.

This would give women officials more confidence and better training to be umpiring women's matches. It can be daunting for them to officiate in an aggressive men's singles or doubles.



Camilla Martin, a world champion and forward mover.

But although I have made criticisms about the lack of women involved, I have to say I feel much better about the 2009–13 BWF council and about the future of world badminton.

The BWF meetings in Guangzhou were very, very professional. We have council members who really do want to work. We are working for nothing, but you now feel you want to be part of the progress which the BWF seeks.

It took me back to the nineties when Craig Reedie and Tom Bacher were prominent, and when everything was very professional. I know, because I stood in on some of those meetings as a proxy voter. I used to come out pretty excited.

And I am excited again. In fact, I'm the most optimistic I've been for quite a long time. There is an opportunity for the council to become one of the best councils of all.



Honoured administrator, Gisela Hoffmann, Honorary Vice President of Badminton Europe after many years as General Secretary, with Torsten Berg.



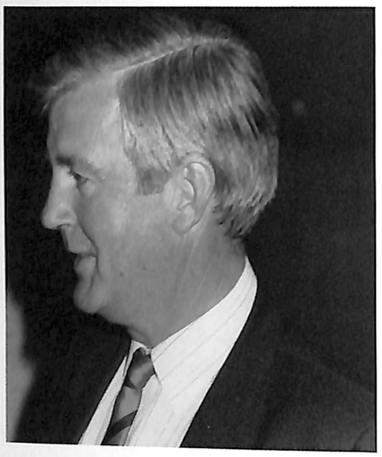
Woman at the top, Anne Smillie, BWF councillor (2003–8) and Chief Executive, Badminton Scotland.

The re-unification of badminton

HOW THE SPORT WAS HEALED

by Sir Craig Reedie

It must seem like worlds ago, but the reality is that it was only in the late 1970's that the world of international badminton was riven by the most serious dispute it has ever faced. Never before had the then International Badminton Federation (IBF) been faced with the possibility of a significant number of its membership resigning to join a break-away rival international organisation.



Sir Craig Reedie *IOC member, Honorary Life Vice-President of the BWF.*

The basis of the dispute was what some saw as the legitimate aspirations of the Badminton Association – but in reality the whole sporting structure – of the People's Republic of China.

China had begun to emerge into the world sporting community in the Asian Games of 1974 and gradually began to argue for its place in the world of international sport. In badminton terms it became clear in very few competitions that China had some of the best players in the world. Many were Chinese ethnic Indonesians who had left that country in the 1960's during a period of severe political unrest.

For whatever reason, the feeling was that Chinese players were some of the best in the world, but not seen in international competition. Membership of the recognised International Federation was of extreme political importance to the All China Sports Federation – the government arm of sport in the country.

The problem was that the existing member of the IBF was the then Taiwan Badminton Association. China argued in general terms that Taiwan was occupying the rightful place in an international sports federation of mainland China, not least that Taiwan called itself "Republic of China".

The argument was made at a number of annual general meetings by Richard Avory, a former Wimbledon tennis junior finalist who had been involved in the 1974 Asian Games and who lived in Iran. Richard went on to join the Mark McCormick agency, IMG, in Hong Kong and played a significant role in the whole emergence of Chinese sport.

Taiwan was represented in the IBF by two senior individuals who were much liked, even though their country produced no great players from a very enthusiastic badminton populace. In retrospect the IBF had no great political sophistication. It just seemed unfair that people they liked, representing a country which appeared to have done no wrong, were under some form of attack.



China's national touring team in 1973. Full of great players who did not compete in the international arena.

The whole matter began to become the only real issue at successive AGM's and the badminton world began to polarise into those who supported the aspirations of China and those who did not. This underlying conflict began to influence every decision taken by the IBF, even on the laws of the game, and threatened the successful holding of the first world championships in Sweden in 1977.

Acting on advice from friendly, but politically motivated countries, the Chinese Badminton Association promoted, and probably financed, the establishment of a rival World Badminton Federation (WBF). This attracted membership – or at least interest – from a number of IBF members including Sweden, to the considerable embarrassment of Stellan Mohlin from that country who was the current IBF Vice-President.

A number of WBF tournaments or championships were held and completely dominated by Chinese players. Few other players scored points against them let alone won games or matches. Of complete importance was that none of the major IBF Asian nations joined the WBF, despite the political pressure in that part of the world to "recognise" in some way the increasing importance of the emerging giant. Chinese badminton was frustrated in the extreme. They could beat anyone they faced, but they could not face the best of the rest of the world.



IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch at the lectern.

Crucial in this stand-off was the attitude of the International Olympic Committee (IOC). It was struggling with exactly the same problem but was led by a visionary President, Juan Antonio Samaranch, who clearly understood that in the long run the sheer political power of China could not be denied. The IOC negotiated the practical solution – that the Taiwan National Olympic Committee change its name to Chinese Taipei and appear at Olympic Games under the Olympic flag. This broke the deadlock.

In certain ways the IBF followed suit, although the process became painful and protracted. At a highly charged AGM in Malmo in 1977 a motion to expel Taiwan was passed. This resulted in the Taiwan Badminton Association raising a legal action against the IBF in the High Court in London in which they claimed that the action of the IBF was against the constitution of the IBF and was, therefore, illegal.

To some surprise Mr. Justice Goff agreed with the Taiwan BA in what was clearly a politically motivated dispute and granted the Taiwan BA an injunction against the IBF and its senior officers. This resulted in an early emergency IBF Council meeting at the Normandy Hotel at Glasgow Airport – not the greatest hotel in the world but with the important advantage that it was not within the jurisdiction of the English courts. It was clear that something had to be done.

Tentative approaches were made to the Chinese authorities and to Stellan Mohlin, who was by now the IBF President; I travelled to Hong Kong to meet with representatives of the Chinese BA, a meeting greatly assisted by the late Henry Fok in Hong Kong, whose son is now a member of the IOC.

China were represented by their President, Zhu Ze, accompanied by a young interpreter from the All China Sports Federation called Lu Shengrong, who of course was to make a real contribution to badminton and to her country as an IBF President and an IOC member. Negotiations could only be described as tortuous until a side meeting between Reedie and Mme Lu.

It became clear that China was unhappy with the situation of the WBF which had no real membership potential. More than anything else China wanted international recognition as members of the IBF and with at least one seat on its ruling Council.

A 'deal' was done and a process instituted whereby an early AGM of the IBF would ratify Chinese membership with agreed representation. Taiwan agreed to come to the party as the Chinese Taipei BA and very significantly China committed its best players to the whole range of IBF events and individual members' championships.



Lu Shengrong, in her days as an interpreter, with the WBF-IBF study group at the reunification meeting in Bandung

The AGM, which became slightly complicated as remaining feelings of anger were dispelled, was held in Tokyo in 1981. A special deed of unification was signed under the full public relations spotlight of the badminton media, and after that Chinese players began to compete fully on the world stage. Their impact was immediate and dominant, with China winning both Thomas and Uber Cups and many individual titles.

The last gracious note in the whole affair was the generous act of the Taiwan BA to meet the IBF legal costs in the London High Court action.

There is little doubt that this series of decisions led to badminton's inclusion in the Olympic Games, although this may have happened earlier had it not been for the political disputes which poisoned the sport.

Noriko Takagi



Noriko Takagi

HOW THE GREAT JUDY CAME TO RETIREMENT

(reprinted from the book *Far Fly The Birds* by the late Ken Brock, the IBF historian)

The most memorable match of my career happened at Wellington in New Zealand in May 1966 when the Japanese women's team played in the Uber Cup for the first time – and won it.

We were ignorant of how foreign players competed, but that seemed to work well for us because we beat Indonesia and England and reached the challenge round where we had to play the United States, who had won the trophy on all three previous occasions on which it had been played.

They had in their team the world famous and great player, Judy Hashman, who had always been winning at that time. It was said that no-one could be a match for her, and all the journalists predicted my defeat. I myself did not expect to win, having heard exaggeratedly how strong she was.

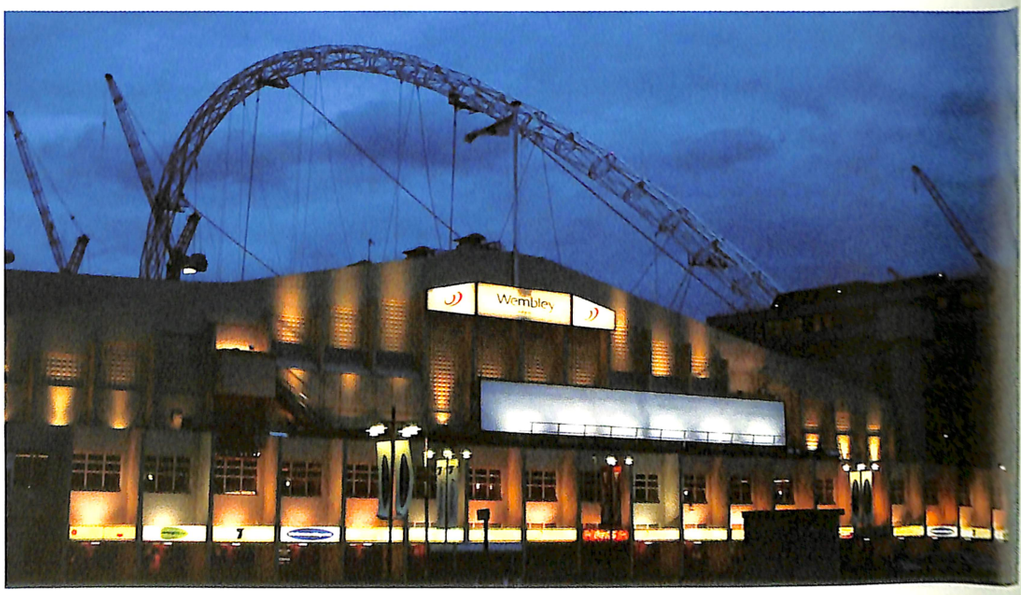
So I thought I might get her confused a little if I competed with her at all. And once the match began, Judy seemed to feel she was competing for the first time with a player like me – running all over the court like mad and getting the shuttle back all the time. By being surprised, her self-confidence gradually changed to impatient and self-defeating play.

As the spectators breathlessly watched the unexpected contest, I now wished to win once I had made her confused. I felt that at last the goddess of victory was on my side.

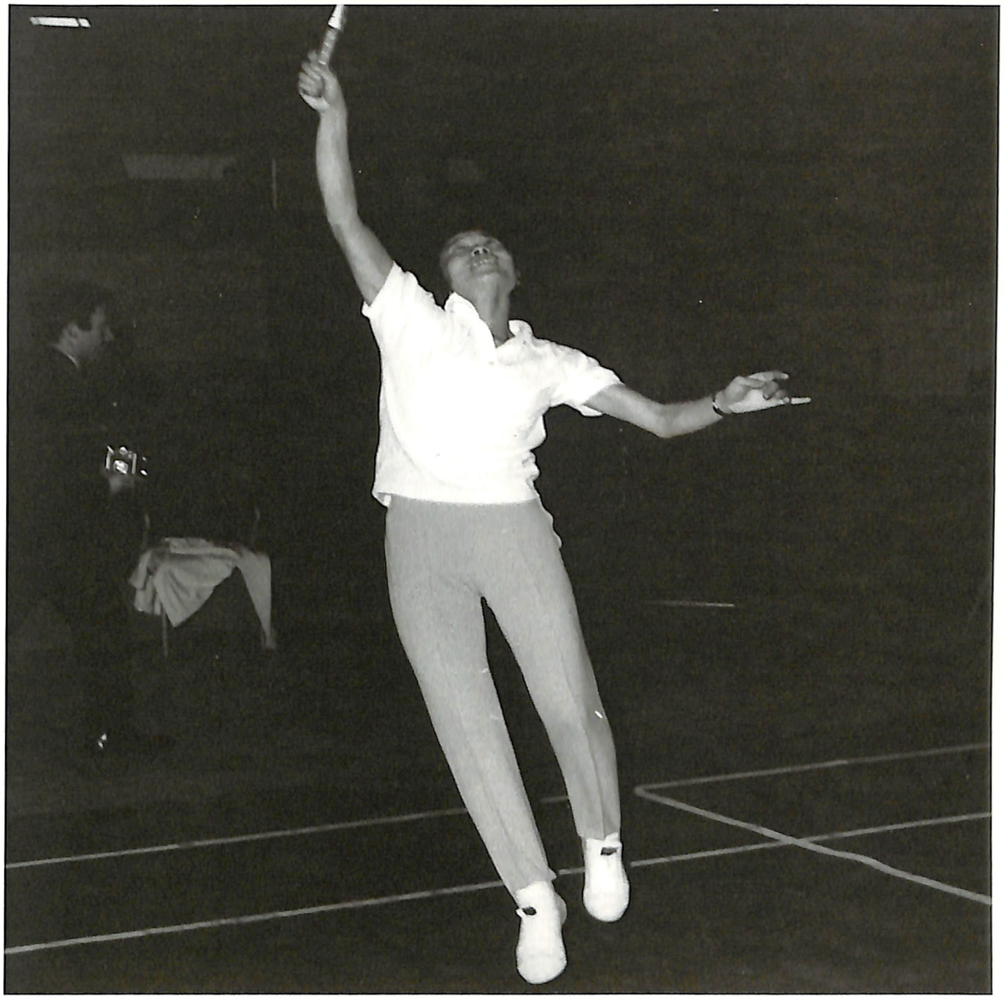
Even now, though many years have passed, Judy's disbelieving face and the weight of the Uber Cup in my hands still come to mind vividly.

The following year we were given the chance to compete in the All-England, a traditional championship in which all the world's players wanted to play. And the two of us came to play the final match again!

Judy seemed to have predicted that this would happen and had decided to get even with me. By contrast I was just delighted to be participating in this traditional, historic badminton championship. So I was not well prepared.



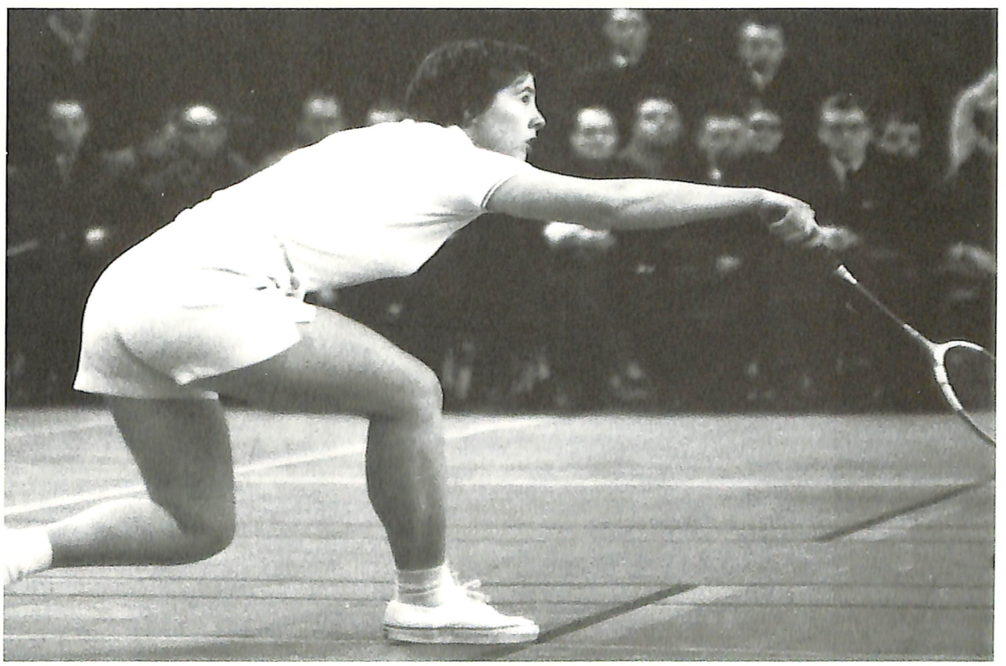
Wembley Arena, where Takagi and Hashman played their last era-changing match.



Noriko Takagi aims high.

Judy won – and this was her last play, because she retired from singles after that, having completed the great achievement of winning the All-England title ten times. Although I competed with many players after that, I never again met such an impressive player as Judy Hashman.

"Although I competed with many players after that, I never again met such an impressive player as Judy Hashman."



Judy Hashman – the most impressive, said Takagi.

Hollywood made badminton popular in the USA

by Niels Rasmussen





Joan Crawford playing badminton.

The game came to the United States of America way back in 1878 when Bayard Clarke and Landon Wilks introduced it to the Badminton Club of New York after having travelled in India and England. It was mostly a meeting place for society leaders.

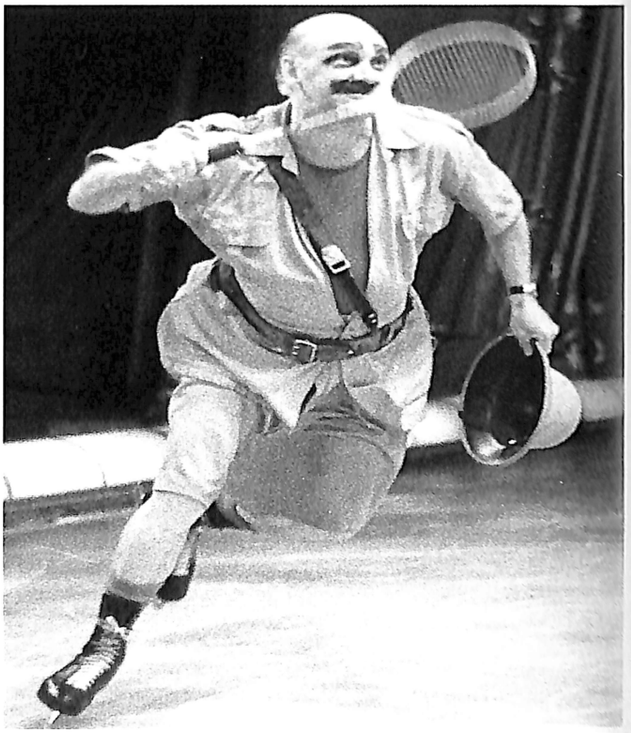
But it took almost 50 years before badminton became popular nationwide. It happened with the help of some of the most famous actors in Hollywood. Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Ginger Rogers and the Norwegian ice-skating queen Sonia Henie were among the players who realised it was good exercise and soon they were joined by Robert Montgomerie, Douglas Fairbanks and Pat O'Brien.

Joan Crawford was said to have played badminton in her swimsuit because it was raining when she played outdoors, and Douglas Fairbanks junior developed a game which he called "Doug". The shuttlecock and the rackets were slightly heavier than normal so it was possible to play outside without being disturbed by the wind.

The New York club had begun playing against Boston in 1915, and it was a Boston player, George F. "Jess" Willard, who in the early 1930's came to Hollywood and demonstrated the game. He was hired to play exhibition matches in movie theatres, sometimes with as many as 3,000 spectators.



Ken Davidson – the touring trickster.



Hugh Forgie – badminton's globetrotter.



Ken Davidson in Flying Feathers.

The Warner Brothers even made a film about the sport, called Good Badminton, and in 1935 Willard won a match for the world championship for professionals against the Canadian Frank Purcell at the Ambassador Auditorium.

By then there were more than 40,000 players in the US and progress continued steadily. The following year the American Badminton Association was organised, when nine regional associations joined forces, its name changing to the USBA in 1978, and to USA Badminton in 1996.

The first national championships were held in 1937, in Chicago on 21 courts, the first men's singles champion being Walther Kramer from Detroit who defeated Hock Sim Ong of Malaya, who had learned to play at Cambridge University and was studying at University College Los Angeles. The ladies' singles was won by Del Barkhuff, from Seattle, who impressed by serving so high that the shuttles often hit the ceiling!

Despite this, it seemed the game was set fair. There were 155 clubs by then and by 1938 it had increased to 229. And so that year, only four years after the founding of the International Badminton Federation, the United States had become a member.

One of the most memorable events of that era – one which is still recalled and celebrated – was the Scot Ken Davidson touring the US in the late 1930's and '40's with Hugh Forgie and the pair of them entertaining with humour and trick shots which spectators could hardly believe.

"I did for badminton what the Harlem Globetrotters did for basketball," Forgie has claimed. Apparently, for a while the two were the Globetrotters' half-time show.They played at venues such as Madison Square Garden and Radio City Music Hall.

They also made a film called Flying Feathers, which looks a little like table tennis played on a badminton court. There were absolutely no overhead backhand clears – a stroke apparently invented by Frank Devlin.

At that stage and soon after World War II it looked as though badminton might become a sizeable sport in the US, especially when David Freeman became the first American to win an All-England title, in 1949. Indeed Freeman, from Pasadena, was so good that he remained undefeated from 1939 to 1953 before retiring to become a neuro-surgeon.

The fifties and early sixties were in many ways an illusory era, promising much but being followed by underdevelopment. The FBI agent Joe Alston became the only badminton player to make the cover of Sports Illustrated, becoming so famous that FBI gave up using him as an undercover agent!



David Freeman, 1949 All-England Champion

"... it became a time when a commercial opportunity was lost ... many came to look upon it merely as the kind of pastime which might be played at barbecue parties ..."



Judy Devlin (left) as she then was, with sister Sue in their early international years in the United States.



Han Jian, the world men's singles champion in Calgary.



USA's winning Uber Cup team in 1957. From left to right – Ethel Marshall, Beatrice Massman, Sue Devlin, Margaret Varner, Connie Davidson (non-playing captain), Judy Devlin (later Hashman), Lois Alston

And it was a time when the US enjoyed great success. Judy Devlin (later Judy Hashman) and her sister Sue (later Sue Peard) were the daughters of the Irishman Frank Devlin, who had been the first full-time professional, moving to North America to coach in Winnipeg and Baltimore.

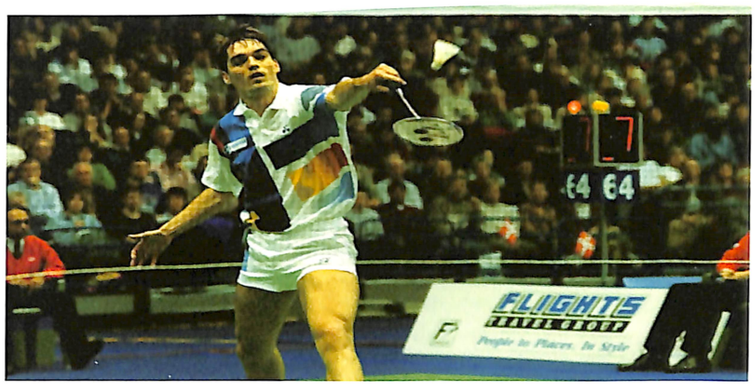
Judy Devlin won 83 national and international titles in nine different countries, was the leading member of the US team which included Sue Devlin and another very fine player, Margaret Varner, and won the Uber Cup world team championship in 1957, 1960 and 1963. But the US has never come near to winning the trophy since.

Devlin, a master of deception, went on to become one of the sport's legends winning the All-England championships 17 times – singles and doubles – and was still good enough at the age of 36 to win two European titles. But her considerable talents were largely lost to the American continent after she married Englishman Dick Hashman in 1960 and became a British citizen.

And so it became a time when a commercial opportunity was lost. Tennis and golf, both able to generate prize money, expanded steadily in the US, competing for a market similar to that in which badminton might have had aspirations. Instead many came to look upon it merely as the kind of pastime which might be played at barbecue parties.



Bang Soo-Hyun, winner of the women's singles Olympic gold medal in Atlanta.



Poul-Erik Høyer-Larsen, a stunning Olympic champion in Atlanta.

The first of several attempts to make up the lost ground took place at the 1985 World Championships which were located at Calgary, just north of the border in Canada, in the hope that US television channels would express some interest, but despite the presence of greats like Han Jian, Morten Frost, Li Lingwei and Han Aiping, that didn't happen.

Another attempt came when badminton made only its second appearance in an Olympic Games, at Atlanta in 1996, when there were complaints from the IBF that the organising committee had been doing too little to promote badminton.

Nevertheless it played to full houses much of the time and produced one sensational champion in Poul-Erik Høyer-Larsen of Denmark, who peaked at the age of 31, and one very unusual one, Bang Soo-Hyun, the daughter of one of Korea's most successful comedians, Bang Chung-Pyung.

Hopes were raised in 2005 when the United States gained its first world champion – Howard Bach, a Vietnam-born American of Chinese origin who won the men's doubles at Anaheim, near Los Angeles, in partnership with Tony Gunawan, an Indonesian who had been living in the US for some years. They had been seeded only 13.

It was in this region, California, that the BWF and USA Badminton have been concentrating their efforts to develop the sport. Many former top players from China, Indonesia, South Korea and Malaysia are now teaching Americans to play badminton, most of them living in California.

In this state there are also many immigrants from Asian countries, and in 2005 the US Olympic Committee estimated that of the 1.7 million who played badminton in the country about 100,000 of them lived in Southern California. It sounds like significant potential.

"... of the 1.7 million who played badminton in the country about 100,000 of them lived in Southern California. It sounds like significant potential."



Howard Bach and Tony Gunawan (right), the pair which won the US its first ever world title in Anaheim, California, in 2005.

The munificent five

Badminton could not use all its talents without linking its past to its present, and offering incentives for the future. In the playing arena it does this with trophies, which are a source of honour to those who donate them as well as those who win them. Here we depict the munificent five who have enhanced the sport's great prizes with their generosity and with their names.



The Thomas Cup.



The Uber Cup.



Sir George Thomas, the founding President of the IBF, and an inaugural member of the Hall of Fame, donated the trophy for the world team championship for men in 1939



Betty Uber, an English player who won 13 All England titles, campaigned for a women's world team trophy to match that of the men, and succeeded in 1956.

They come from East and West and their abilities cover the widest of spectra – playing, competing, coaching, administering, funding, decision-making, teaching, and inspiring. These images are a legacy from people who care; their trophies symbolise not only high achievement, therefore, but caring itself, without which even the most powerful cannot ultimately succeed.



The Sudirman Cup.



The Eddy Choong Player of the Year medal.



The Suhandinata Cup, the world junior team trophy.



Dick Sudirman, founder of the PBSI, the governing body of Indonesian badminton, posthumously had a world team championships for mixed teams named after him in 1989.



Eddy Choong, the Malaysian who is one of the all-time great players, was honoured by the IBF by having the Player of the Year award named after him in 1998.



Suharso Suhandinata, a leading figure within the PBSI, who worked for unity within badminton, gave his name to a world team championship for juniors which began in 2004.

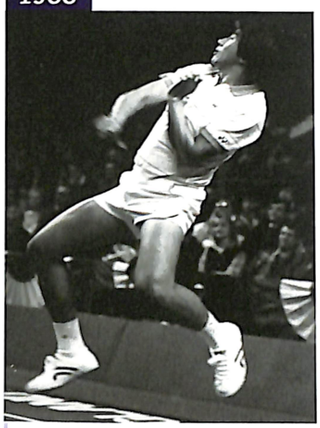
A Galaxy of Stars 1956–1979

1960

Erland Kops, star of the sixties. All-England men's singles champion 1958, 1960–3, 1965, 1967, four times men's doubles champion

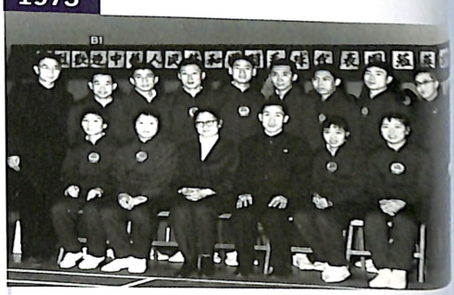


1968



Rudy Hartono, world men's singles champion 1980, All-England champion 1968-1974, 1976.

1973



China's uniformed national touring team in 197

continued from page 27

1956



The Uber Cup begins.

1958

The Asian Badminton Confederation becomes the first continental confederation.

1962

Asian Games includes badminton.

1966

Commonwealth Games includes badminton.



Finn Kobberø was one of the most talented players of the pre-professional era. He was also one of the most successful in the history of the All-England championships – at this time the world's premier event – taking 15 titles between 1955 and 1966, seven in men's doubles and eight in mixed doubles.

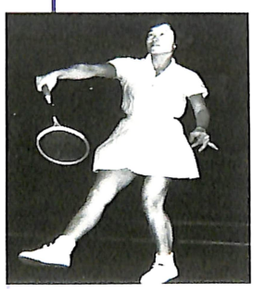
1967

European Badminton Union started

1972



Christian Hadinata & Ade Chandra, world men's doubles champions 1980, world silver 1977, All-England champions 1972–3.



Noriko Takagi-Nakayama, All-England women's singles champion 1972, women's doubles champion 1971, unbeaten in Uber Cup singles 1965–75.

Badminton becomes a demonstration sport at the Olympic Games in Munich.

1976

Herbert Scheele retires and Ronnie Rowan becomes IBF's first professional General Secretary.



1974

Margaret Beck, world invitation champion 1974, All-England champion 1973.



1975

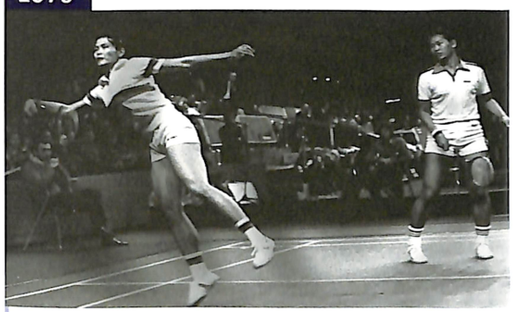


Svend Pri, All-England men's singles champion, 1975, mixed doubles champion three times with Ulla Strand 1967, 1971, 1972.

1977–80

Use of metal rackets spreads.

1979



Imelda Wigoeno and Verawaty Fajrin, All-England women's doubles champions 1979, world silver medalists 1980.

continued on page 78

1974 *cont.*

China applies for IBF membership with proviso that Taiwan is expelled.



Gillian Gilks, the last person to win all three All-England titles in the same year (1976). All-England women's singles champion 1976, 1978; women's doubles champion 1974, 1976, 1980, mixed doubles champion 1969, 1973, 1976–77, 1982, 1984.



Hiroe Yuki, All-England women's singles champion 1969, 1974–5, 1977, women's doubles champion 1971.

1977

An alternative governing body, the World Badminton Federation, was formed to promote China's entry into the international arena, triggering the explusion from IBF of Taiwan, which had the appellation of the republic of China.

First world championship singles titles won by Flemming Delfs and Lene Koppen, both of Denmark.



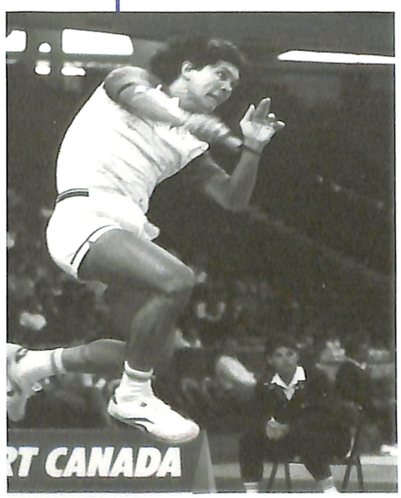
Lene Køppen, the first world women's singles champion 1977, All-England champion 1979,1980.



Flemming Delfs, the first world men's singles champion 1977, All-England champion, 1977.

1978

Badminton becomes a sport recognised by the International Olympic Committee.



Liem Swie King, All-England men's singles champion 1978–9, 1981, world silver 1980, 1983.

First Person

Hiroe Yuki



***Hiroe Yuki**, great mover.*

THE CUP WHICH BECAME PERMANENT

(reprinted from the book *Far Fly The Birds* by the late Ken Brock, the IBF historian)

I won the All-England championship '69 by my youth rather than by my real power. I participated in it for the first time and won without knowing the importance of the event.

After that tournaments were more severe for me. I found later that the real power should be formed by piling up the experiences one by one.

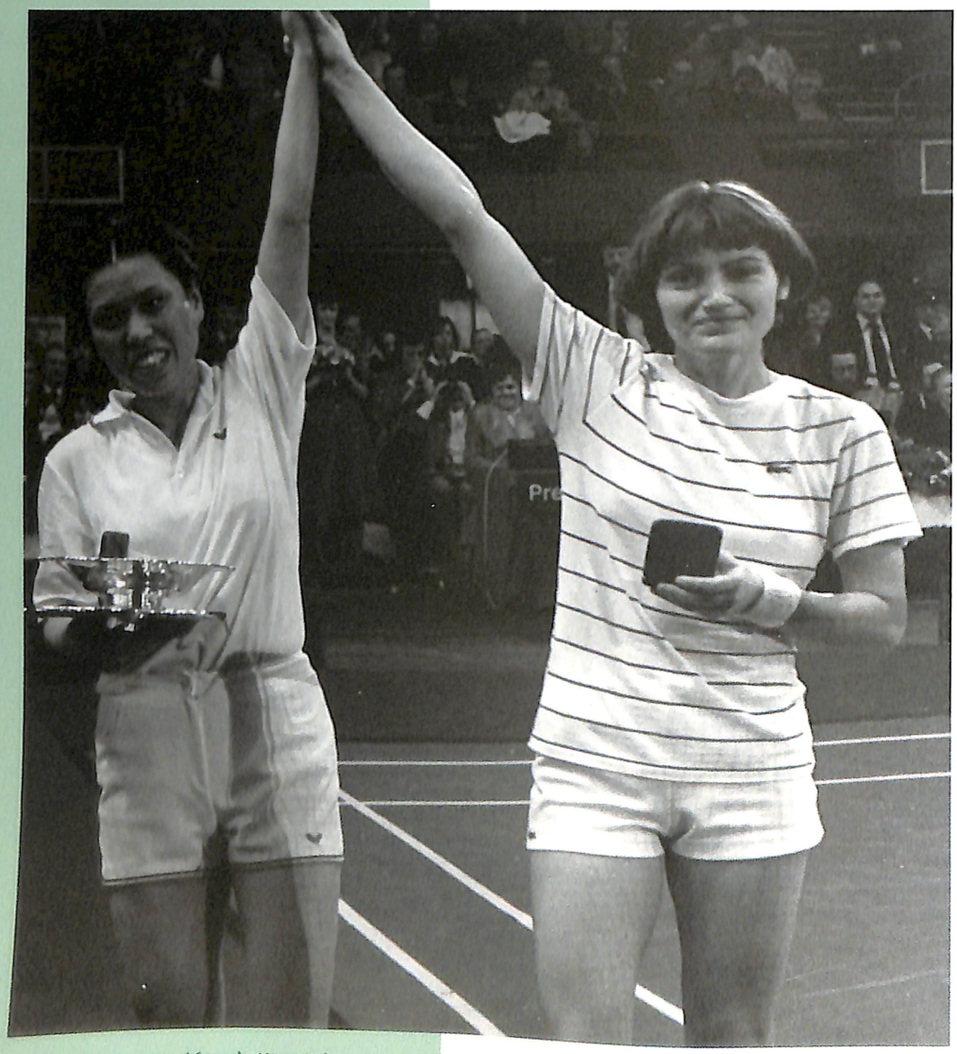
Now many scenes come to mind, but the most memorable one is the All-England championship of 1977 in which I won the women's singles for the fourth time. My opponent was a fresh star, Lene Køppen from Denmark.

I had heard that anyone winning the title four times would earn the trophy outright, but nobody seemed to know for sure. Naturally I was keen to win such a cup if possible.

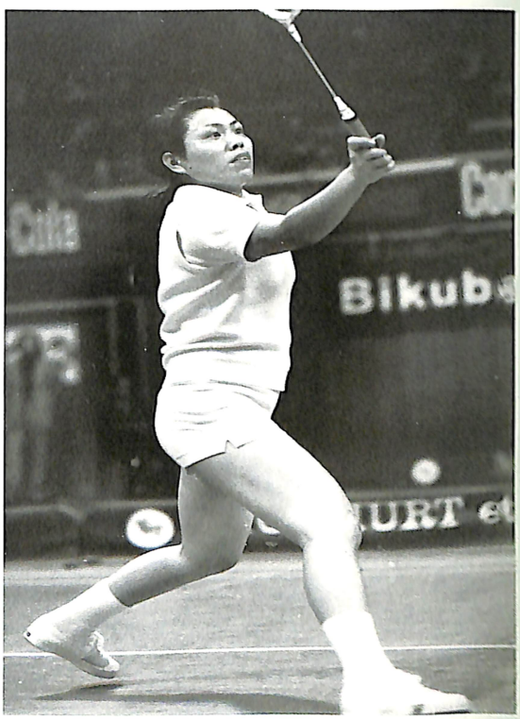
This final was the toughest match I have ever experienced. The latter part of the final set became a game of sheer force of will and spirit, pursuing the shuttle to continue rallies for so long that by the time we reached a position to make a smash we had lost the power to do so.

The real difficulty of playing top badminton is in the spiritual realm. This time my experience, at the age of 28, brought me victory over Lene.

And then I received the supreme honour as a badminton player. I was handed, by the Princess Margaret, the trophy which I had desired so much to get – the permanent cup.



Adversaries but good friends, Hiroe Yuki and Lene Køppen in 1977.



Hiroe Yuki: youth not power.

Richard Purser

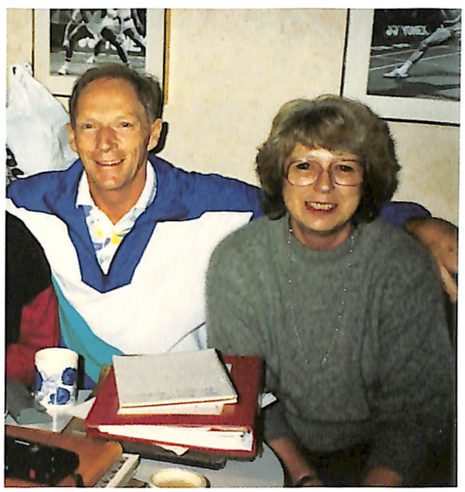


***Richard Purser** with full vision.*

Life member of New Zealand Badminton Association, first New Zealand player to win a Commonwealth Games badminton medal, winner of 33 New Zealand senior titles, winner of a World Masters gold medal in both badminton and squash in the same year.

THE EYES HAVE IT

(reprinted from the book *Far Fly The Birds* by the late Ken Brock, the IBF historian)



Richard Purser and Ronnie Rowan.

This incident was an extremely memorable prelude to an international match in South Africa in the early 1960's at the beginning of my representative badminton years.

I travelled to the badminton hall in Jeff and Heather Robson's car. I was in the back seat and decided to save time and to put my newly acquired contact lenses in en route. (How could I have been so stupid!)

Gingerly inserting the balanced lenses with pointed finger above a precautionary coat on my lap, I suddenly realised that one lens was missing. I froze into immobility as the car sped hallwards, praying that the tiny object would easily be found on arrival.

We searched every fold and crevice in my vicinity for the elusive lens. No luck!

Several more helpers arrived with torches. The car and I were examined Sherlock Holmes style, my coat was reverently carried into the hall like the Holy Grail and carefully shaken out over a table. Still no lens!

Fortunately I was last match on. My father and I had a fast trip into the city to my opticians: no luck there with substitutes as contact lenses were still relatively new on the optical scene.

Perhaps the missing lens had not been in the little container at all. Could I have mislaid it on the dressing table? A hurried car trip home and a thorough search revealed nothing. I was trying hard to remain calm and unflustered.

Decision time. "I'll have to cope wearing one lens only, and hit blurry shuttles," I said.

I took my remaining lens out to give it an extra good polish – and found that both my lenses were in one eye.



Jeff Robson (right) was the car driver and witness to the first leg of Richard Purser's eye-catching behaviour. Here he is with Craig Reedie (left) and Roy Ward.

From woollen balls to widespread popularity

ANCIENT TO MODERN IN INDIA

by Prakash Padukone



Prakash Padukone

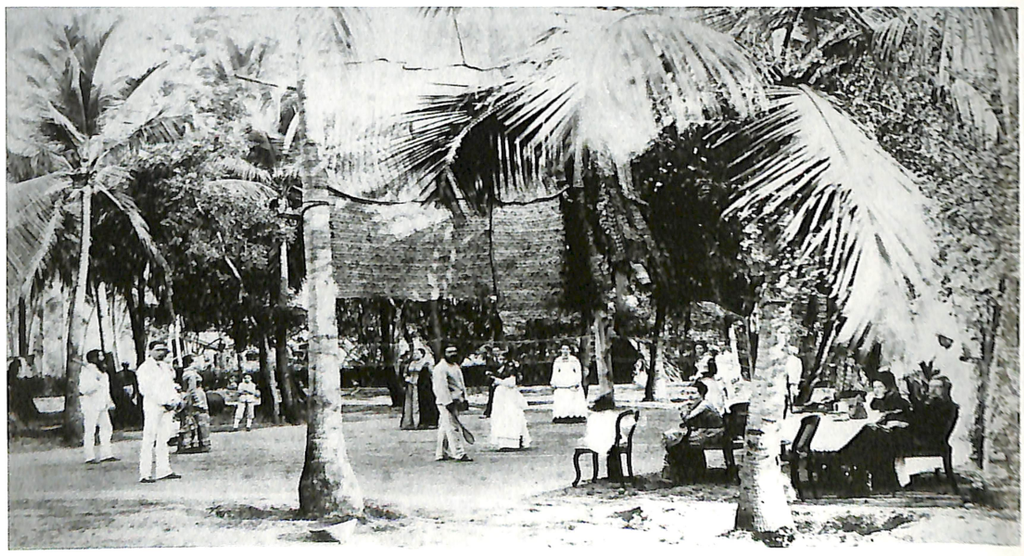
Prakash Padukone has become one of the most important people in the progress of international badminton. Coming from one of the fastest developing and most populous nations on earth, he popularised the sport by becoming the world's leading player in the early 1980's. He further accelerated its progress by founding his academy in Bangalore, to which players and coaches travel large distances. Among Padukone's other achievements are winning the All-England men's singles title in 1980, the Commonwealth Games gold medal in 1978, the sport's first prize money tournament, the Friends Provident Masters at the Royal Albert Hall in London in 1979, the first Alba World Cup at Kuala Lumpur in 1981, becoming manager of a medal-winning Indian team, winning the Indian national title nine successive times, and gaining the Arjun award for sport and the Padma Shri award for distinguished service to public life.

When I began playing badminton, at the age of seven in the 1960's, we had to call it by a different name! That was because another game entirely, called ball badminton, ruled the roost in the southern parts of India at that time.

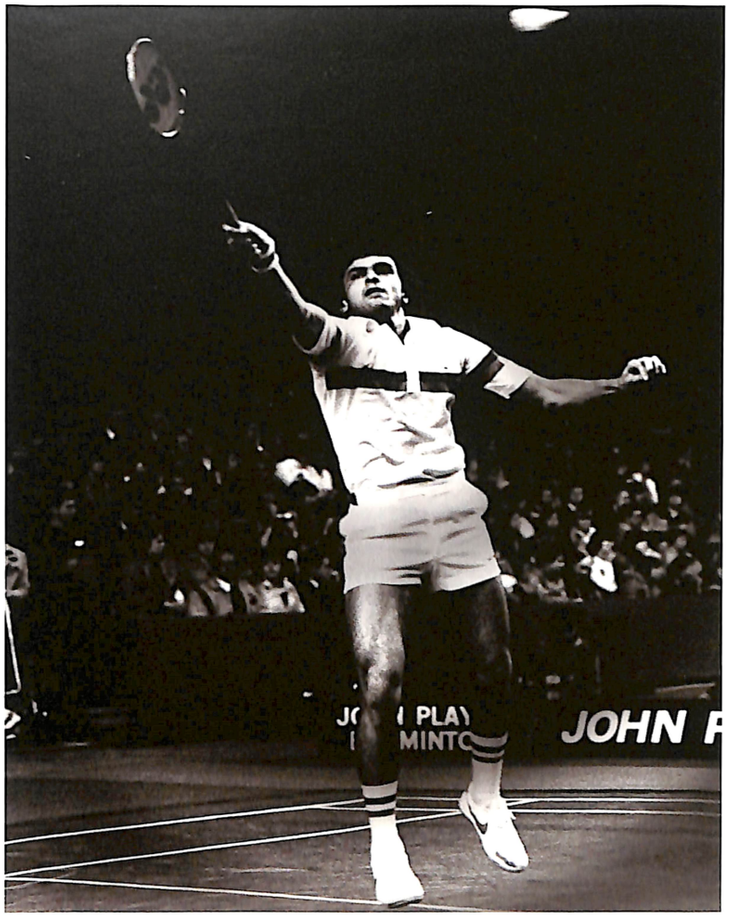
Ball badminton was essentially an Indian outdoor game played with five players a side and a yellow woollen ball. So many people mistook ball badminton for real badminton that it became necessary to specify our sport as shuttle badminton.

That was one of the reasons why, after retiring from the professional game, I wanted to ensure that following generations of players did not suffer hardships similar to my own back then.

Now the scene has turned completely around. Ball badminton is almost extinct and shuttle badminton is the most popular sport in India after cricket.



Ball badminton, India.



Prakash Padukone winning the All-England title.

In the sixties and seventies badminton was played mostly in northern, western and eastern cities, and only gradually did the focus shift to the south – though more so after I won the the All England championships in 1980. That proved a turning point.

The game gradually grew in stature with increases in media coverage, players, tournaments, training centres, prize money, international exposure for players, and private sponsorships. There was a brief period in the late 80's and early 90's when the game suffered a slight setback but things were put in place quickly. Our performances since then have been encouraging, with Pulella Gopichand's victory at the All England Open in 2001 being the icing on the cake.

One of the main reasons for improved performances of the Indian players in recent years has been the establishment of various academies or training centres in different parts of the country. Previously there had not been sufficient opportunities for talented youngsters to train together because they were all spread out in different cities and could only come together at national camps.

But the establishment of the Prakash Padukone Badminton Academy (PPBA) in Bangalore in 1994, and then centres of excellence of the Sports Authority of India in different cities, as well as Gopichand's Academy in Hyderabad more recently, has given opportunities for youngsters to use the best training facilities throughout the year almost free of cost.

Government support has also increased manifold, especially in organising camps and funding the participation of the top seniors and juniors at international tournaments. This has increased the confidence of players substantially, and the results are there for all to see.

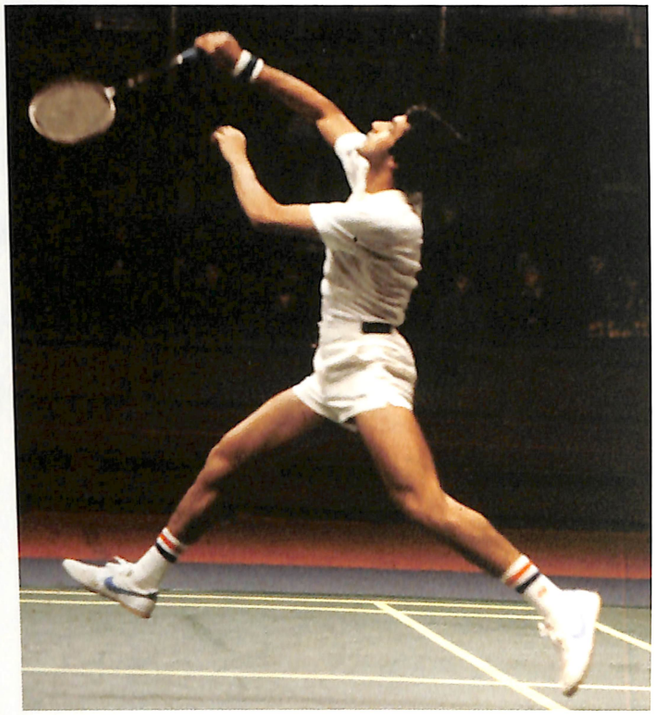
The PPBA is located at the Karnataka Badminton Association Stadium in Bangalore, which has ten courts, guest rooms, a dormitory, a canteen, a gym, and a swimming pool. We have rented an apartment about five kilometres from the stadium for our full-time outstation trainees. We even have a full time cook.

I have tried to provide players with the facilities I never got, such as international standard courts with wood floors, shuttles, world class coaches, free equipment, free stay and food for selected outstation trainees – so that they can train together throughout the year.

Promising players are sent for international and training stints abroad, funded by us, as well as by financial support from the government. However the PPBA itself is one of the few privately funded badminton academies in the world, and entirely funded by sponsorship with no government funds so far.



Chariot sculpture in the state of Karnataka, where Prakash Padukone comes from



Prakash Padukone smashing.

It provided all trainees' requirements absolutely free initially, and now does so at highly subsidised rates. It has links with several foreign training centres, particularly in Indonesia, Denmark, United Kingdom, France and Germany, where improving trainees are sent for short-term stints. Similarly, foreign players visit our academy for mutual benefit. About 100 players have been through the academy so far.

The success rate is encouraging. More than 90 percent have gone on to represent India after joining the academy and a PPBA trainee has qualifed for the Olympics at each of the last four Games.

Some of the top national players who joined the PPBA at that time were Dipankar Bhattacharjee, Manjusha Kanwara and the top juniors Ajit Wijitilak and Aparna Popat.

After the first year Bhattacharjee went on to become the Indian national champion for three years and qualified for the 1996 Olympics in Atlanta. Popat won the Indian national junior title as a 14-year-old and later a silver medal at the world junior championships, getting wins over top Asian and European players.

Before that Gopichand frequently used to travel to Bangalore to train and ended Dipankar's reign in 1997. By then both he and Popat had established themselves at world senior level.

The following year Gopichand, Popat, and another PPBA trainee, Nikhil Kanetkar, helped India to secure silver and bronze medals at the Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur, with Popat becoming the first Indian to win a Commonwealth silver medal at women's singles. She also won the French international championships and had creditable wins over players from Europe and Asia.

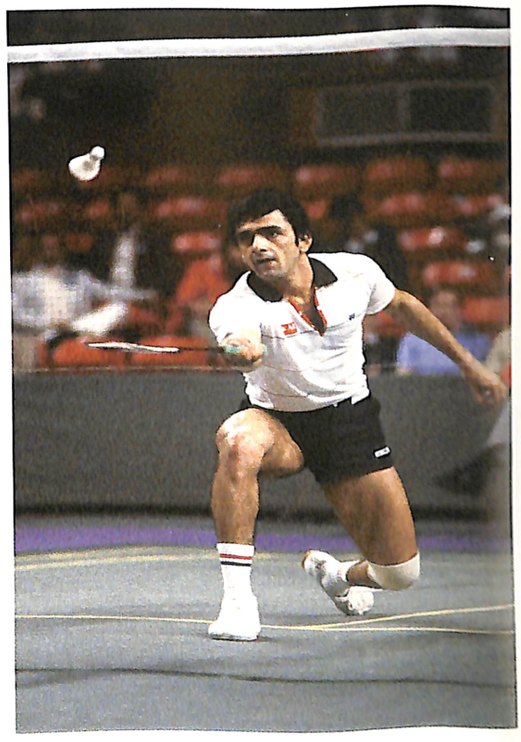
Kanetkar went on to reach world level by reaching the final of the US Open, and Siddarth Jain, another PPBA trainee, won the French Open title. That same year, in 2000, Gopichand, Jain, Kanetkar and Wijitilak, helped India reach the Thomas Cup finals for the first time in 12 years.

The following year Gopichand won the All England open title, only the second Indian player to have done that, beating Peter Gade, the former world number one from Denmark, and Chen Hong, the soon-to-be world number one from China, in the process.

Two years ago Sridhar also reached the quarterfinals of the World Championships in Kuala Lumpur, scoring wins over Taufik Hidayat, the then Olympic champion from Indonesia, and Muhammad Hafiz Hashim, the former All-England Open champion from Malaysia.

And so, looking back, we can see how far Indian badminton has progressed since 1934, the year the world's governing body and the Indian national championships simultaneously began. From a small minor sport, it has become one of the most popular and widely played.

The good thing is that it is still growing. That is evident from the number of new courts and the increase in players. Even those playing mainly for fitness have grown greatly in number. It has happened despite badminton being a fairly expensive sport, especially for the ever-growing middle class population of India.



Prakash Padukone lifts from the net.



The team in the Academy (left to right) Anup Sridhar, Vimal Kumar (coach), Prakash Padukone, Arvind Bhat, Anand Pawar and Tom John (consultant coach).

Though much has been accomplished, much more needs to be done, and in particular the creation of more professionally run academies in different parts of the country is needed.

One of the most important things Indian badminton needs is paid office bearers. I would like Badminton Association of India (BAI) to appoint a professional and competent Chief Executive Officer to bring in more professionalism to the administration. He can be assisted by staff looking after departments like coaching, development, marketing, and publicity. The BAI can then restrict itself to taking decisions about running the sport efficiently and leave the implementation to the CEO.

We also need a stronger domestic circuit. We hardly have any domestic tournaments in the country. Though there are enough junior tournaments, not enough attention has been paid to the senior categories. Right now there are not enough opportunities for players who have just graduated from the juniors unless they have already made it into the senior Indian team. There is a lot of talent, especially in the 18–21 age group which also needs to get a look in.

Meanwhile the PPBA celebrated its 15th anniversary on October 1st 2009. Though time has flown during that decade and a half, badminton's progress has soared. Our ambition is to have it flying still higher.

"... badminton's progress has soared. Our ambition is to have it flying still higher."



Prakash Padukone and his wife Ujjala.

The Olympic dream – How the games were won

by Sir Craig Reedie



***Craig Reedie** At the IBF's annual general meeting in 1985.*

It would be convenient, but wrong, to believe that the International Badminton Federation was paralysed by the political issues involving membership of the People's Republic of China in the late 1970's and early 1980's. World sport was developing quickly in those days as international sports federations developed their competitive structures and events. The creation of the individual World Championships and later a complete revision of the Thomas and Uber Cups formats rather proved the point.

In addition, money was becoming an ever more plentiful commodity, and when money appears there are always unlimited claims on it. The old Indonesian phrase of "where there is sugar, there are ants" was entirely appropriate. Sponsorship, and quite large amounts of it, began to become available and presented international federations with a number of challenges.

Should the commercial receipts from events stay with the international federation, or should these be shared with the competing national governing bodies, the host national association and, in many parts of the world, with the players? Inevitably a balance had to be reached but there were a number of contentious meetings before that point.

Badminton was organised by national badminton associations but the day-to-day control which they had over their players differed greatly in different parts of the world. Pressure to recognise player freedom in prize money and individual contracts was more prevalent in Europe. In Asia the national associations looked after their top players and made commercial arrangements which in many ways funded the training, lifestyle, travel and competitive programme of all their top players. For the Europeans the rapidly developing prize money totals and player organisations in tennis were a very attractive route to follow and arguments were presented that badminton should follow the tennis model.



Craig Reedie (left) TV commentating with Torsten Berg in 1990

Difficult task

There was only one problem. Despite much effort it was quite clear that badminton would have a very difficult task to establish a similar presence to tennis in the United States market. The US provided much of the television rights fees, much of the sponsorship and much of the media interest, all necessary for a successful "professional" sport.

The IBF tried on a number of occasions to interest American commercial development of the sport – but to no avail. The sheer costs and difficulties of breaking into the US television market – once tried on the back of exhibition matches in the intervals of basketball events – were way beyond the reach of the IBF finances. Development of the sport at grass roots level was an equally formidable challenge as the NCAA, the powerful US college sports organisation, showed little enthusiasm.



Craig Reedie, brilliant diplomat, outlines a better future.

The challenge was clear. How did the IBF develop a competitive structure, agree an equitable division of financial profit and keep all the different interest groups happy?



The Olympic needle next to the Olympic stadium in Barcelona.

A players' meeting in Copenhagen argued the players' interests and eventually a compromise was struck. Prize money would be sent by the national association promoting the tournament to the IBF, which would then distribute this, either under an agreed formula or on the instructions of the tournament, to the national associations of the players who won prize money. Each national association would deal with their own players according to their own taxation or other regulations.

Without the strength of the US market, it was clear that it would take some time for prize money to reach the levels which the players wanted. Out of all of this debate came a further – and ultimately significant – decision. It was to increase the IBF efforts towards Olympic inclusion.

There was no doubt that the political dispute which plagued the IBF over China and Taiwan made the Olympic ambitions much more difficult to achieve. With the re-unification of the badminton world, the IBF placed themselves in exactly the same position as the IOC, whose clever solution of Taiwan becoming Chinese-Taipei for Olympic purposes had served the world of sport well.



Juan Antonio Samaranch, the IOC President when badminton was accepted into the Olympics.

The IOC was aware of the badminton ambition – along with a host of other sports – but the IOC would never wish to become involved with a politically divided sport. There is a certain truth to the view that the China/Taiwan issue may well have cost badminton Olympic inclusion in 1981.

The sport had been involved in the first World Games in San Jose 1981 but the IBF Council decided in 1980 that it did not wish to continue as members of the World Games organisation, rather to the disappointment of Stellan Mohlin who had worked very hard to make World Games work. An IBF delegation of Stellan Mohlin and Craig Reedie attended the IOC Congress in Baden Baden in 1981 and watched powerlessly as the IOC admitted tennis and table tennis to the Olympic programme. It was clear that greater efforts were called for.

There was a considerable lack of knowledge of IOC matters and consultations were arranged with Thomas Keller, the Swiss President of the General Association of International Sports Federations, and with Walther Troeger, the Secretary of the German National Olympic Committee and part-time Sports Director of the IOC. Keller in particular was very helpful, instructing Craig Reedie, by now President of the IBF, on the Olympic "jungle". The several hours spent in a Japanese restaurant in Zurich were hours well spent.



The city hall of Copenhagen, where Samaranch made up his mind to admit badminton.

Badminton had been a demonstration sport at the Munich Games in 1972, but after the atrocities involving the Israeli athletes the IOC was more concerned with matters other than the introduction of new sports. The election to the IOC Presidency of Juan Antonio Samaranch in Moscow in 1980 changed all that. Samaranch had a view that part of the modernisation of the IOC was to update the Olympic programme.

The introduction of tennis and table tennis showed the way. However it was still important to meet and impress members of the IOC with the strength of badminton's case. Reedie attended the IOC Session in Rome in 1982 and lobbied as many members as possible. A private meeting with Samaranch proved to be invaluable. He undertook to visit the next World Championships, in Copenhagen in 1983, and it was clear that his influence as President would be crucial.

Badminton showed its best face. Samaranch arrived for semi-finals on the Saturday and was impressed by all he saw, not least the press facilities, and the video library of all matches arranged by the Danish organisers. Finals day saw a full house containing Queen Margarethe and Samaranch watching a final of the men's singles involving Indonesia's Liem Swie King and the young Icuk Sugiarto.

King was the overwhelming favourite but in a classic match Sugiarto upset all the odds by winning in three games. Samaranch was impressed, and from that moment he acknowledged that badminton was a real contender for an Olympic programme place.



Samaranch meets Reedie soon after badminton joins the Olympics. Between them is Gilbert Felli, IOC Olympic Games Executive Director

This was finally delivered at the IOC Session in East Berlin in 1985 and the Olympic flag was presented to the IBF at the World Championships in Calgary a few days later. It would have been ideal to take part in Seoul in 1988 but the Olympic Charter provides for a period of seven years for the introduction of a new sport and the badminton world had to wait until Barcelona in 1992 to begin their Olympic status.

The Koreans organised a one day exhibition of the sport in Seoul in 1988 which served to whet the appetite, despite an absurd initial quotation on costs of over US$300,000. This was reduced to US$10,000 by skilful negotiation.



Icuk Sugiarto wins the world title in a thrilling final in Copenhagen in 1983.

Barcelona took a long time to settle on a final venue before building what was to become a basketball hall, but at the very side of the new Olympic Village. Badminton players could take the internal village transport to a gate in the perimeter fence, walk through to the badminton venue, play their match and return to the village. The set-up was perfect.



Susi Susanti after receiving her gold medal from Juan Antonio Samaranch.

Badminton filled almost all its quota of 172 players and a young lady called Susi Susanti from Tasik Malaya in Indonesia won both her country's first and badminton's first ever gold medal – fittingly presented by a smiling Samaranch. Television viewing figures were enormous and the new sport had made its initial impact. All round the world badminton associations joined their national Olympic committees, and money to develop the sport began to flow, to say nothing of the funding direct to the IBF from the IOC which changed the finances of the Federation.

Subsequent Olympic Games in Atlanta, Sydney, Athens and Beijing have all shown that badminton has become an asset to the Olympic programme, especially with the introduction for Atlanta of the mixed doubles event. Looking ahead, the sport should be playing a full and responsible part in the Olympic movement, both in national Olympic committees and in Lausanne, the Olympic capital, in Switzerland.



Reedie celebrates his 50th birthday with Tom Bacher, IBF Vice President, not long before the Barcelona Olympics.

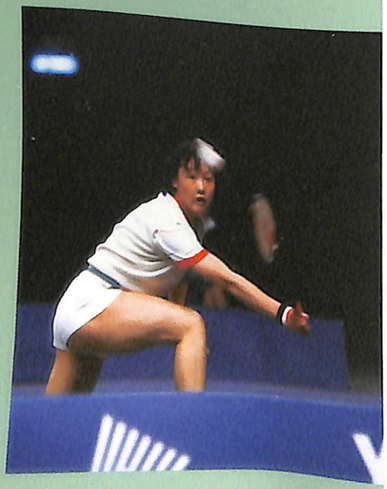
First Person

Li Lingwei



Li Lingwei

World women's singles champion 1983, 1989, world women's doubles champion 1985, BWF council member, winner of IOC Women and Sport trophy for Asia, member of the BWF Hall of Fame.



Li Lingwei – en route to the world title.

WHY I HID FROM THE QUEEN

The first time I won the World Championships was in 1983 in Copenhagen. I was only 19 years old, and it was a remarkable and unforgettable moment for me. It still is, even though many years have passed.

Not only was it the first time I won a world title, but it was the first time that badminton's two world federations, the IBF and the WBF had joined together, creating a unity which helped the sport gain Olympic status.

That first time also went way beyond my expectations because there were players there like Han Aiping, Zhang Ailing, and Xu Rong who are older than and senior to me.

Despite this I was lucky enough to win the title, and after winning it I found it extremely hard to believe that was true. So hard, in fact, that I was crying and went to the rest room and hid behind the door!

After a little while my coach Chen Fushou had to ask someone to try to get me to the court because it was time for the prize-giving ceremony. Queen Margrethe of Denmark was ready to present the trophy to me.

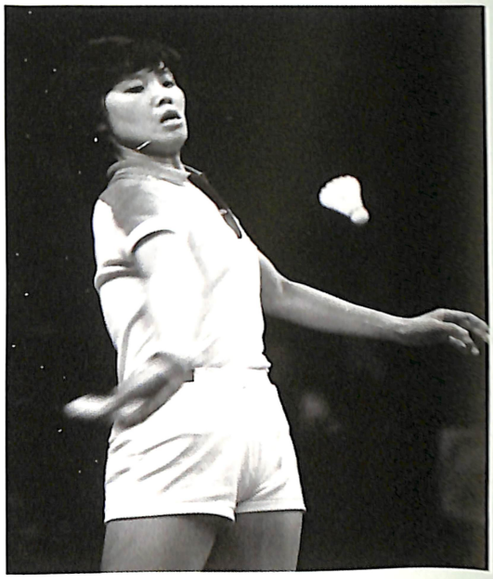
However I was hiding behind the door with a little bit of embarrassment and excitement, and I thought I needed a minute to calm down.

In the meantime my coach asked a player from Japan to go to the ladies rest room and fetch me. When she did she saw nobody, and went back to say that there was no-one inside. I was actually there, hiding behind the door! Finally I walked out and received my medal from the Queen. But I was still crying.

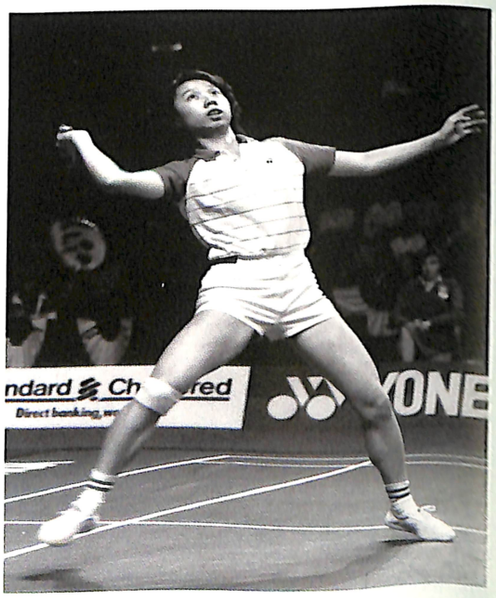
Later I was told that there was an article in China which wrote about "the player who kept the queen waiting five minutes"! I hope she didn't mind. It was an extraordinary moment.

When you recall these memories, you recall the people, though you don't always know what they are doing now.

Some former players have not continued with a career in badminton. After retirement they went back to their home



Zhang Ailing, the first All-England champion from China. Now in Australia.



Han Aiping, clearing from the forehand corner.

"... there was an article in China which wrote about "the player who kept the queen waiting five minutes"! I hope she didn't mind."



Li Lingwei, twice winner of world women's singles titles.

towns, so they are maybe not so close to badminton. They are probably playing another positive role in life.

I met Han Aiping again just last month, when she was in Beijing. She is working for the provincial sports administration bureau, especially on the junior sports side – not only in badminton but other sports. Wu Dixi has a club in Guangzhou now, since moving back from Indonesia. She is still coaching, but not for the provincial or national team.

Zhang Ailing is living in Australia. Whether she's coaching or not I'm not sure. Several years ago she was coaching. Many former players are still doing something for badminton in different areas, not just for the national team.

Even though I don't see them, I still think about them.

And even after all this time, the memory of that day in 1983 when I hid, is still as fresh in my mind as ever.



Li Lingwei (right) and Han Aiping, world doubles champions together in 1985. They met up again recently.



Lin Ying (left) and Wu Dixi, world women's doubles champions in 1983.

Giving the players a voice

THE STORY OF THE BADMINTON PLAYERS FEDERATION

by Stephen Baddeley

It is the mid-1980's, and I am sitting in my front room in North London with Scottish doubles specialist Billy Gilliland. We have trained all morning and have come back to my place to work on creating an organisation which represents top players worldwide.



Stephen Baddeley *For one year Chief Executive of Sport England, six years Chief Executive of the Badminton Association of England, 1990 European and 1986 Commonwealth men's singles champion, founder member of the BPF.*

Spread on the floor is the constitution of the Association of Tennis Professionals, which we are using as a template. This has been sourced for us by my old school friend Andrew Ryan, then a badminton coach in Norway, later the IBF's Chief Operating Officer.

I remember little of the discussion with Billy, although I think the most debated issue was the name! We settled eventually on the Badminton Players Federation and a few months later the BPF was launched with Steen Fladberg, the former world men's doubles champion, as chair.

Wikipedia claims the BPF was established under Steen in 1972 which would have made him a very youthful chairman! It was actually born about 1986, according to my best estimate. No historical information is available on the BPF web-site, so perhaps the current leadership could take on board the need for a brief history before this is lost in the mists of time.

My memory and contacts indicate that it was chaired by Steen from 86–88, followed by myself from 88–90 and Gill Clark from 90–95. Evidence is less precise thereafter but I believe Poul-Erik Høyer-Larsen followed Gill, which means he was chairman when he won his Olympic gold medal at Atlanta in 1996.

The Danish/English stranglehold was broken when Jeroen Van Dijk from Holland took the chair, followed by Canadian Bobby Milroy, who has been in post since 2003, with Jesper Larsen occupying the role in between. However as Jeroen married a Danish player and Bobby lives in Copenhagen, Danes seem to have been involved in almost all cases.



Steen Fladberg – the first chairman – here (right) winning the world men's doubles title with Jesper Helledie.

"We felt players needed an independent voice."



Poul-Erik Høyer-Larsen, chairman while winning the Olympics.

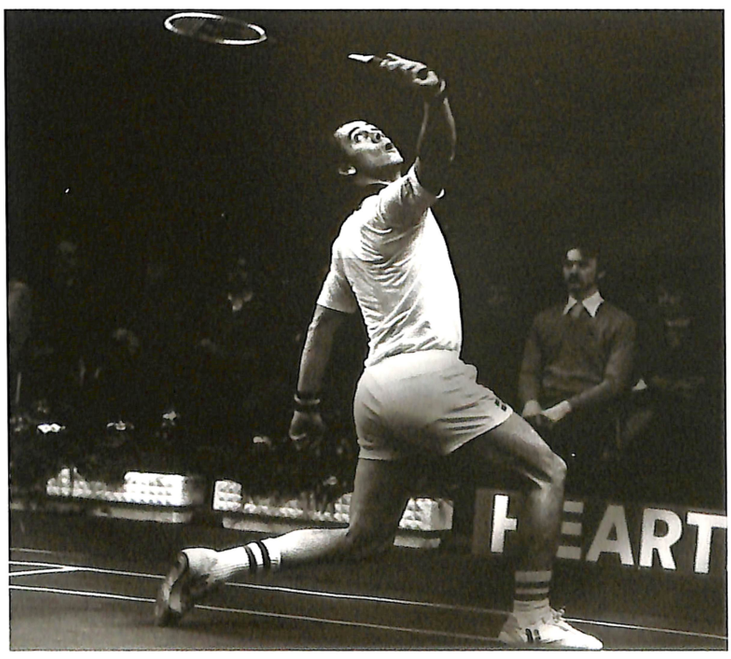
It is important to record that the BPF did not grow from conflict. Badminton moved from the amateur to the open or professional era without the troubles seen in other sports.

Relationships between top players and IBF officials were generally highly constructive in the early 1980's. Players such as Morten Frost and Thomas Kilhström sat on the IBF's open badminton committee, able to influence the development of the World Grand Prix circuit. Given that top players were regularly consulted and had access to decision-makers, what made us believe the BPF was needed?

My answer is that it was an inevitable response to badminton going open. The formation of the BPF was about principle rather than urgent need. We felt players needed an independent voice. Players needed to select their representatives and not have to accept those chosen by the IBF. In practice, the players involved on the IBF Committees were also prominent in the BPF, but that didn't negate the importance of an independent body.

The World Grand Prix circuit was launched in the early eighties and grew from just seven events to become rapidly the driving force of international badminton. The creation of a circuit offering prize money brought a new breed of player – the full-time professional, whose income was dependent on earnings from the sport.

This animal was primarily confined to Europe, where a small group of players competed extensively on the Grand Prix circuit and paid bills and mortgages, and in some cases supported families, with income from their performances. It came from a mixture of prize money and endorsement contracts, the latter mostly with racket manufacturers.



Thomas Kihlström, pioneer of the players' voice.

The World Grand Prix circuit threw up a host of issues about scheduling, prize money, practice facilities, refereeing and many more things. As touring professionals we needed consistency, and the BPF collated concerns and ensured they were heard and addressed.

Players today might be amazed at the inconsistency which existed during the circuit's infancy, though this was not surprising as it was formed by linking existing events which had grown independently, sometimes over decades.

It took many years to create consistent, high standards, even across the major events and Gill Clark recalls still grappling with many basic issues in the early nineties, ten years after the circuit's launch.

One battle she recalls eventually winning during her long period in the chair – the only female to hold the post so far – was the appointment of an independent, IBF-appointed referee in charge at all Grand Prix tournaments.

The availability of practice courts before any event, including in the stadium itself, is a central concern for a touring professional,

"the BPF has had and still has, an important role in creating understanding internally amongst the players about how the BWF works and what the players' obligations are towards international badminton"

one which perhaps best illustrates the BPF's significance and the importance of players being heard.

Having flown halfway around the world and needing to acclimatise rapidly to vastly different conditions – heat and humidity for Europeans in the days before air-conditioned stadia (wow, today's generation have it easy!), cold and damp for players from South East Asia – sufficient court time is as vital as food and drink.

Equally important is court time during an event, so that players eliminated before the last two days, the majority, can prepare for the next tournament. Essential though this is, it may be of minimal concern to tournament organisers focused on the climax of their own event.



Gill Clark, long stint in the chair.

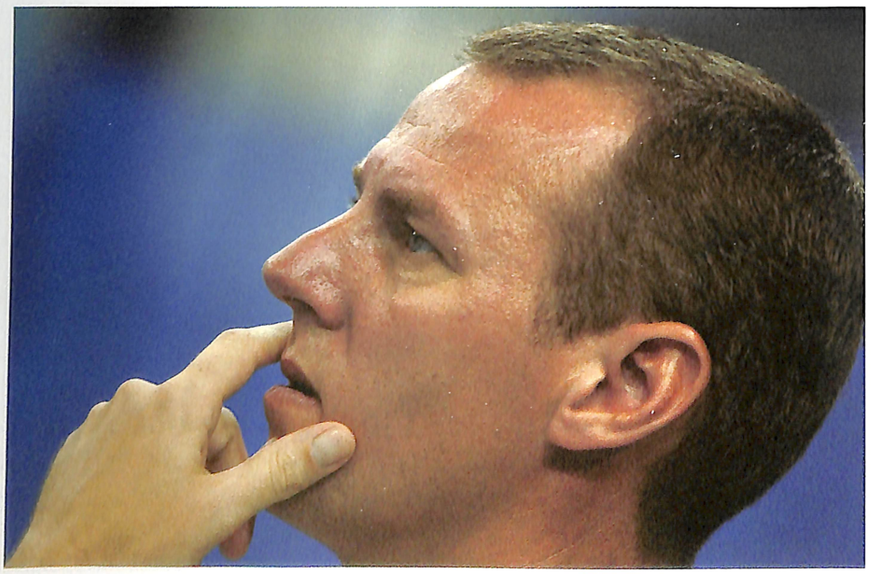
Another issue was scheduling. I remember playing three singles matches in one day at the Japan Open, followed by a rest day as we moved cities to finish the event. The All-England Championships used to play quarter-finals and semi-finals of doubles events during the same session!

The BPF campaigned for one-round-per-day events and, if numbers required more than one round per day, this had to happen in the early rounds. We eventually won this discussion too, but not without considerable resistance. I recall this was far from popular in my own country as it caused change to the traditional All-England Friday night schedule, and England does not give up traditions without a fight!

One of the BPF's greatest contributions concerned the division of prize money. There cannot be a more contentious issue, nor one more appropriate for it to tackle.

There were two key concerns, the division between events and the breakdown within an event. Debates among players were long and hard, and, even though it is more than two decades ago, some of the percentage breakdowns presented to the IBF remain fresh in my memory. The men's singles received 25.5% of the prize pool with the winner getting 6.5% and the runner-up 4%, followed by 2.5% for semi-finalists, 1.5% for quarter-finalists and 0.5% for those losing in the last 16.

As you see, we didn't propose the standard distribution in which money doubles with each win in the latter stages. We agreed a more equitable split, spreading it across a larger group, to sustain more full-time professionals. This was not without its detractors but I suppose it was democracy in action, as more players benefited and therefore supported it.



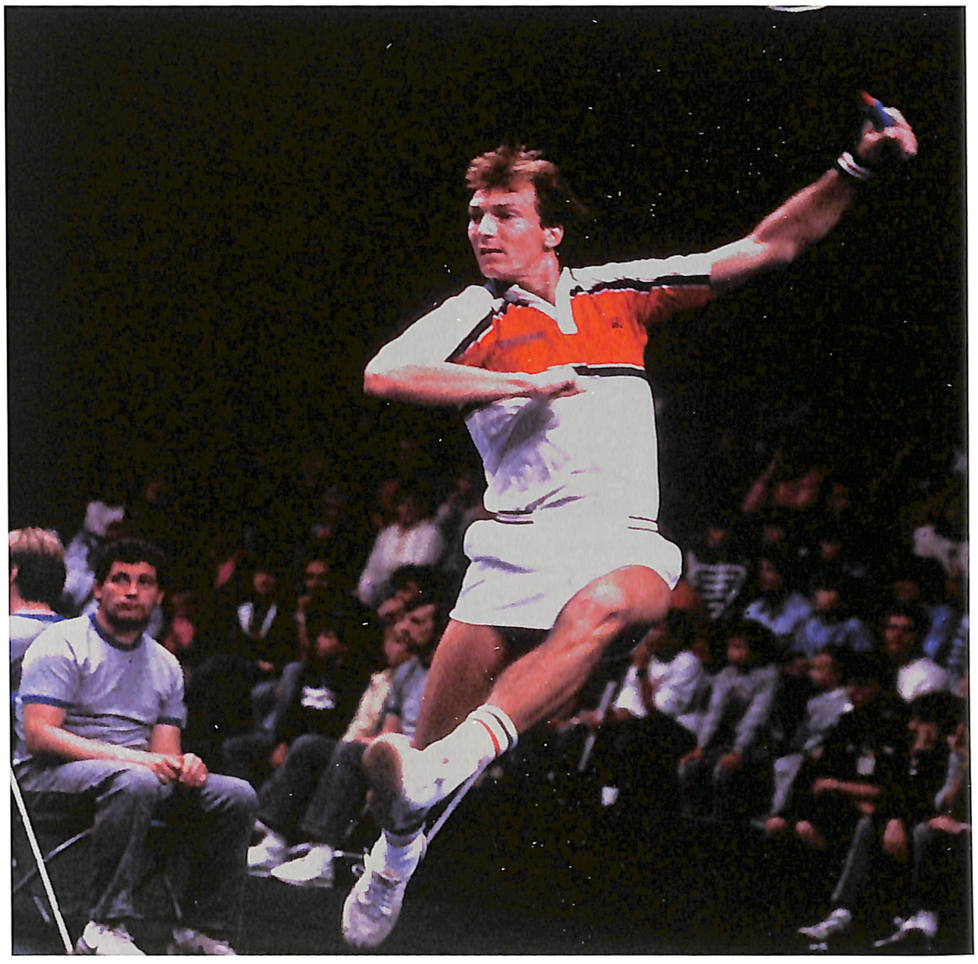
Morten Frost – it's all in the mind.

The IBF was supportive of the BPF from its outset. We had a seat on the IBF council, given willingly without any resistance from elected officials. It didn't carry a vote but provided influence and ensured that issues important to elite players would be heard.

My old friend and adversary Morten Frost is more critical, stating that back in the eighties "the IBF was not really listening and the players were not prepared to stick together".



Billy Gilliland, co-pioneer, with the tankard presented for his 50th Scotland cap.

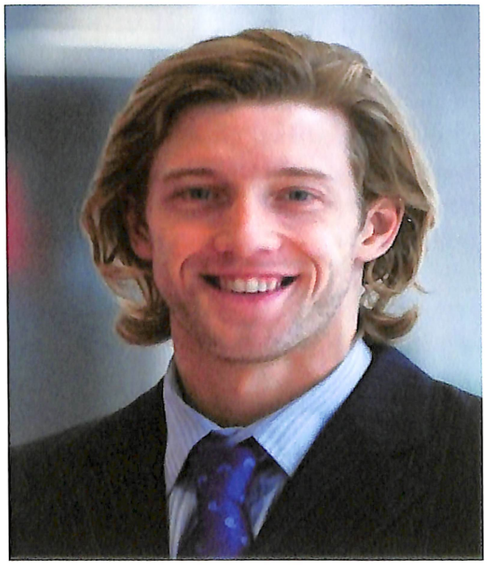


Stephen Baddeley, in his days as the world's third best player.

He admits he was never close to the BPF but was "always supportive". He believes "prize money must be the main focus" but that the biggest barrier to progress is "the national associations' stronghold on players".

Till this is removed, he argues, players cannot be free and independent and badminton will not realise its commercial potential. Having known Morten for many years, I can tell you his views are nothing if not consistent, just as his game was.

The power of the BPF has always been constrained by national associations having immense control over players, especially in Asia. It has always fought with one hand tied, as it can never claim to have been representative of all players.



Bobby Milroy, seeking a more professional approach.

Nevertheless Thomas Lund, the BWF's new Chief Operating Officer, believes the IBF/BWF has benefited from "being challenged by the BPF to develop tournament structures and enhance focus on the players". Given his recent appointment, it is perhaps unsurprising that Thomas believes the BPF also has an important role in supporting the BWF.

He says "the BPF has had and still has, an important role in creating understanding internally amongst the players about how the BWF works and what the players' obligations are towards international badminton".

The BPF today has over 300 registered members, has successfully campaigned for equal prize money for men and women, and enjoys a vote on the BWF Council. Much has been achieved, but Bobby Milroy, the current Chair, believes there is still much to do in ensuring "a more professional approach to tournaments and public relations".

He believes the "BWF is not demanding enough on event organisers and the BPF is not demanding enough on players". He also emphasises the overwhelming importance of the BPF maintaining its independence - a sentiment with which Billy and I would wholeheartedly agree.

Badminton's most golden moment

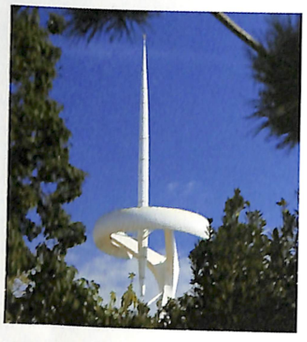
by Richard Eaton

The Times' badminton correspondent at the Barcelona Olympics

It was ostentatiously billed as the most important moment in the history of badminton – but little did the purveyors of hyperbole and ballyhoo realise that this was going to be one of those rare moments when reality exceeds the most exploiting superlatives.

Badminton's debut in the Olympic Games at Barcelona in 1992 was always likely to have a galvanising effect – a massive heightening of profile, a mighty boon to funding, and moments of surging emotions, especially when the President of the IOC, Juan Antonio Samaranch, presented the first gold medal, symbolising the sport's entry into a new era.

The amazing thing was that it was even better than all that.



The Barcelona Olympic torch.



The Barcelona Olympic Games opening ceremony.

Something special happened, and continued to happen, right from the beginning, when four unseeded players who had not expected the eyes of the globe to be upon them, played so thrilling a women's doubles that an estimated 150 million worldwide watched them on TV.

Their stunning 50-stroke match point was won by Gill Clark and Julie Bradbury of England, and although it was Rosiana Tendean and Erma Sulistianingsih of Indonesia who lost the match it was they who attracted the majority of television watchers, most of them in the Far East. It set badminton's log rolling spectacularly.



Susanti's unique smile.

And it gathered such momentum that after four days estimates suggested that the number of viewers had risen to about a billion. This enabled badminton to claim, at least until the athletics got going, that it was the most watched sport at the Games.

Badminton also took the Olympics to parts other sports could not reach. It gave Indonesia, the 13,000-island archipelago which is the world's fourth most populous nation, its first Olympic champion in any sport.

It had taken 40 years of trying to achieve it. Yet incredibly within two hours Indonesia had earned another, and it went on to take a full set of gold, silver and bronze medals in the men's singles.

"The nation can take pride in itself in the past 40 years," wrote Titus Kurniadi, the Indonesian who was an IBF council member at that time. "And now the people of Indonesia can be proud of players who have brought honours to them."

This triumph, Kurniadi claimed, could help make badminton the national sport of his country. For the International Olympic Committee this was irresistible stuff. But for the media there was even better.



Allan Budi Kusuma and Susi Susanti, the lovebirds now.



Susi Susanti has a special wink for fiancé Allan, 1992.

Badminton's first Olympic champion turned out to be a slim, unobtrusive, girlish-looking 21-year-old – Susi Susanti, who had been the firm favourite to win the women's singles, and was therefore obliged to survive an ordeal of pressure which might have destroyed many a muscular and seasoned man.

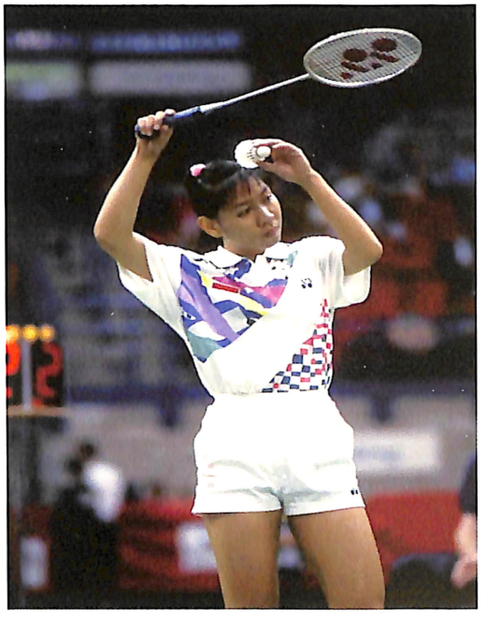
That was story enough. But it was nothing compared to the tale unfolding only two hours later when the men's singles gold medal was won, astonishingly, by Susanti's fiancé – Allan Budi Kusuma.

He had definitely not been the favourite to win, but he had an inspired day which can only have been inspired by love, or at least according to newspapers, radio and television that was so, even though Kusuma himself denied that the romance of it had concerned him at all.

The story summoned so many delicious, circulation-boosting, viewer-grabbing clichés: love on the badminton court, the Games of the heart, the golden couple, and the emotions which would not be denied. And part of it was that Susi had decided she wouldn't go to watch Allan because she might be too disastrously nervous – but couldn't help herself and changed her mind.

"She had been so burdened mentally because everyone had been saying that she must win," commented Rudy Hartono, the legendary Indonesian player of the seventies and eighties. Susanti, he added, had the nickname of an Indonesian shadow puppet which is a fighter.

There were other great moments. Razif and Jalani Sidek won Malaysia's first Olympic medal of any kind, a bronze in the men's doubles, and the two great Koreans who were retiring, Park Joo-Bong and Kim Moon-Soo, finished their careers with gold medals.



Susi Susanti, a study in art.



Kusuma gets his gold.



Old gold and new gold. New legend Susi Susanti with long-time legend Rudy Hartono at the post-final press conference in Barcelona.



The Sidek brothers, from top Razif, Jalani, Rashid and Misbun. Razif and Jalani made history in Barcelona.

But it was the love-birds who created the moment which transcended medals. What, 17 years later, has become of them?

Susi, or Lucia Fransisca Susi Susanti as she really is, married Allan on February 9th, 1997, in a Catholic ceremony, she having retired after the 1996 Atlanta Olympics where she won a bronze. More than 1200 guests were invited to the wedding, including top government and badminton officials, with President Suharto in attendance to honour Indonesia's first Olympic gold medalists.

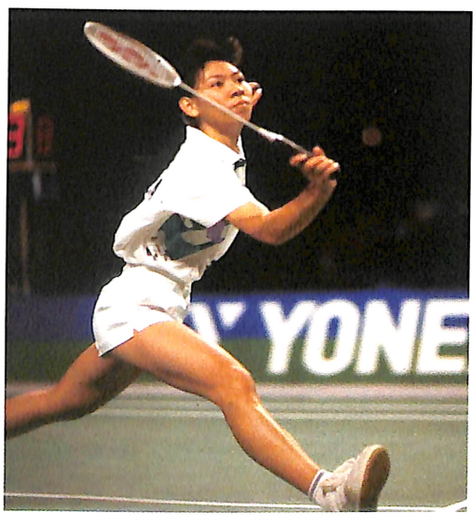
When the glory was finally over, she chose not to be a coach but to have her own sports equipment business. Perhaps that is not so surprising. No protégé could have lived up to her hopes.

She won the All-England title four times, the World Grand Prix title consecutively six times, the world title once, and it was written of her that "she has the muscular legs of a beach volleyball star and the flexibility of a ballerina."

She was frequently photographed performing the splits as she lunged for net shots. Somehow that hinted that she was a person who, quietly and determinedly, but sometimes spectacularly, did things her own way.

Offered a job by the PBSI which would have brought her back to professional badminton again, she turned it down. "I just simply can't do what the bosses say," she was reported as saying. "I get too used to being independent with my own business."

She and Allan now run a badminton club in North Jakarta. It followed the establishment of Astec (Alan & Susi Technology) which over ten years has developed agents and branches all over the country, selling Taiwanese rackets and all their accessories – shoes,



Susi Susanti.



Susanti does her famous splits.



Allan and Susi in love.

T-shirts, shorts, towels, jackets, strings, socks, and bags.

Later Susi and Elizabeth Latief opened several branches of a sport massage business, called Fontana, while Allan has worked in the business department of the PBSI. More recently the two of them participated in an Olympic torch relay in Jakarta for the 2008 Games.

The couple had three children and Susi now spends more time raising them. Daughter Laurencia Averina is eleven, her first son Albertus Edward is ten, and second son Sebastianus Frederick is six.

Apparently neither parent tries to make their children play badminton. "I give my children freedom. I guess they are tending to sing all day long," she is reported to have said.



Susi and Allan – a personal highlight.

Theirs is still the most romantic story in badminton. One can only imagine how many times their minds have turned back to that incredible day in August 1992 when they returned home with gold round their necks and in their hearts. Nor can anyone know how many Indonesians lined the Jakarta streets when the couple returned home in August 1992. Some estimates put the crowd at 500,000; others at more than a million.

"On Sudirman, the main street, it was difficult to move; it was jammed with people all shouting congratulations," Allan said. "For five or six hours, we just kept going and going. It was like in Europe for the soccer championship or Brazil for the World Cup."

The couple reportedly received more than $500,000 each from sponsors and government sources for their Barcelona victories: a gigantic pay day in a nation where the average income is less than $1,000.

But they are people with a spiritual side and it may be that they value something else more. As they stood in an open car with garlands and Olympic gold medals around their necks, inching toward the national monument in Merdeka square, they acquired a heightened appreciation of the power of the subtle and lovely game of badminton.

And they still have it. "Badminton is the only sport right now that can bring Indonesia's name to the world," Susi said recently. "When Allan and I got those gold medals, the world knew our country better. I am very proud about that."



Susanti – dreams come true.



Rudy Hartono, Liem Swie King, Susi Susanti, and Korn Thapparansi in 2004.

Olympic champions



Gold medalists in 1992, Barcelona

Men's singles Allan Budi Kusuma, Indonesia.
Women's singles Susi Susanti, Indonesia.
Men's doubles Kim Moon-Soo and Park Joo-Bong, Korea.
Women's doubles Hwang Hye-young and Chung So-Young, Korea.
Mixed doubles was not part of the Olympics this year.



Gold medalists in 1996, Atlanta

Men's singles Poul-Erik Høyer-Larsen, Denmark.
Women's singles Bang Soo-Hyun, Korea.
Men's doubles Rexy Mainaky and Ricky Subagja, Indonesia.
Women's doubles Ge Fei and Gu Jun, China.
Mixed doubles Kim Dong-moon and Gil Young-Ah, Korea.



Gold medalists in 2000, Sydney

Men's singles Ji Xinpeng, China.
Women's singles Gong Zhichao, China.
Men's doubles Tony Gunawan and Candra Wijaya, Indonesia.
Women's doubles Ge Fei and Gu Jun, China.
Mixed doubles Zhang Jun and Gao Ling, China.



Gold medalists in 2004, Athens

Men's singles Taufik Hidayat, Indonesia.
Women's singles Zhang Ning, China.
Men's doubles Kim Dong-Moon and Ha Tae-Kwon, Korea.
Women's doubles Zhang Jiewen and Yang Wei, China.
Mixed doubles Zhang Jun and Gao Ling, China.



Gold medalists in 2008, Beijing

Men's singles Lin Dan, China.
Women's singles Zhang Ning, China.
Men's doubles Markis Kido and Hendra Setiawan, Indonesia.
Women's doubles Du Jing and Yu Yang, China.
Mixed doubles Lee Yong-Dae and Lee Hyo-Jung, Korea.

© IOC

Gold medalists in 1992, Barcelona



Men's singles
Allan Budi Kusuma, Indonesia.



Women's singles
Susi Susanti, Indonesia.

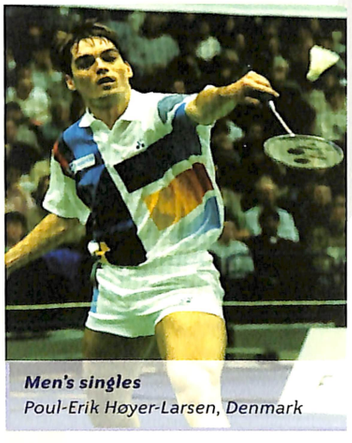


Men's doubles *Kim Moon-Soo (right) and Park Joo-Bong, Korea.*

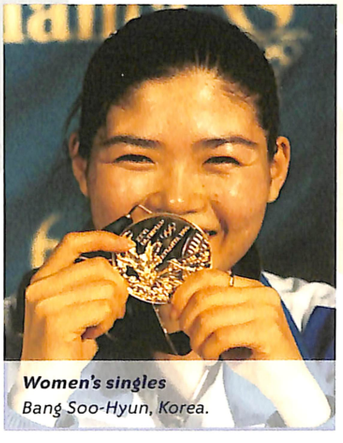


Women's doubles *Hwang Hye-Young (right) and Chung So-Young, Korea.*

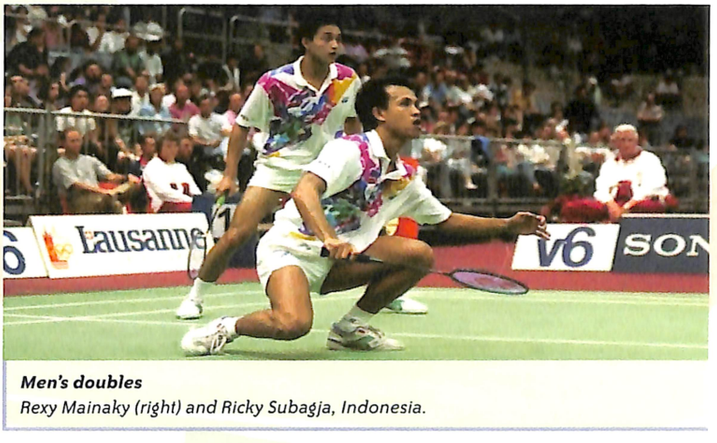
Gold medalists in 1996, Atlanta



Men's singles
Poul-Erik Høyer-Larsen, Denmark



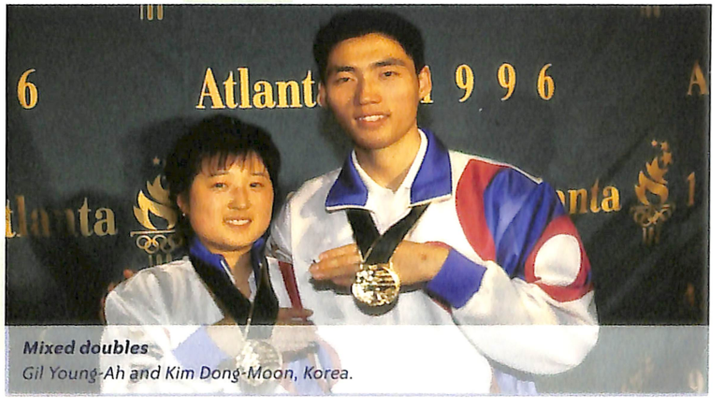
Women's singles
Bang Soo-Hyun, Korea.



Men's doubles
Rexy Mainaky (right) and Ricky Subagja, Indonesia.



Women's doubles
Ge Fei and Gu Jun, China.



Mixed doubles
Gil Young-Ah and Kim Dong-Moon, Korea.

Gold medalists in 2000, Sydney



Men's singles
Ji Xinpeng, China.



Women's singles
Gong Zhichao, China.



Men's doubles
Tony Gunawan and Candra Wijaya, Indonesia.



Women's doubles
Ge Fei and Gu Jun, China.



Mixed doubles
Gao Ling and Zhang Jun, China.

Gold medalists in 2004, Athens



Men's singles
Taufik Hidayat, Indonesia.



Women's doubles
Zhang Jiewen (front) and Yang Wei, China.



Women's singles
Zhang Ning, China.



Men's doubles
Ha Tai-Kwon and Kim Dong-Moon, Korea.

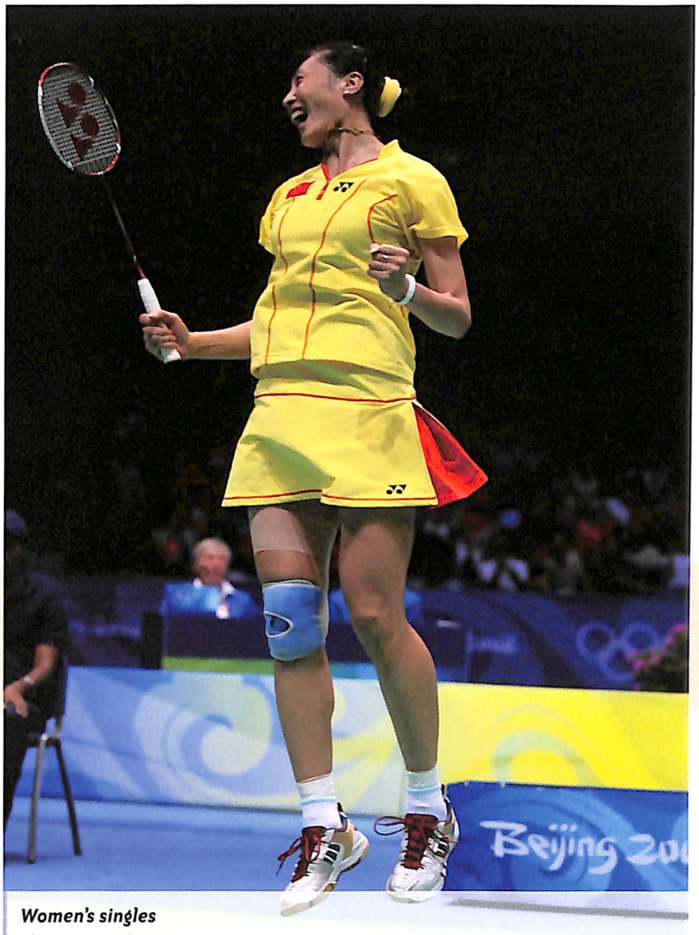


Mixed doubles
Zhang Jun and Gao Ling, China.

Gold medalists in 2008, Beijing



Men's singles
Lin Dan, China.



Women's singles
Zhang Ning, China.



Men's doubles
Markis Kido and Hendra Setiawan (left), Indonesia.



Mixed doubles
Lee Yong-Dae (left) and Lee Hyo-Jung, Korea.



Women's doubles
Du Jing and Yu Yang (foreground), China

Puzant Kassabian



Puzant Kassabian

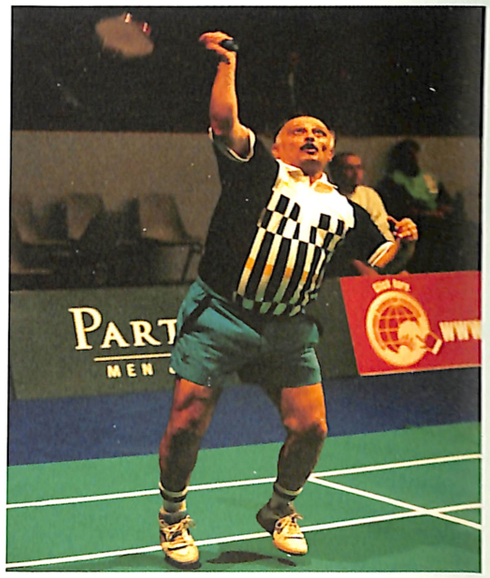
The President of the Bulgarian Federation, has taken part in all 16 world championships, performing the functions of player, coach, manager and supporter, and was honoured in 2005 with a lifetime honorary diploma by the IBF for his record participation.

THE AWARD WHICH TOOK 25 YEARS

The first world championship of my career was in Malmo in 1977 and I was there even though Bulgaria was not able to become an affiliated IBF member in those days because of the regime we lived under.

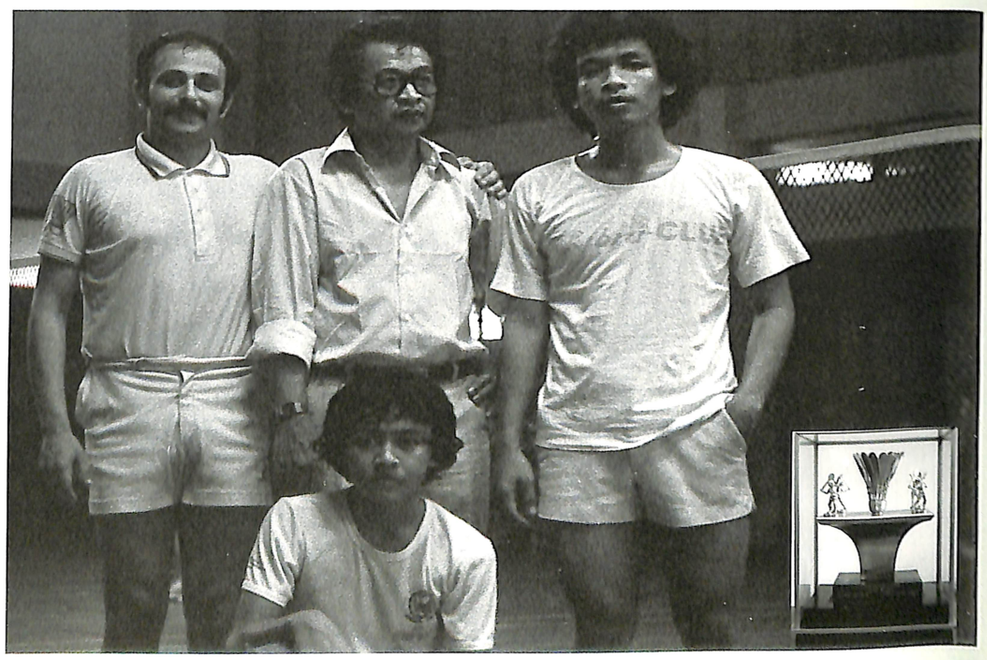
My presence was thanks to Stellan Mohlin, then the IBF President, who sent my invitation to the President of the Bulgaria Sport Union and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, helping me get an international passport, something that was rarely possible in those days.

I went to Malmo to participate in a coaching seminar organised by the IBF and the Swedish Badminton Federation, but my story emerged from being correspondent of a Bulgarian newspaper, Sport, which enabled me to play in the world press championships taking place at the same time.



The Bulgarian evergreen competes in his 11th World Championship.

After two rounds, some other journalist competitors complained to the referee, asking who I was and what right did I have to play in the competition. At that point Hans Lenkert, a long time president of the Swedish badminton federation and a Vice-President of Badminton Europe, became worried that he might be lynched.



Jakarta friends with Kassabian on the left.



Puzant proudly greets the only world champions from Europe, Nora Perry and Jane Webster, at Jakarta in 1980.



Kassabian's great collection.

I was forced to show my journalist's ID, but the card was written in Cyrillic and hard for everyone to understand. Fortunately we did find someone who could read in Cyrillic and after that all was well, and I went on to win the tournament in partnership with Leif Anderson from Eurovision TV.

Afterwards Stellan Mohlin pushed away a group of unhappy journalists, saying that they should be ashamed to be beaten by someone from a country which they knew was making its very first infant steps in the badminton world. Despite that, all material awards for winning the tournament were taken away and we received nothing.

Little did I think that one day the injustice would be put right. But on the 25th anniversary of that unhappy event, I returned to Malmo when the city hosted the European championships, and there Jan Ahrberg, the Secretary General of the Swedish Badminton Federation, presented a trophy to me for that success all those years ago. I was thankful.

A quarter of a century is a long time. And during those years, thankfully, I had the chance to make many good friends in badminton. Some of those friendships will last a lifetime.

"Little did I think that one day the injustice would be put right."



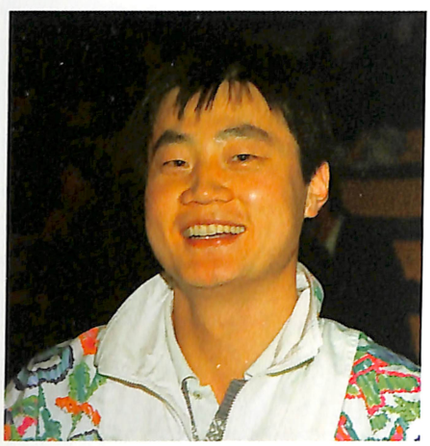
Kassabian gets his prize – 25 years late.

The story of coaching

by Lee Jae-Bok

Former Korean national coach, former British Olympic coach, and one of the world's most cosmopolitan teachers.

You only have to look at images of cumbersome clothes and wooden rackets of players 50, 60 and 70 years ago to see how startling are the changes in badminton. It is far faster and more dynamic – and more thought is put into it too. Lighter, airier dress, carefully researched and manufactured equipment, and greater access to tournaments has transformed how badminton is played. Coaching has changed with it.



Lee Jae-Bok *Former Korean national coach, former British Olympic coach, and one of the world's most cosmopolitan teachers.*

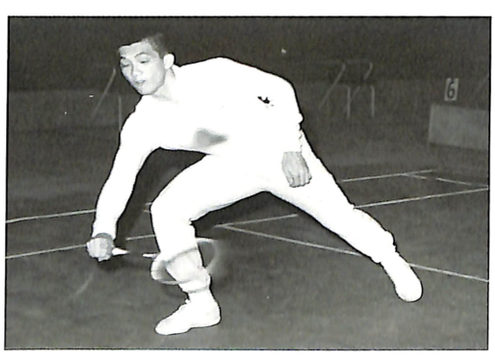
As coaching became more professional, and more debated, it also became a cause of change, not just a consequence of it. It influenced how badminton is played – not just the other way round.

Analaysis and argument about coaching methods now happens all over the world. New philosophies emerge. Change gathers pace. Standards rise sharply.

But before coaching manuals became widespread, common sense coaching developed. In the first three decades of organised badminton, players put more swing into their shots and often used more touch. The racket was heavier, so turning the body was important for generating power.

Rackets changed, first from wood to metal, and then into compound synthetics, becoming lighter and more flexible, and enabling players to strike the shuttle differently. Technical changes followed, with shorter shots – flicking, whipping, jabbing.

But when coaching ideas were first written down, people were less aware of what badminton was, and what it might be. This caused manuals to be followed inflexibly. Nowadays they should just be a starting point.





Tan Aik Huang, one of the early greats from Malaya as it then was, was dressed very differently from players today! Markis Kido, diving and Hendra Setiawan at the Beijing Olympics show the need for modern garb to be streamlined.

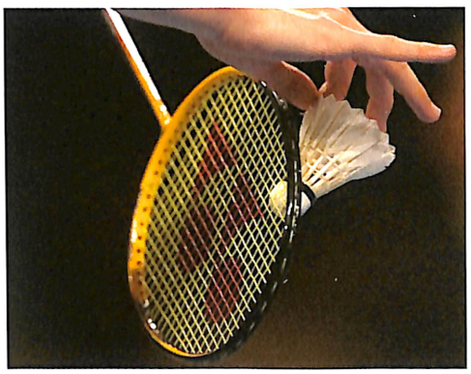
A coach should merely identify the standard method. Whether this works for all ages and nationalities is another matter. That too should be written into the manuals. They should also be written collectively after much debate. I am not sure this always happens.

Badminton was introduced to Korea by a university professor in the generation before mine. It was new to him and he didn't know how to do it, but because he was an academic he could obtain a coaching manual from England.

When badminton was new in Korea, much information was taken like this from England. But coaching methods from other sports in Korea were also introduced into badminton.



Iris Rogers and June Timperley, famous English players of the post-war era – halls were cold and rackets could warp, but ...



... rackets today look very different and only very occasionally break. Racket presses are no longer necessary!

All sports are played really competitively in Korea, and this automatically became part of badminton training. That's why it advanced so quickly.

Suddenly, apparently from nowhere, Hwang Sunai burst on to the international scene in 1981 to win the All-England women's singles title. Many people were amazed.

Her training had been helped by the seriously competitive multi-sport culture in Korea. Football, Taekwondo, Boxing, Judo – all had a similar culture in training, and it passed to badminton. It was not so surprising to me that Sunai won like that.

The old culture in Korea says that if you are my teacher, it is good manners not even to stand on your shadow. I even respect your shadow. This kind of respect still happens between a player and coach in Korea, in all sports.

The upside of this is commitment and discipline. The downside is that players may have difficulty thinking for themselves. Europeans sometimes prefer to express themselves, to question, and if necessary to argue.

Best is to combine European initiative with Asian discipline. It can be done. Some Asian players have a European attitude and some European players possess Asian-type discipline – and become very successful. Look at Rudy Hartono of Indonesia, Yang Yang of China, Morten Frost of Denmark, Park Joo-Bong of Korea, and Gill Clark and Stephen Baddeley of England.

As coaches we should not just make the players copy us. Nor should we make players dependent on us. They have to be their own person on court and make their own decisions. A player who depends on the coach will never be a champion.

Badminton still produces characteristic styles in different countries and regions. Culture, geography and temperature all play a part. Asians have tended to be more intense and serious than Europeans, but there are considerable variations.

Hot climates as in Indonesia and Malaysia tend to make players more relaxed, but mentally hard. This can lead to fast attacking, but also to patient rally making. China is a huge country, with very different climates, and produces players with many different styles.

Korea has considerable mountain ranges and four distinctive seasons, with a very cold winter and very hot summer. The food is both spicy and mild, and very mixed. And Korean badminton is like that – a mixture.

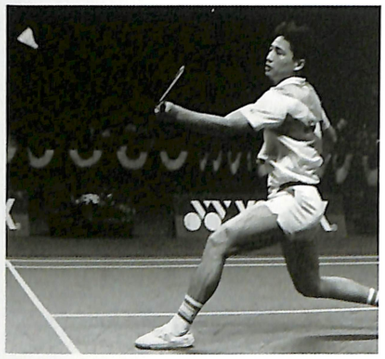
Much of Europe has a mild, or cool climate, and its players have often tried to win with more tactical, less energetic badminton. I don't believe that tactics will beat fitness, or fitness beat tactics. A champion must have both, as well as the will to win.



Korea's Hwang Sunai with Lene Køppen after her shock win over the Dane in the All-England final of 1981.



Rudy Hartono serving.



Yang Yang, a Chinese great.

The traditional European style was influenced by the game's origins. It began in Britain, with cumbersome clothing, with doubles and even triples and quadruples being played rather than singles, and where sport was regarded as leisure, fun, and relaxation.

A more democratic approach to coaching exists in England. Though a respectable attitude, it can make coaches too respectful of players' wishes. They can become too comfortable to become the best.

If players are allowed to choose how much training is done, they are less likely to push to the limit. Coaches should make players feel they can do more than they think, so that the 'impossible' training becomes possible.

Elite level training spread in different parts of the world in different ways. We now know the Chinese government identified badminton as a something it wanted to take seriously way back in the fifties.

From then on it gradually concentrated its great organisational powers upon the sport, developing its own coaches, some of whom influenced thinking in Indonesia and Malaysia. Eventually many travelled to countries all around the world.

In Europe it was slightly different. Once the post-war recovery created more economic and social confidence, governments and sports organisations began to realise the human value of getting people into sport, including badminton, to give them some kind of education.

There was a great spread of coaches in the 1980's and 1990's, both at grass roots and elite levels, as it became better understood that to win, knowledge and organised education were needed. National governing bodies began to be able to afford this, and in some countries, clubs could too.

Then the IBF took a hand. With financial support from the Olympic Solidarity movement, a newly established Development Committee helped coaching knowledge to spread. About 20 or 30 highly qualified coaches travelled around the world, including to Africa and island associations in Oceania.

After Andrew Ryan joined the Federation in the 1990's, becoming responsible for development, this process accelerated. By now badminton was an Olympic sport, with national Olympic committees becoming much wealthier, and many more coaches crossing national boundaries, driven by international demand.



Morten Frost, the only European of his era to win major titles in the East and the West.

From this elite development, it was natural that coaches should become better understood and more fashionable at other levels. More and more clubs and individuals acquired their own coaches.

In the last 20 years sports science has developed enormously. It teaches how to become fitter, what to eat, and the short- and long-term needs of the body. Statistical analyses show which aspects of a player's game have been working best; diagrams can be constructed of shuttle patterns.

But there is something more important – the power of mind and the influence of attitude. To become an Olympic gold medalist, a trusting and respectful relationship with the coach is vital.

Before tackling technical faults, a coach needs to see if a player believes in him. This can be lacking in the situation where a player pays for an hour's coaching, and then walks away.

I have also found big cultural differences between Europe and Asia about how much pressure children should face.

Life is about respect, and about challenging and competing, so children must be able to face the pressure of a challenge from a young age. They must also learn to accept the result and take responsibility for it, rather than blame other things for the outcome.



Trust – Park Joo-Bong, coaching the Japanese team at the Indonesia Open 2004.



Rexy Mainaky coaching at the Singapore Open 2007.

Take the Chinese. To reach a national standard they must survive amidst so many good players, and train in this environment from early on. If they are not strong enough – so be it. Being more democratic in training can reduce the strong to a mediocre level.

So athough sports science has helped greatly, I believe this is in secondary factors. Players from a very competitive environment, even without much sports science, often beat players with scientific support but without the right environment or the will to succeed.

More money in sport has meant increased funding for sports science and sports ideas. Politics drives it, fuelled by national desire. There are more seminars about coaching, helping it evolve. So what will the future bring?

Will it continue with the recent changes of coaches being allowed to talk to elite players during matches? Or will modifications emerge?

It is true that the BWF has merely allowed something which had been happening anyway, illegally, for many years. But there are different opinions as to how positive a change this is, if at all.

There is now less emphasis on players sorting out their own tactical problems during a match, though there may be an entertainment ingredient, with coaches becoming recognised by the public. And it may be better than having referees running around, trying to hear what coaches were saying in all sorts of different languages!



Coach Misbun Sidek has to be ready to catch. Lee Chong Wei is the player with the trust, Beijing.

Scientific development will continue, which is good, but we also need more of that which science cannot help. We need relationships of trust and respect between coaches and players rather than brief commercial arrangements of buying time and ideas.

To win Olympic gold medals, such relationships are important. Real sporting behaviour involves putting everything into a match, then accepting the result. Hurling a racket, throwing a water bottle, or using bad language can create an alibi which avoids the truth.

Pride is essential. Players with pride accept blame without the head dropping. If they lose like this, they are not really losers because they learn.

Better to fight the tiger and be eaten by it, than run away and be eaten anyway! Great players don't play for money – they play for pride.

A Galaxy of Stars 1980–1988

1980s



Chinese flag became prominent from the 1980's onwards.

1981

Reconciliation between IBF and WBF in Tokyo; the sport is unified again.

China wins the Thomas Cup for the first time, at the Royal Albert Hall in London.



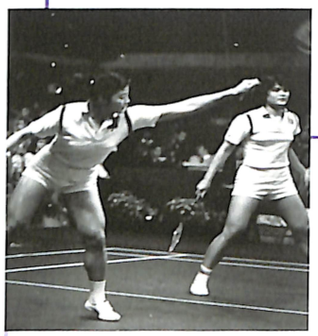
Nora Perry and Jane Webster, world women's doubles champions 1980, silver medalists 1983, All-England champions 1981.

1983

Synthetic shuttles permitted

China begins to dominate the sport

First IBF World Grand Prix



Lin Ying, world women's doubles champion 1983 with Wu Dixi, and with Guan Weizhen 1987, 1989.



Nora Perry and Thomas Kihlström, world mixed doubles champions 1983, All-England champions 1983. Kihlström was also All-England men's doubles champion 1983.

continued from page 47

1980

Agreement reached with Badminton Associations of China and Taiwan, the IBF and the WBF, join to re-unify world badminton.

IBF rents offices in Cheltenham.



Verawaty Fajrin, world women's singles champion 1980.

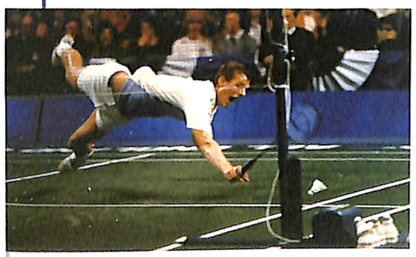


Prakash Padukone. All-England champion 1980, winner of the first open tournament, the Friends Provident Masters 1979.

1982



Zhang Ailing, All-England women's singles champion 1982, 1983, member of Uber Cup world title winning squad 1984.



Morten Frost, All-England men's singles champion 1982, 1984, 1986, 1987, world silver medalist, 1985, 1987.

1982–90

Use of synthetic rackets spreads

1984

China wins the Uber Cup for the first time.

The Thomas and Uber Cup competitions, held together for the first time, were a huge promotional and financial success in Kuala Lumpur.



Koreans at Badminton House in the 80s.

1985



Hwang Sunai.



Park Joo-Bong and Kim Moon-Soo, Olympic men's doubles champions 1992, world men's doubles champions 1985, 1991.



Craig Reedie did more than anyone to get badminton voted into the Olympic programme in 1985.

1987

China becomes first country ever to win all five world titles, in Beijing.



Wang Pengren and Shi Fangying, world mixed doubles champions as China win all five in 1987.

The Oceania Badminton Federation was formed in Beijing.



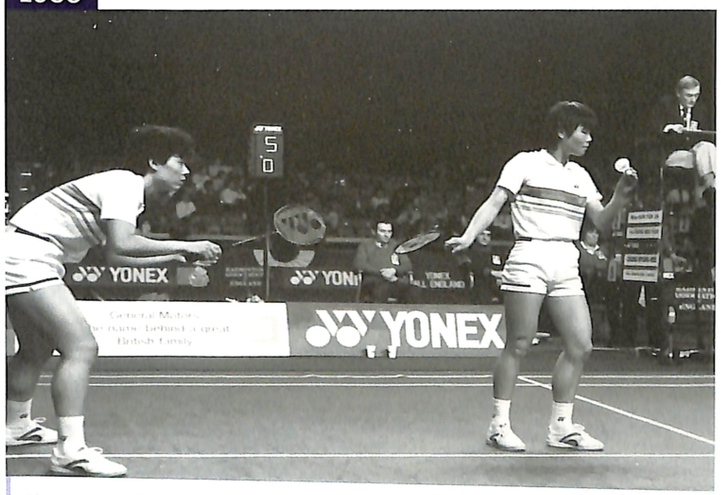
Yang Yang, world men's singles champion 1987, 1989; All-England champion 1989.



Han Aiping, world women's singles champion 1985, 1987, world women's doubles champion 1985.

continued on page 100

1986



Hwang Hye-Young and Chung Myung-Hee, All-England women's doubles champions 1986, 1987, 1990.

1988

Badminton is a demonstration sport at the Seoul Olympics.

The story of court officials

by Tom Marrs



Tom Marrs *Former championships director of the All-England Open.*

Although the International Badminton Federation (IBF) was formed in July 1934 it did not organise competitive events until after the second world war, and so did not involve itself with court officials, referees, and umpires until after that time.

Nevertheless, long before the IBF came into being, there was a desire for competitive play. The first rules were drawn up in England, in 1877, by Colonel H.O. Selby of the Royal Engineers, but inter-club matches were played prior to that, with varying rules and varying sizes of court.

The formation of the Badminton Association at a meeting in Southsea, England in 1893 led to standardising the rules and the size of the court, increasing the need for court officials.

It was after the first open tournament, open to members of all clubs, which took place over one day only at Guildford, England in 1898, that the Badminton Association decided it should get involved.

Its first effort was the inaugural All-England Championship at the Horticultural Halls in London, in 1899. The appointment of referees does not appear to have been considered at this time, with all arrangements and officiating being down to "the committee"!

Photographs of the time show what could be considered the first court officials, standing between courts acting as scorers. Court lines were chalked by committee members before play could begin and needed constant renewal during the day.

The first championships involved only doubles, but singles was added the following year. As other national associations emerged so more championship tournaments joined the calendar. The Irish started theirs in the 1901–02 season, followed by the Scots in 1906–07 and the French in 1908–09. The first recorded international match was played in 1902–3 in Ireland, who played England.

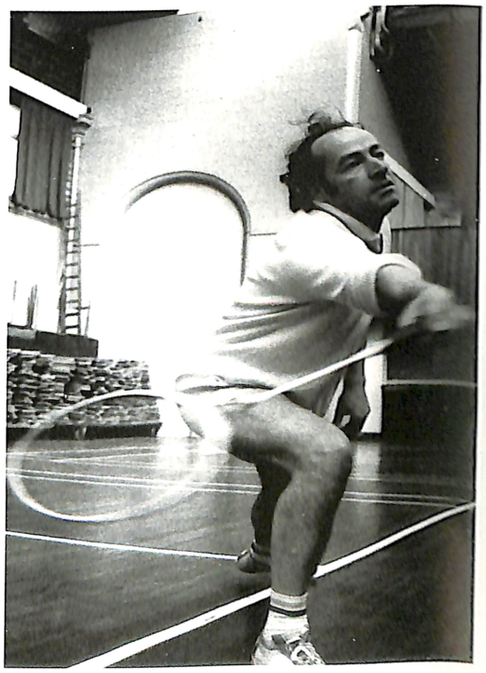


The arms say it – Junior Durrant of Bermuda.

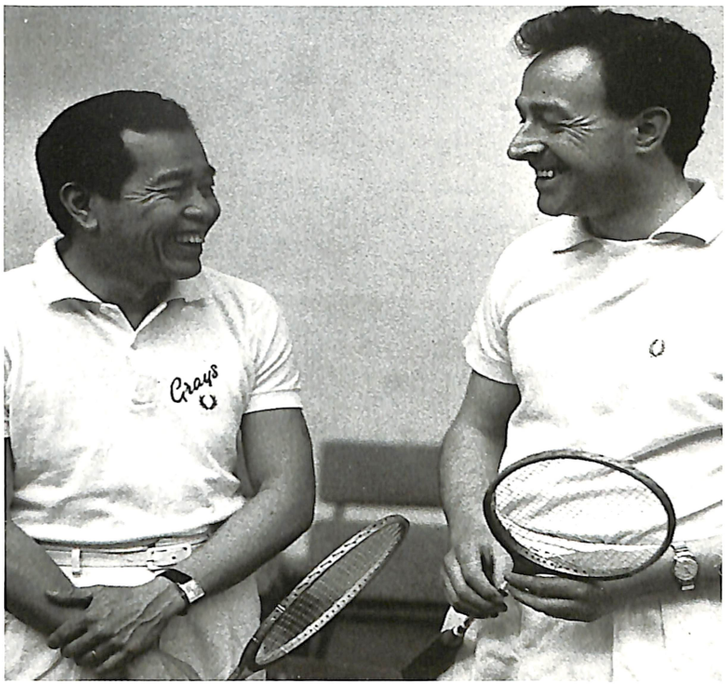
By now court officials were beginning to appear. Mr. W. Littlejohn was appointed honorary referee of the inaugural Scottish Championships – and must have made a good impression because records show that he went on to referee the All-England in 1910, almost certainly the first foreign court official to be appointed.

Play was severely curtailed by the 1914–18 war but made a hesitant resumption in 1919. The number of tournaments increased and specialist court officials evolved through experience rather than training.

This progress continued to such an extent that the more forward looking of The Badminton Association committee, led by Sir George Thomas and Mr. A.D. Prebble, overcame the objections of the die-hards



Marrs can play too



Tom Marrs with the great Wong Peng Soon.

and drafted a constitution for a new international body to be called The International Badminton Federation (IBF).

This finally happened at an historic meeting at Bush House, London, England on 5 July 1934 at which the Badminton Association renounced its international remit and also donated £200 to help the new organisation.

More countries, both those affiliated to the new international federation and those outside, developed internal competitions and appointed untrained members of "the committee" to officiate.

In 1938 the IBF took a major step towards developing competition and court officials by appointing Herbert Scheele (England) as its honorary secretary. No-one was more knowledgeable regarding the rules and laws or insistent that they were followed to the letter. Hence the need for competent court officials.

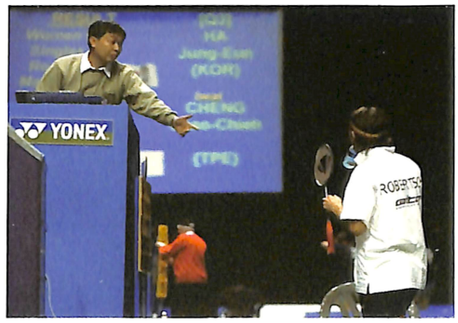
The second World War brought the Federation's activities virtually to a halt, particularly in most of Europe. But come 1945, under Scheele's dynamic leadership, the Federation moved to develop the competitive game worldwide.

The annual general meeting of 1946 was attended by only seven of the 15 member national associations, and the growth of tournaments was hampered by a post-war shortage of serviceable venues and an acute shortage of shuttlecocks.

Despite this the Federation announced its first ever world event, a men's team championship to be known as the Thomas Cup with national teams competing for a trophy presented by Sir George Thomas, the long serving IBF President. Because of post-war problems it was decided to delay the launch until the 1948–49 season, when ten countries entered.

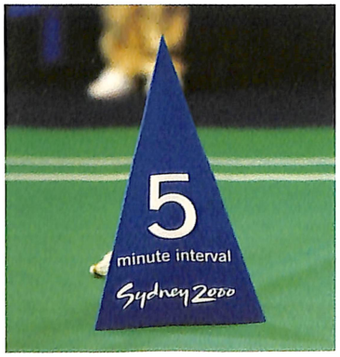
Out of deference to the cup's donor it was agreed that the inter-zone ties take place in Great Britain just prior to the All-England Championships of 1949. Herbert Scheele was appointed honorary referee, the first of many such appointments.

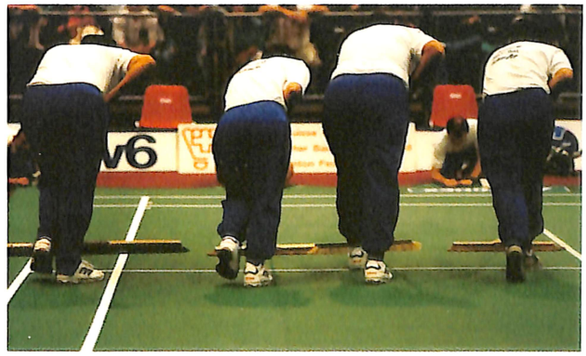
Scheele built up a reputation as a referee who was tough but fair though this was certainly put to the test in 1967, when the Thomas Cup finals took place in the 12,000 seat Senayan Stadium in Jakarta with Malaysia and Indonesia reaching the challenge round tie.



Regulations enforced – Nathan Robertson is off for a drink, the umpire waves him back on.

All went well on the first days, after which Malaysia had established a 3-1 lead. The visitors increased their lead to 4-1 by winning the first singles on the second day and looked well on their way to victory.

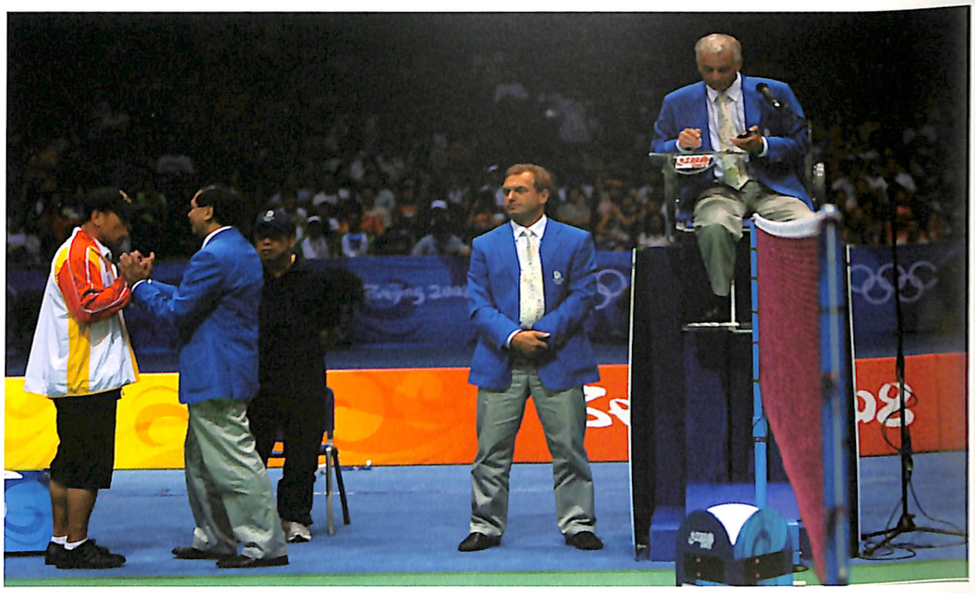




An interval for players means more work for officials – teamwork.

However the Indonesians took the next two singles to narrow the Malaysian lead to 4-3. After an interval the first doubles of the evening took to the court. For Malaysia Ng Boon Bee and Tan Yee Khan demolished Susanto and Muljadi in the first game 15-2 in just eleven minutes.

Their domination continued until they reached 10-2 in the second game, only five points away from winning the tie. Then it was that the crowd got quite out of hand.



Li Yongbo, China's head coach, protests, court officials cope, Beijing.

To quote the referee's report: "The shouting, the waving, the booing, the stamping and the letting off of flash bulbs all started then, and the Malaysians became extremely nervous. Both served into the net through sheer nervousness. No longer was this match a sporting contest, and the appeals of the umpire, Tom Bacher (Denmark) went quite unheeded by the great crowd. Indeed, if anything, his appeals made their behaviour worse."

From 2-10 the Indonesians went on to win the second game but referee Herbert Scheele declined to let play re-start. His decision to abandon the match was supported by the IBF Council and the tie was awarded to Malaysia 6-3. The following day Scheele was provided with an armed police escort from his hotel to Jakarta Airport.



Neil Cameron with Roger Johansson and Lau Teng Chuan in Japan.

International matches continued to increase in number, particularly in Europe, and in 1950 a prominent England player Betty Uber offered to provide a trophy for a world team event for ladies. Acceptance was delayed for fear that the financial commitment would be too great for many countries, but the competition eventually took to the courts in the 1956–57 season, the first winner being the United States.

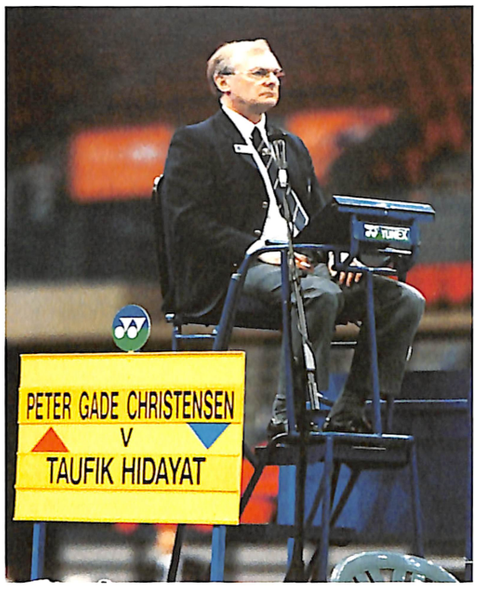
With the number of open championships continuing to increase, recognised referees and umpires started to appear, provided by the home nation and self-taught rather than formally trained. Some umpires had little or no qualification to perform the job, and the job was sometimes performed merely by people who were available or who wanted to do it.



Roy Ward – the brains behind the umpires' organisation and the hall of fame.

The training of court officials, particularly of umpires, increased during the 1970's with the formation of umpires' associations, particularly in European countries, and the need for this increased in 1979 when badminton went open.

The first open event was the Friends Provident Masters at the Royal Albert Hall in London in September 1979. Tennis had declared itself open eleven years earlier, enabling badminton to learn from its mistakes.



Mike Gilks, one of the first umpires to be internationally certificated.

Now the stakes were higher with increasing prize money, and the organisation of umpires accelerated with the setting up of the International Badminton Umpires' Organisation (IBUO) during the Thomas Cup final at the Royal Albert Hall in London in 1982.

This was largely the work of IBF Vice-President Roy Ward from Australia, who included amongst the stated aims not only improved methods of training and assessing, but ways of defining umpire ranking criteria to establish a worldwide classification, and being available if invited to assist in the organisation of tournaments.

The first assessments of candidates took place at the World Championships in Copenhagen in 1983 and at the Thomas and Uber Cup Finals in Kuala Lumpur in 1984, producing 20 certificated umpires from 11 different countries and nine accredited umpires from six different countries. This has risen to 52 certificated umpires from 27 different countries and 45 accredited umpires from 29 countries, with all five continents represented.

Now that prize money had to be raised and sponsors found, events had to become more media friendly, particularly towards television companies. This meant a subtle change in attitude was needed, particularly from certain referees.

At the All-England Championships at Wembley Arena the referee, the one and only Herbert Scheele, was heard to respond to a polite enquiry from a distinguished BBC television producer, who requested consideration of a certain order of play for the finals, by informing him that "this tournament is for the players, not for television."

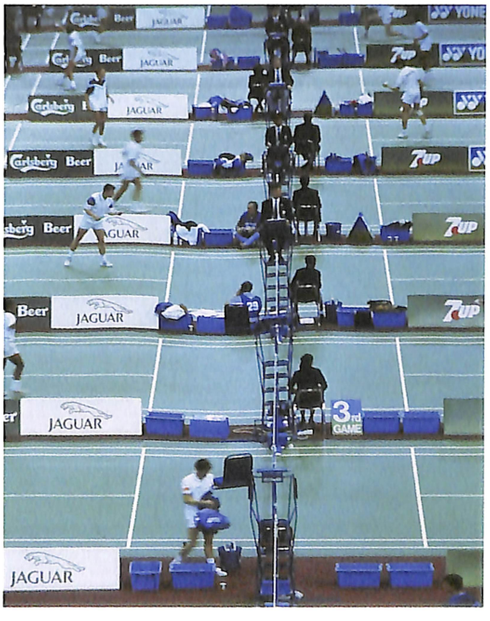
Sponsors and television looked for more attractive presentation, and no longer just a court laid on bare boards with a rusty tea urn and plastic cups at the side. Special lighting, coloured carpets with court-side flowers made the game look more professional and helped it fight for its all-important share of coverage.



The floor manager's team – always crucial.

Line judges, an important part of match presentation, now appeared in smart uniforms and were introduced on to court rather than strolling on carrying programmes, handbags, and the weekly shopping. The need to inform the audience of umpires' decisions brought the creation of a set of service judges' signals for service faults.

A big change was caused by badminton getting into the Olympics in 1992. Expectations increased, and there was a steep learning curve in terms of the pressure encountered. A greater intensity emerged with more at stake. A greater degree of psychology became part of the job. Around 1990 Arthur Jones took the initiative to formally organise the referees, in a system parallel to the IBUO



Umpires in line at Birmingham.

The two were amalgamated by 1994 as the Court Officials Committee (COC). Lau Teng Chuan of Singapore became the first chairman, followed by Torsten Berg and Paisan Rangsikitpho. The chairman now is Torsten Berg.

Refereeing too is a growing area, especially with the establishment of the BWF Super Series, and within the COC there are now also eight certificated referees worldwide and 22 accredited.

BWF training courses for referees have been for some while including sessions on what tournament directors and television would require from the referee, if standards of presentation are to be improved. That is something which has to happen year on year.

First Person

Nora Perry



Nora Perry

BWF councillor, former world women's doubles and mixed doubles champion.

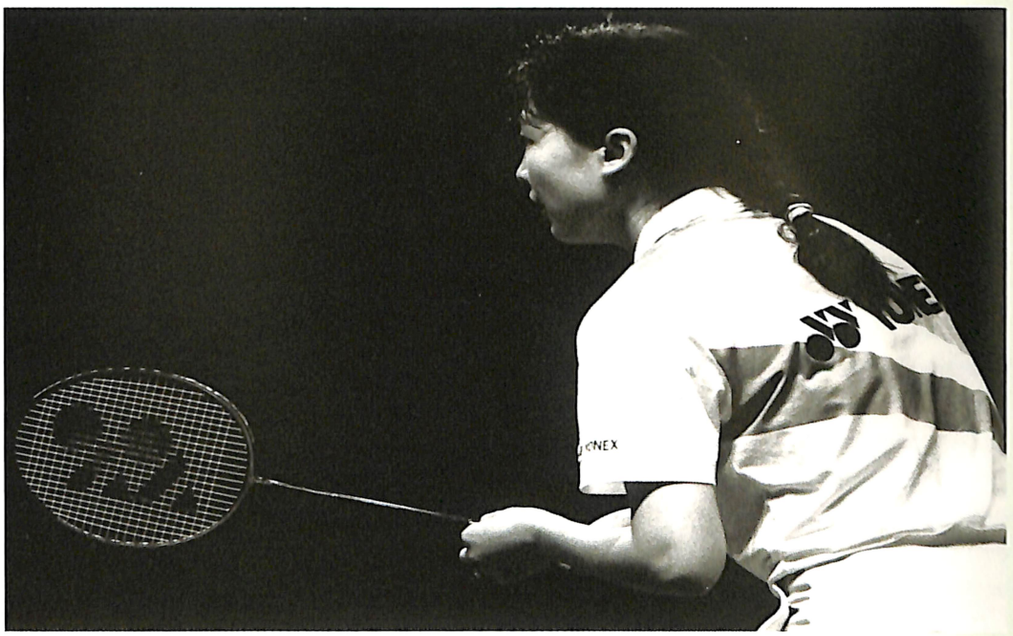
IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS WHICH COUNT

I work a 14-hour day, coaching, teaching, and doing BWF work, hardly taking a break, and then just crashing into bed at the end of it, and people sometimes ask how I manage to keep going.

The answer is that, despite all the big issues which need dealing with, it's the pleasure I gain from kids' success at grass roots level which energises me to achieve bigger and better things.

What do I hope for, now I'm a BWF councillor? The answer is to be involved in decision-making and not just a little participation without much voice, which can happen at the national level. I like to think that once you are on the world council you are actually listened to.

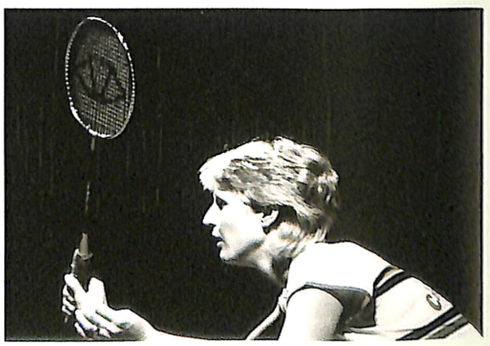
Even though the last four years have been difficult for the BWF, the council has still maintained the sport of badminton, and now I believe it is in a better position to push forwards.



Li Lingwei, forward looking.

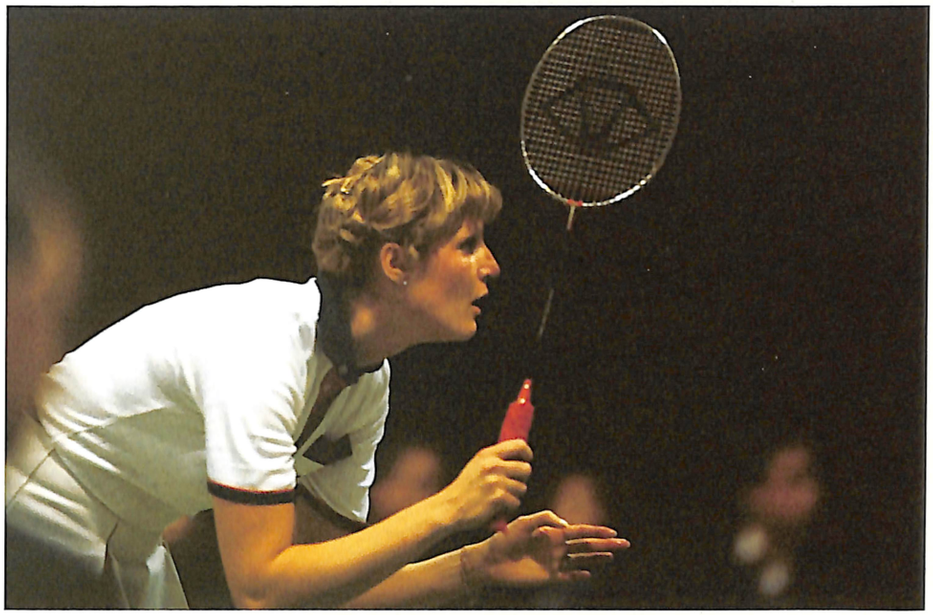
However Li Lingwei and I are the only past elite players on the council. That's not much representation, but it may be a reaction to the previous council, which arguably had too many players, and not enough business expertise.

Let's be honest, international badminton is a business. It's there to make money – not necessarily for people to make money, but for badminton to make money. I don't think that was happening. I think we lost sight of it.



Nora Perry, no way past at the net.

"Most of all I want the BWF to be acknowledged as doing great things for badminton."



Nora Perry is ready.

We have though taken a step forward with each of the five continents being allowed to nominate their own Vice-Presidents. It is crucial that they should choose the person to make their own ideas heard and not have that imposed on them. It's more democratic and should be more effective too.



Zhou Mi at the Singapore Open, 2009.

It's the best step since I have been around in badminton – and I was a player representative on the open badminton committee when Tom Bacher was chairman of it and Craig Reedie the IBF President, years and years ago!

It is crucial that continents see that their money is distributed and used in the right way, which is another reason for each to choose its Vice-President rather than have the council doing it. At the same time, the council is now strong enough to question anything which is not going right.

Another improvement to ensure players don't suffer the disappointment of having just one match and then going home. We want some form of group format so they can get at least two matches.

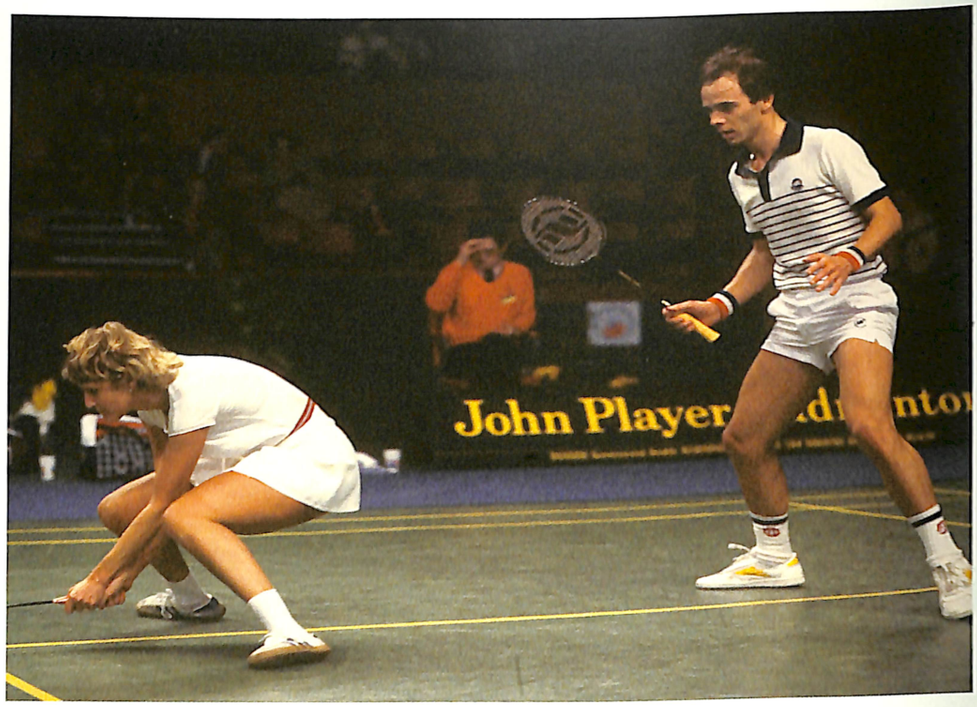
I also think we should make improvements to the Super Series. Looking at that calendar I can't see how a top player gets an opportunity to do any really good training. There are too many tournaments.

Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer are able to build everything around the four Grand Slams on the tennis tour. How can you build everything around 12 tournaments, which the BWF Super Series has? You can't.





Nora Perry was an early sponsored star.



Nora Perry and Thomas Kihlström, world mixed doubles champions in Copenhagen in 1983.

Four Grand Slams would be an obvious progression. Other tournaments could be taken to many different countries, including those in Pan-America and Africa, and they could be built up gradually.

BWF has contributed to this process by sending a few players to various tournaments. Something like that happened many years ago in Taiwan. Flemming Delfs, the former world champion from Denmark, played some exhibitions there and suddenly we were all competing there.

I would also like BWF to become a bit more affluent. It would make me extremely happy if we got a huge sponsor, and I wouldn't mind if it took the Super Series over. The Super Series needs to be smaller and richer and become a pinnacle between the Olympics.



Chin Eei Hui and Wong Pei Tty (right) of Malaysia, winners of the Super Series title.

My greater involvement with all of this has brought extra work as a councillor, and requires my schedule to start earlier, finish later, and to be even better organised! I am on my laptop before I go out, answering e-mails: I get up to ten e-mails a day from the BWF, and that's before anything I receive from Badminton England and about my teaching work. I also use a Blackberry. I have to keep on top of things all day.

The school at which I work has been brilliant in supporting me once they knew I was up for council. They know I need to go to meetings and to be seen at a few major events.

As a community sports coach, my funding comes from Sport England, which is under the umbrella of UK Sport. And UK Sport are very happy I have become a BWF councillor. So it's a helpful full circle. All are helping each other and hopefully that will continue.



Camilla Martin made little things count very big indeed. Here she is helped to celebrate winning the world title in her home city of Copenhagen.



Flemming Delfs – an influential exhibition.

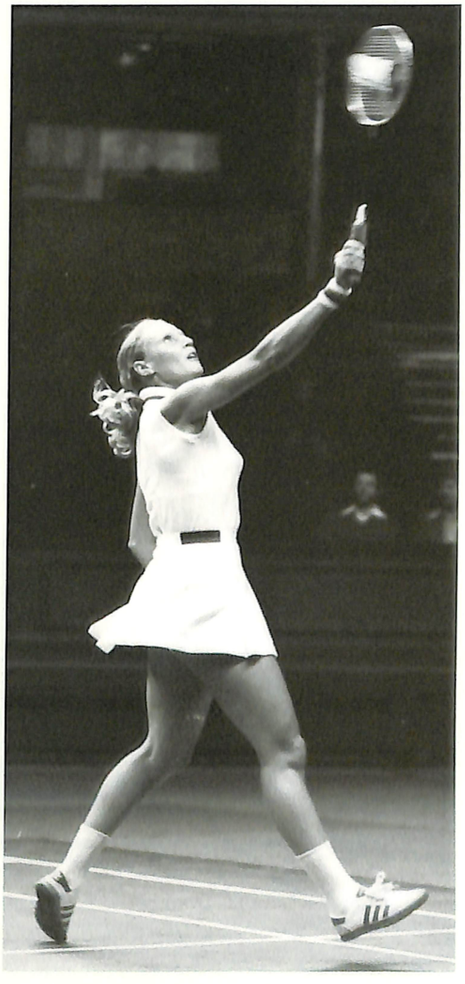
After six months of this community coaching work I had seen 6,000 kids. I am a great advocate that these kind of badminton coaches go out and help our sport.

Because I'm from the old school I'm used to doing the work! And I get used to the schedule. Coaching is more mentally than physically tiring. These school classes are not so hard compared with the world class under 19 stuff which I have done in the past.

It may sound bizarre, but I get my biggest buzz from the other end of the spectrum. Recently three children I taught at a young officials course got chosen to go to a national schools competition and then to go to a national schools games. And I was so excited for them. To me that meant just as much as other things. It was very motivating.

Despite this, I would like to think that in four years time I might – not stop – but not do quite so much, perhaps. Hopefully I will remain on the BWF and do more in that direction.

Most of all I want the BWF to be acknowledged as doing great things for badminton. And I don't want to be thought of as a former world champion – oh dear! I want to be part of something which is doing well for the future.



Nora Perry, used to big crowds, here plays before two spectators. It's the little things which count.

From Kent to Kuala Lumpur

By Torsten Berg, BWF Vice-President

Four, Madeira Avenue, Bromley, Kent, is today almost forgotten, but this was the headquarters address for half the 75 years which the BWF celebrated in 2009. Here lived the honorary secretary of IBF, Herbert Scheele, and his wife and assistant Betty Scheele, and here the official address remained until he retired in 1976.

From this house Scheele conducted all the affairs of the international federation, for an honorarium, as well as those of the All England Championships – and he also served the Badminton Association of England in a similar capacity for most of that period.

Herbert ruled, generally with a minimum of involvement from the elected officials, between meetings. Minutes of meetings were presented at the following meeting.

After the retirement of Sir George Thomas, the inaugural President of the IBF, in 1955, most Presidents served for two years only, which meant they had a limited impact on the game's development and administration. Scheele managed the affairs and the minimum of funds to everybody's satisfaction, commanding enormous respect.



The sport's first headquarters – 4 Madeira Avenue.

Annual general meetings were held in London and were mostly attended by delegates already in London as businessmen or students, or by British officials representing overseas Associations. For instance David Bloomer, a significant IBF President from 1965 to 1969, a creator of legendary challenge matches in Glasgow before the All England championships, and a mentor of Craig Reedie, was a Scot representing the USA when he was elected to IBF.



Ronnie Rowan (left) with Torsten Berg.

After Scheele retired in 1976, the IBF employed a General Secretary, Mrs. Veronica S. Rowan, affectionately known as Ronnie. The IBF office moved to Cheltenham in Gloucestershire – not far from Badminton House – for the simple reason that there Ronnie Rowan lived. The office of IBF was established in her spare bedroom!

Ronnie Rowan was a well-known player of the England squad, daughter of former IBF Council member and badminton development stalwart Ken Brock, and had a good office administration background to add to her profound knowledge of the game and its personalities. She had the perfect badminton pedigree.

Around the same time the AGMs started to move around the world with the annual major competitive event, be that the Thomas or Uber Cup finals or the World Championships, and the composition of the AGM and the council started to reflect the worldwide growth of the game.

With the developments of the early 1980's, the Federation had outgrown this arrangement, and an independent office address was established at Winchcombe House in Cheltenham. Wendy Bennett joined the staff, where she remained in various capacities as a significant resource until shortly before the office moved out of England.

This office grew with the business, particularly after badminton became a full summer Olympic sport in 1985. A young Vanessa Freeman started then and stayed with IBF until 2004, developing from trainee into a very capable Director of Events.



Vanessa Freeman – very capable.

"... the office grew in professionalism and developed an IT capacity which was significant for those days, including an electronic world ranking list, e-mail, and a website."

More staff was added to the office, though not in any executive capacity. The President and committee chairmen ran the Federation's affairs in the 1980's, with able support from the General Secretary and mostly clerical assistance from the rest of the office.

By the time of badminton's first appearance in an Olympic Games, in 1992 in Barcelona, and the television income which came from it, the Federation had outgrown these premises and their organisational set-up. Later that year an Executive Director, David Shaw, was appointed, who came from outside the game and brought experience from the media world and television in particular.



David Shaw, the first executive director.

By then the IBF had bought its own premises in a dedicated modern office building in Manor Park, still in Cheltenham, where later the staff grew to ten. With the arrival of Neil Cameron as Director of Tournaments in 1996 – he came from an elected position as Vice-President and Committee Chairman and had had many years of experience at IBM – the office grew in professionalism and developed an IT capacity which was significant for those days, including an electronic world ranking list, e-mail, and a website.

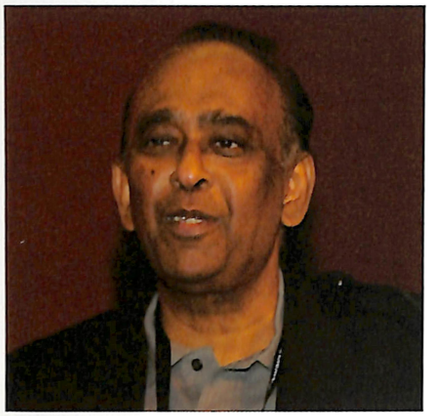


Badminton makes great television.

Cameron took over as Chief Executive Officer two years later after David Shaw retired, and now his organisational skills came to flourish. His contribution still stands clear in the minds of many, as it built for the Federation a streamlined machine which served very well both the council and the member associations.

During his period in office he recruited or trained several young, talented administrators, who now serve badminton or other sports in high positions. He resigned in 2003, following disagreement with the political leadership and in particular with Vice President Punch Gunalan.

From the mid 1990's there was growing unhappiness with the BWF administration, and with the expense involved, among Asian council members led by Punch Gunalan. The argument concluded that they found no reason to have the office in England, when the centre of gravity of international badminton undoubtedly was in South East Asia. Labour here was also less expensive.



Punch Gunalan.



Neil Cameron (right) Poul-Erik Nielsen and Arthur Jones in Beijing, 1987.

Certainly the proposed move was also a gesture, meant to demonstrate his grip on the political power of the Federation, based on alliances in Africa and Pan-America in particular, and on control of a considerable number of proxy votes at the AGM.

Andrew Ryan, formerly Director of Development, succeeded Neil Cameron in late 2003 to become Chief Operating Officer. President Thapparansi, elected in 2001, was losing influence, and Ryan was requested to oversee a bid process for a potential move of the office. Bids were received from countries (or member associations) and cities, including UK, Lausanne, Korea and Malaysia.

Following a controversial discussion and decision in council, Kuala Lumpur became the council's recommendation, and an extraordinary general meeting confirmed this city as the new headquarters of the Federation, with an ancillary office to be established at Lausanne, the Olympic capital.

The move took place in 2004, the new Kuala Lumpur office opening early in 2004 under the leadership of Gunalan, and the Cheltenham office closed after the Olympic Games in Athens, in October 2004. No Cheltenham staff members accepted an offer to transfer, which meant a significant loss of corporate knowledge.

With the election of a new council in 2005 – for the first time all members were elected for a four-year period – and of a new President, Dr. Kang Young-Joong of Korea, the Federation faced major changes. Gunalan, in a newly created position, Deputy President, and as acting chief operating officer, called the shots.

"Cameron ... built for the Federation a streamlined machine which served very well both the council and the member associations."



Korn Thapparansi at 2002 AGM in Guangzhou.



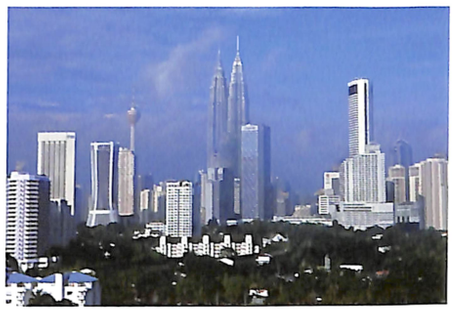
Andrew Ryan, chief operating officer in 2003.



Dr Kang Young-Joong – significant leader.

New strategies were developed – and often again changed at the next meeting. The acronym of the Federation was changed from IBF to BWF, the name Badminton World Federation symbolising the changes. In fact the new name proposed was originally World Badminton Federation, the name of the breakout group after the split of the 1970's, and only after a heated debate in council did BWF become the compromise. A new constitution, drafted by Eraj Wijesinghe, Robin Bryant and Torsten Berg, was hastened through council and through an extraordinary general meeting in 2006. The changes included the rally point scoring system, which was a significant step forward for the game.

The office costs of Kuala Lumpur were very significantly reduced compared to Cheltenham, and so was the output from the office. The new leadership was offered the opportunity to transfer all files and equipment from the former headquarters, but only used this opportunity to a limited extent. New IT systems initiated by Punch Gunalan and Eraj Wijesinghe never became fully operational. Doubts were even cast on tournament draws performed in the office.



Kuala Lumpur – BWF headquarters environs.

The President, Dr. Kang, turned out to be a significant leader of the Federation at this critical point, contributing his major business leadership experience as well as his good name and support to BWF – to the surprise of those who had expected him to limit his ambitions to being a figure-head. This period became difficult in the council, where personal attacks on the President and a few independent voices hampered progress for a while.

The office, still under Gunalan's direction, did not have and did not propose to acquire the quantitative or qualitative resources to contribute much, until the employment of Stuart Borrie in early 2008. Following an aborted attempt to oust Dr. Kang at an extraordinary general meeting early in 2008, Gunalan gave up the position as acting Chief Operating Officer, and after another major clash in connection with the council session and the AGM of 2008, he also resigned as Deputy President.

The Lausanne office, so far only a mailbox in the International Federation headquarters at the Maison du Sport International, was filled by Director of Development Gunther Hüber, who also became the office liaison to the Olympic family.

A few months later, at a council meeting during the Olympic Games in Beijing, most committees changed chairs, under the leadership of Dr. Kang. Following an intense campaign, the 2009 AGM re-elected Dr. Kang as BWF President by a large margin and elected a council with many new faces. Shortly afterwards the position as Chief Operating Officer was filled by Thomas Lund, twice a world champion in mixed doubles and later a successful CEO of the Danish Badminton Association. Hopefully, this new team can lead the Federation to new heights!

"Hopefully, this new team can lead the Federation to new heights!"

In the modern world of tele-communications, the Federation's office can probably be situated anywhere in the world, any major city providing easy connections, minimum visa formalities, reasonably priced skilled staff and no strings attached. Some cities, like Kuala Lumpur and Lausanne, may however offer additional added values, such as proximity to the sport's centre of gravity and the daily face-to-face connections to our Olympic family.



Thomas Lund with President Kang Young-Joong

It began in the back bedroom

MEMORIES OF IBF'S FIRST PROFESSIONAL

by Ronnie Rowan



***Ronnie Rowan**, IBF General Secretary, helped badminton to take flight.*

I was not an army brat, but I am very definitely a sports brat! Both my parents played several sports to a good standard, including hockey and tennis, and my mother played at Wimbledon several times. But it was another great racket sport favourite of theirs which affected my life most of all.

Both played at the All-England badminton championships on many occasions, and had contacts amongst the players of their time, during the 40's and 50's. The man then called Mr Badminton, Herbert Scheele, had known me since I was born, and when he retired in 1976 it changed everything for me.

It happened because of a chance encounter between my parents and Stellan Mohlin of Sweden, the imminent President of the IBF. Consequently I was lucky enough to be interviewed and became the first General Secretary of the IBF, with Herman Valken of the Netherlands replacing Herbert as Honorary Secretary.

I had known many players of the 40's, 50's and 60's and had started to play reasonably well myself, and so had made contacts in Denmark, Netherlands, Germany as well as England. Having lived in Canada from 1966–72 I had more contacts there too. By then my father was coach to Club Duinwijk in Haarlem and to the Dutch national team. As he had also coached in South Africa and Jamaica, I had more contacts in those places too.

So there I was, employed on a part-time basis, working from the back bedroom of my house in Cheltenham! And with completely empty files. There was no telex, fax or e-mail in those days, and the telephone was an absolute must. Many were the calls which came – during the entire 24 hours of each day. Fortunately my two children could sleep through an earthquake.

The work gradually increased as the game grew around the world, and by 1980 I was instructed to rent premises in the centre of Cheltenham and a second member of staff, Wendy Bennett, was hired two years later. After several years larger premises were purchased on the outskirts of the town. From then until I left the Federation, the number of staff other than myself increased to seven.



Neptune's Fountain, Cheltenham.

My time as General Secretary covered some very exciting developments – once the split in the badminton world of 1977 had been followed by the reunification of 1981. There was a dramatic growth in every area, in membership, in the number of tournaments, and in participation in all events.

Membership of the IBF more than doubled during my time. Partly this was due to badminton's acceptance into the Olympics, which ensured that national associations received more money from their governments. It also meant that money for courses and other things was available through the Olympic Solidarity Fund, where badminton had, and still has, a very good friend in Pamela Vipond.



Torsten Berg.



Tom Bacher in 1990.

A tremendous amount of well-channelled work was done by Torsten Berg, currently a BWF Vice President, during his time as Chair of the Development Committee. It included the running of training courses for officials from member associations in certain parts of the world, such as Pan-America and Eastern Europe.



Ronnie Rowan and Emile ter Metz in Hong Kong in 1983.

As more countries became IBF members, entries for the Uber Cup increased greatly, particularly after it was played in the same place and time as the Thomas Cup. By 1977 the first World Championships were held, at Malmo, and this event has grown in stature ever since.

The introduction of the Sudirman Cup, in 1989 in Indonesia, was particularly special because it was a mixed team competition. I loved these events and very much enjoyed seeing the improving standard of smaller and newer members, and their enthusiasm at taking part.

The introduction of open badminton was undertaken during the 1980s, and was quite quickly accepted thanks to the indefatigable work of Tom Bacher, currently President of Badminton Europe, as the Open Badminton Committee's Chair. Players became members of an IBF committee for the first time, with Derek Talbot of England the first involved.

The Grand Prix circuit was also set up. I helped train member associations to make a tournament draw and seed it correctly, which was so important once prize money had become part of the sport.



Ronnie Rowan presents the IBF Meritorious Service Award to Shah of Kenya, 1990.



Neil Cameron – who did much of the initial work in setting up a world ranking system in the late eighties.

Badminton's inclusion in the Olympics brought the first attempts to set up a ranking system. The initial and vital work was carried out by Ian McDowell, one of the first IBF certificated umpires, and also by Neil Cameron, later Chief Executive of the IBF. After several unsuccessful attempts, one which was acceptable to all was settled on after the Barcelona Olympics in 1992.

Another success story was the introduction of IBF certificated and accredited umpires, for whom the late Roy Ward of Australia worked long and hard. Now they have moved on and become known as technical officials, together with referees of tournaments and events.



Roy Ward in 1996, success story with umpires.

As it became more and more professional, the image of the sport became more important too. This had greater and greater commercial consequences, and partly with this in mind World Badminton magazine was brought in-house. It meant yet more work, but enhanced the already growing feeling that the sport was becoming much bigger.



Aussie umpire Ian McDowell with Rexy Mainaky and Ricky Subagja of Indonesia at the Atlanta Olympics in 1996.

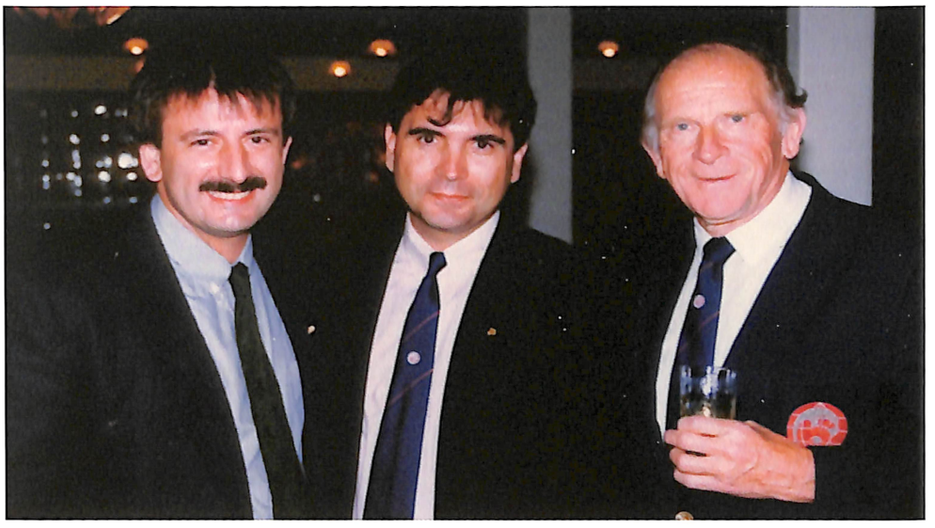
It all caused further increase in the many, many additional hours which I was working every week, and by not taking many holidays during nearly 17 years' employment. I was also bringing up two girls by myself, and inevitably they were left on their own much of the time, so I count myself extremely lucky still to have a fantastic relationship with both.

During each of my last few years there was a session of meetings during the major IBF event – the AGM, the council twice, and committees – which meant sitting through and minuting 14 meetings, starting on a Saturday and working through to the following Friday. Each had to be copied and distributed in time for the final council meeting on the second Saturday.



The Olympic Games were a catalyst for the development of a world ranking system – and no-one has spent as much time at the top of the men's singles rankings than Lin Dan, here seen at the moment when he won the men's singles gold medal at Beijing in 2008.

If life was becoming tougher, it was also becoming more exciting. One great experience was visiting China to view the



Roy Ward (right) in Hong Kong in 1996 with Pedro Blach (left) and José Luis Vila Piñeiro, an IBF Vice President for Olympic relations, both from Spain.

Olympic sites for its 2009 Games bid, and others came with visits to what were then called "iron curtain" countries. I visited them all except Romania and Albania, and although it could be quite intimidating at times, it was notable how much weight a number two in an international sports federation (i.e. the Secretary General) carried with national Olympic committees. The first visit to the Soviet Union was the most scary. It was hard to get used to being stared at for as long as five minutes by customs officers and then having to declare your jewellery.

"If life was becoming tougher, it was also becoming more exciting."

Visits to the smaller federation members were often the most enjoyable. Most impressive were the ways in which some of them were kept alive, often involving the faith and hard work of just one person. These were called "Ronnie's Babies" by the late Arthur Jones, a past IBF President.

Among the most memorable was the first Presidential tour of East Africa, made with Ian Palmer, another past IBF President, in which we saw the problems of those trying to keep the game going in those countries. At that time the only one with the full support of its government was Mauritius.

This has made it all the sadder to hear of the recent troubles, which appear to have resulted from one or two people placing their own ambitions before those of the sport itself. It is encouraging to hear that an attempt has been made to draw a line under it.



Ronnie Rowan with Ian Palmer, the IBF President in 1990, discussing awards to be given to East Africa.

Cheltenham remembered

THE IBF IN ITS LAST DECADE

by Neil Cameron

IBF Chief Executive 1998–2003, IBF Vice President 1988–1996, IBF council member 1983–1996.

Using money from the first appearance of badminton at the Olympic Games in Barcelona, the short-term mortgages on the new buildings at Manor Court were paid off. David Shaw, a former TV executive, was recruited to become badminton's first Executive Director and he set about gradually building a larger professional staff to support him.



***Neil Cameron**, as IBF chief executive, presents prizes at the Copenhagen Masters.*

Key recruits during this phase included Andrew Ryan as Director of Development who later became Director of Marketing & Development, and Neil Cameron initially as Director of Tournaments and who replaced David Shaw in early 1998. Later, after the departure of Neil Cameron in late 2003, Andrew Ryan became IBF Chief Operating Officer (and after IBF moved its main office to Kuala Lumpur) Director of the Association of Summer Olympic International Federations (ASOIF).

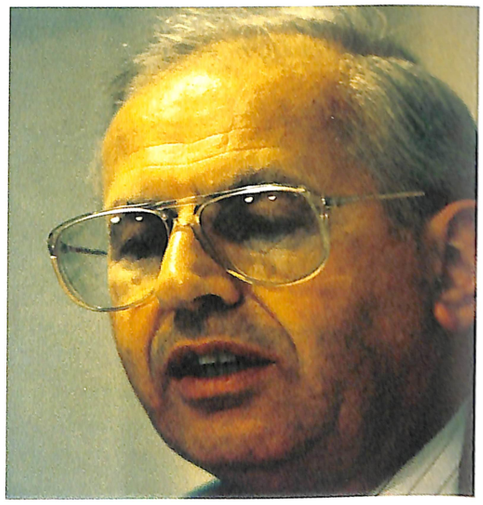
A significant development in David Shaw's time at the helm was the contract signed with Asian satellite TV company STAR Sports (which after a takeover became ESPN Star Sports) to cover a certain number of World Grand Prix (WGP) tournaments and to support the WGP Finals. This caused considerable concern amongst some member associations as the money apparently coming in to badminton was not being shared with them.



Andrew Ryan, key man.

However this concern was mostly misplaced as the money was primarily being used to give coverage to and promote the WGP events. The contract enabled the WGP Series and its finals to progress, albeit that viewing figures were quite low due to it being a satellite rather than a free-to-air channel.

Having the new staff in this period enabled more attention to be given to many aspects of IBF's development, including improving media support with a full-time media officer, Lindsey Bell, building a database of results from all sanctioned events, introducing a transparently determined world ranking system with weekly listings, and running seeding and draw-making centrally.



David Shaw, IBF's first executive director.



Vanessa Freeman, Director of events, and Lindsey Bell, communications officer. Cheltenham stalwarts at the Athens Olympics, their last major tournament with the IBF.



Neil Cameron at the 2002 AGM in Guangzhou with the then IBF President, Korn Thapparansi.

Vanessa Freeman, recruited by General Secretary Ronnie Rowan as an employment experience trainee under a government scheme, became the indispensable manager of all aspects of event draws, seeding and results, and the ranking list, published weekly. She also dealt with the sometimes complex Thomas and Uber Cup nomination process, particularly when new or untried doubles pairs were listed and so-called nominal rankings had to be calculated. Vanessa later became Director of Events.

Experiments were conducted with the scoring system for badminton. A five games of seven points system, but not rally-point scoring, was tried very successfully at the World Junior Championships in Guangzhou in 2000, although there was some concern with the doubles serving turn provisions.

There were also major developments in competitions, including the introduction of official World Junior Championships in 1992, and later World Junior Team Championships in 2000, and the first World Senior Championships.

Coming with badminton's involvement in the Olympics were many other changes. Among them were contributing to and implementing the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) code, being involved with all the lead-up work to the Olympics – a process which intensified and became more formal than pre-Barcelona and included more rigorous test events – and participation in ORIS, an IOC-sponsored process to develop and agree the Games-time media and results system outputs and on which organising committees would base their systems.

The rewards however were substantial, with badminton's income from the Games increasing more than threefold between Barcelona and Athens, with further increases from Beijing still to come.

More mundane but nevertheless important changes included the introduction of coloured clothing for players and names on players' shirts.

However, not everything went well in this period. For example, an Africa Badminton Federation extraordinary general meeting had to be held at considerable expense in Nairobi to resolve an internal African Badminton Federation dispute.



Ronnie Rowan.



Tong Wai Lun – helped the ship into harbour.

Meanwhile David Shaw was pursuing, and had a very good chance of securing, a major increase in sponsorship for the 1999 World Championships to be held in Copenhagen. However it became apparent in late 1997 that forward projections of IBF expenditure were going to require the anticipated sponsorship income, and even with it, cash flow would be tight, due to the ongoing cost of a staff complement now well into double figures and the associated office costs in UK.

With a change of Executive Director, a period of austerity was introduced, with cut-backs in expenditure affecting all areas of IBF's operation and all decisions taken. Tong Wai Lun, who had taken over as Chair of Finance also became famous for his ship analogy where he likened IBF to a ship heading into a storm (a financial one), and many nautical metaphors at meetings were used to describe the latest financial position and the possible problems that could still befall IBF. Wai Lun was aided by a graphical model of reserves developed by IBF Accountant Ruth Ballinger which showed the projected position until "the ship sailed safely into harbour" when the Sydney Olympic money would be received.

This period was also characterised by increasing disputes and dissent between Asia and Europe. The first signs of this came in 1999 when the 2001 World championships were awarded to Seville, after its tender was amended, by a small majority. Council had voted along continental lines and ignored the European preference for The Netherlands, a case argued from knowledge of the capability and experience of the potential host associations.

Madame Lu Shengrong had been the first female President of an Olympic international federation and was generally popular and respected. When her successor was to be appointed, the Sultan of Brunei was approached by some Asian Council members and allowed himself to be nominated, but was opposed by Justian Suhandinata of Indonesia and Korn Thapparansi of Thailand. The Sultan eventually withdrew his nomination shortly before the AGM, and after a vote between the other two, Korn was elected President in 2001.

Is the potential of badminton as yet unfulfilled and what lessons can be learned from this period?

To some extent these two questions are inter-related: badminton has definitely not fulfilled its potential, whether measured by the total prize money available compared to its



Neil as lead singer at the 1993 World Championships in Birmingham! Impromptu celebrations with Tuomo Tennila, Roger Johansson, and Stan Hales.

"Is the potential of badminton as yet unfulfilled and what lessons can be learned from this period?"



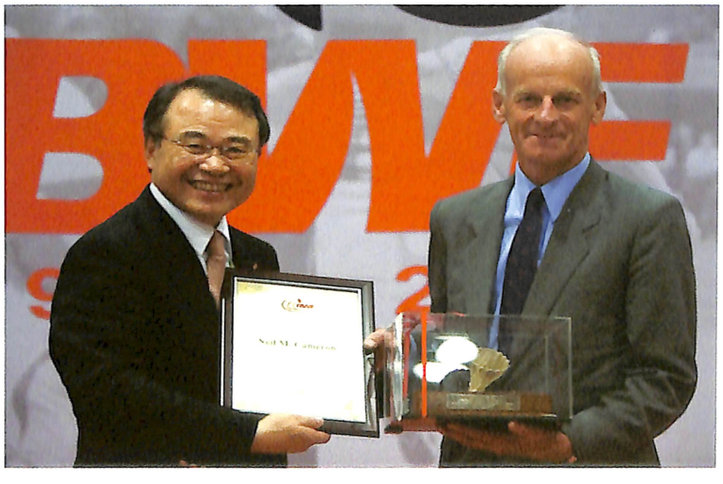
Lu Shengrong (left) and Korn Thapparansi in 2001 at the world championships in Seville. She handed over to him as IBF President.

outdoor sister racket sport tennis, the television coverage which remains limited and very patchy, or the participation rate amongst the world's population. Although this is good, it has enormous potential to develop further due to badminton's suitability for and appeal to both genders, and a wide age range.

Why has badminton not achieved its potential? Well, the answer could lie in the answer to the other question. If the energies of the staff and council of the IBF (now BWF) are dissipated even partly by looking after their own power, status and re-electability – as much of it was in the first years of the 21st century – the already challenging task of making progress with badminton's potential will become almost impossible.

The progress made in the late 1990's and the early years of the 21st century was definitely much less than would have been the case with a united, forward-looking council and Federation.

Additionally, no-one has yet modernised the BWF to make real progress in the commercial arena. Such progress is dependent on having staff and/or contracted organisations who have the experience, expertise and a network of contacts to implement a strategy set by the council, but the work cannot be done by the council itself as they only have limited time (and in some cases, no relevant expertise save perhaps for some technical badminton matters).



Neil Cameron receiving the Herbert Scheele award from BWF President Dr Kang.

It is perfectly appropriate that there is a council elected by the national federations, but the role of council vis-a-vis its professional staff and contracted organisations needs to be carefully defined, distinguishing strategy and policy from operational implementation. It is necessary to engage or employ people or organisations to achieve agreed outcomes.

Also, a 27-person council is far too many: by all means use expertise in particular technical committees, but only where people are appointed to them. An elected council of 10 or 12 would be more appropriate and enable faster progress towards goals which everyone can see need to be achieved.

A Galaxy of Stars 1989–1999

1989



First Sudirman Cup world team championship won by Indonesia, in Jakarta, wth Susi Susanti the star player.

IBF purchases offices in Cheltenham.



Li Lingwei, world women's singles champion 1983, 1989, world women's doubles champion 1985.



Guan Weizhen (left) and Lin Ying, China, both three times world women's doubles champions with two different partners.

1992

Badminton makes its Olympic debut in Barcelona.



Tian Bingyi (left) and Li Yongbo, world men's doubles champions, 1987 and 1989, Olympic bronze medalists 1992.



Allan Budi Kusuma, first men's Olympic champion 1992 and Susi Susanti, first woman's Olympic champion 1992, World champion 1993, All-England champion 1990–1, 1993–4.

1993–2001



Lu Shengrong is first female President of IBF.

1994



Chung So-Young and Gil Young-Ah, All-England women's doubles champions 1993, 1994.

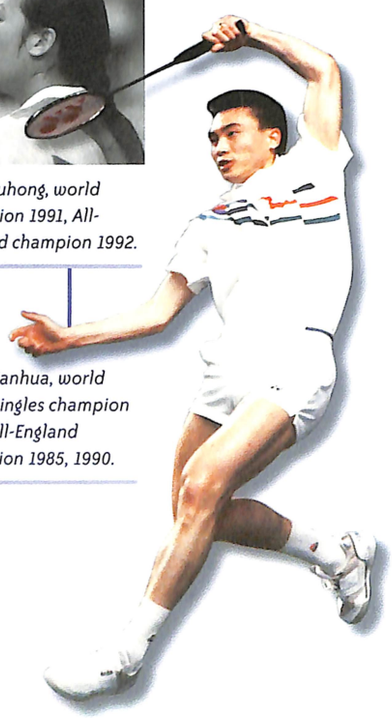
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1991

Computerised world rankings begin.



Tang Jiuhong, world champion 1991, All-England champion 1992.



Zhao Jianhua, world men's singles champion 1991, All-England champion 1985, 1990.

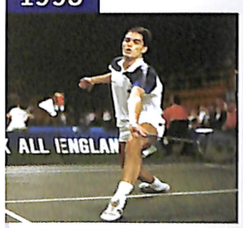
1993

David Shaw, the IBF's first Executive Director, takes over and builds a large professional secretariat.



Heryanto Arbi, world men's singles champion 1995, world bronze 1997, All-England champion 1993–4.

1995



Poul-Erik Høyer-Larsen, Olympic men's singles champion 1996, All-England champion, 1995, 1996.



Ye Zhaoying, world women's singles champion 1995, 1997, Olympic bronze medalist 2000.

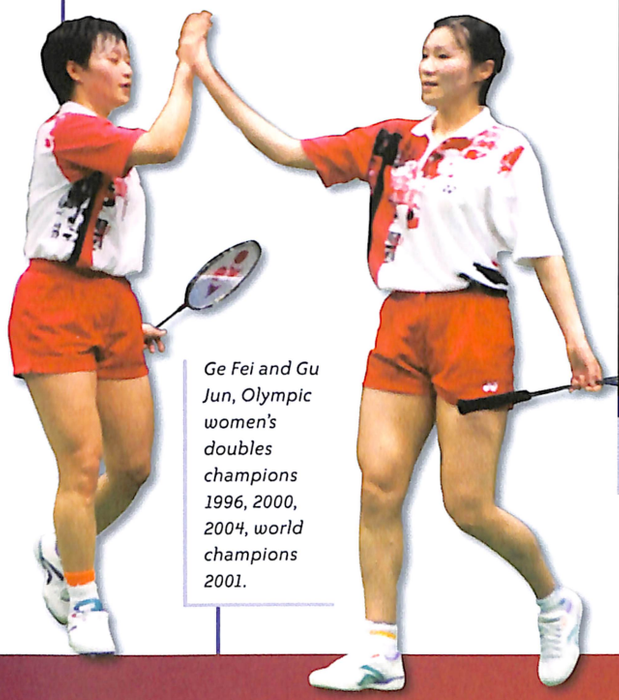


Rexy Mainaky and Ricky Subagja, Olympic men's doubles champions 1996, world champions 1995.

1996



Bang Soo-Hyun, Olympic women's singles champion 1996, Olympic silver 1992.



Ge Fei and Gu Jun, Olympic women's doubles champions 1996, 2000, 2004, world champions 2001.

1998



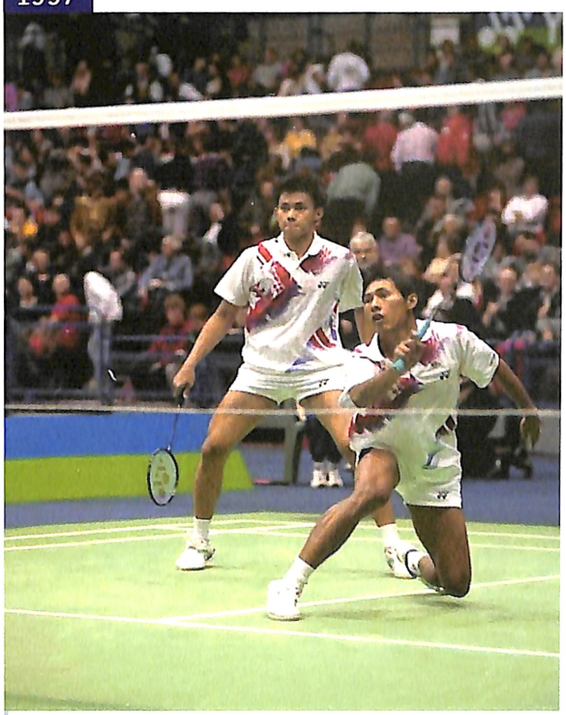
Sun Jun, world champion 1999, All-England champion 1998.

Gong Zhichao, starred in China's recapture of the Uber Cup from Indonesia in 1998, became Olympic champion in 2000 and All-England champion in 2000 and 2001.



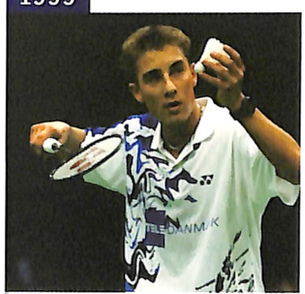
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1997



Sigit Budiarto and Candra Wijaya, world men's doubles champions 1997.

1999



Peter Gade, world number one 1999, All-England men's singles champion 1999, world silver medalist 2001, world bronze 1999, 2005.



Kim Dong Moon and Ha Tae Kwon, Olympic men's doubles champions 2004, world champions 1999.



Camilla Martin, world women's singles champion 1999, Olympic silver medalist 2000.

From 9 to 166: the family grows

by Torsten Berg, BWF Vice President

When the nine founder members met on 5 July 1934 to create the International Badminton Federation, the sport was still very much a British game. Those nine comprised the four British home countries – England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales – while Denmark, France and the Netherlands represented the European continent, and Canada and New Zealand provided the worldwide perspective.

"Why did badminton succeed in the strong, competitive world of international sports?"

The paramount international competition in those days was the All-England Championships, dominated by the English players with only occasional successes for others. But India joined in 1935 as the first Asian member, and Australia, Sweden, Malaya and the USA followed, so that by 1938, the federation counted 14 members in four continents. In 1940 South Africa joined, to put the fifth continent on the list.

Today it has 166 member associations and is still counting. As the BWF it is a thriving, successful summer Olympics international federation, by any measure. Growth and progress have certainly happened – but how? Why did badminton succeed in the strong competitive world of international sports?

Badminton is the best game, simply, some will answer. It is easy to begin playing, but extremely hard and demanding to play at an international level. It is technically, physically, and mentally demanding. It is also one of the fastest of all games.

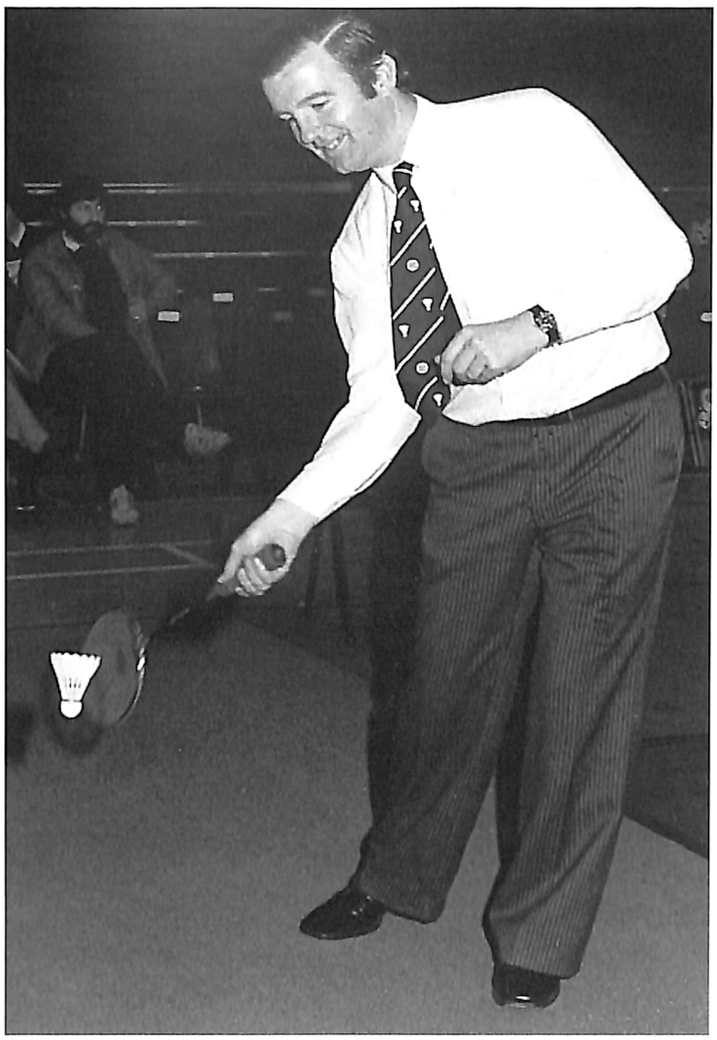
Badminton appeals to players from ages 5 to 95 or even older. It appeals to men and women equally – they even compete together in mixed doubles at the highest level, a unique feature of our game and a most attractive one.

Badminton makes super television, and it is not too hard to roll out a court, invite a few players, and get an event going. So, of course, badminton is a success, because the sport deserves it!

"... because the sport deserves it!"



Badminton makes great television; Mia Audina shows why



Craig Reedie, "young and dynamic Olympic visionary".

Well, yes, but how did the world learn about that? Who did what to spread the game worldwide and make it grow?

Sir George Thomas took the initiative by creating the IBF in 1934 and establishing badminton as more than just a national game. It was our first milestone.

In the 1930's, at least three other factors combined to get the federation off the ground. Even before the IBF was born, Major J.D.M. McCallum started sending his team, called The Strollers, to tour the European continent, where its exhibitions and games against local players did much to initiate and promote international badminton.

Then in 1938 the IBF employed Herbert Scheele as its honorary secretary, a position he held until 1976. Scheele more or less became a personification of the IBF, and his contribution to the growth of badminton, with the All-England Championships as the jewel in the crown can hardly be overestimated.

And in 1939 Sir George Thomas created the Thomas Cup, obviously inspired by the Davis Cup of tennis, and donated this magnificent trophy, still the foremost of our game.

Wartime inactivity meant that badminton's growth in the 1940's was slow. By 1949, when the Thomas Cup was first played, the membership total was a sweet 16 – just as in 1940. However, the successful Thomas Cup, and the Malayan triumph, surely had an impact.

In the next five years the membership doubled to 32 with many new members coming from Asia, including such strong and important badminton nations as Indonesia, Japan and Thailand. Badminton now became the national sport in places like Indonesia and Malaysia, where large, enthusiastic crowds gave the game a giant leap forwards.

Worldwide, badminton grew steadily in the next ten years. The annual All-England remained the pinnacle of the season, and the game, at least in Europe, was seasonal, played from September to March only.

Visionary leaders in IBF, primarily Stellan Mohlin and Craig Reedie, now realised that it was time to take the next step – towards becoming an Olympic Sport! The first enquiries in the mid-1960's told them that important reforms were necessary: badminton needed an official World Championships and a continental structure with official continental championships. Only Asia already had that.



Stellan Mohlin of Sweden, visionary President.

Mohlin took the initiative, with the Helvetia Cup founder Hans-Peter Kunz from Switzerland, of establishing the European Badminton Union in 1967 and of having the first European Championships played, in Bochum, Germany, in 1968. The Pan-American Badminton Confederation was created soon after, and also the African Badminton Federation.

It was, however, much more difficult to agree on an official World Championships. The All-England championships had served in this capacity for many decades, and served exceedingly well. And the All-England was very close to the heart of Mr. Badminton, the IBF honorary secretary Herbert Scheele,



Poul-Erik Nielsen, an initiative taker.

who by then had served the federation well for more than 30 years, as well as to the hearts of many other officials of the IBF, which in those days was still dominated by representatives with a British background.

Not until in the early days of May 1977 were the first official World Championships played, at Malmö, Sweden, by which time Stellan Mohlin had become IBF President and Herbert Scheele had retired.

Meanwhile the efforts to make badminton a summer Olympic sport had made much progress. Badminton was played as an exhibition sport at the 1972 Olympics in Munich, and with success.

The membership reached 55 by 1976. However a major conflict was arising over the representation of China, and in 1977 came a split (described in the article *The Reunification of Badminton* by Craig Reedie). Membership dropped to 42, and Olympic dreams were put on the back burner.



Icuk Sugiarto – surprise winner of a great final in 1983.

Reunification came in 1981, China became a member, providing the world's best players for the next generation, and badminton was back on its Olympic track. A young, dynamic President, Craig Reedie, diligently promoted badminton in the top Olympic circles.

IOC President J.A. Samaranch became convinced in 1983 when he attended the third World Championships in Copenhagen. They produced a legendary men's singles final between Icuk Sugiarto and Liem Swie King, both Indonesians, and on June 5th, 1985, badminton was elected a summer Olympic sport at the International Olympic Committee session in East Berlin. This had enormous impact on our game, and the size of the membership soon exploded!



Poul-Erik Høyer-Larsen with his 1996 Olympic gold medal.

The IBF became one of the first international sporting federations to establish a development committee of the council, an initiative by President Poul-Erik Nielsen in 1984. Emile ter Metz of the Netherlands became the first Chair, with Charoen Wattanasin of Thailand and Torsten Berg from Denmark as the workhorse members.

A first priority for this committee was to facilitate access for new members and help them to feel welcome within the federation through the training of their administrators and coaches, as well as their players.

Other duties included approaching the Olympic solidarity movement for the creation of development plans – and to teach member countries how to get Olympic funding from the national Olympic committees.

Badminton's inclusion in the Olympics, which was supported by systematic development activities, almost doubled the membership, from 56 after reunification in 1981 to fully 108 at the sport's Olympic debut in 1992!

The success of badminton as a new sport at the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona appealed to national Olympic committees worldwide and the growth of IBF continued. By 2000 there were 139 member associations.

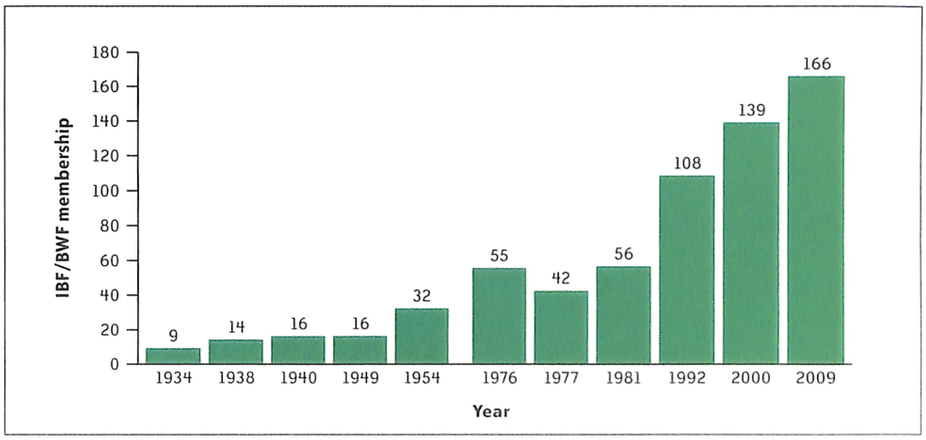


Stunning Beijing.

A few technical changes, such as rally point scoring, which improves the presentation of badminton and makes it easier for television and spectators to follow, and a modified Olympic qualifying system – which meant that fully 50 member associations had players at the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, compared with 28 in Sydney and 32 in Athens – have added to the attraction of badminton. It has also improved our standing as a member of the Olympic family.

By the year of the 75th anniversary, the BWF had expanded to 166 full members and a handful of associate members, and it is still growing. All populous parts of the world are well represented, and those still to be welcomed are mainly small island states or countries, where indoor sports, generally, are less attractive than outdoor activities.

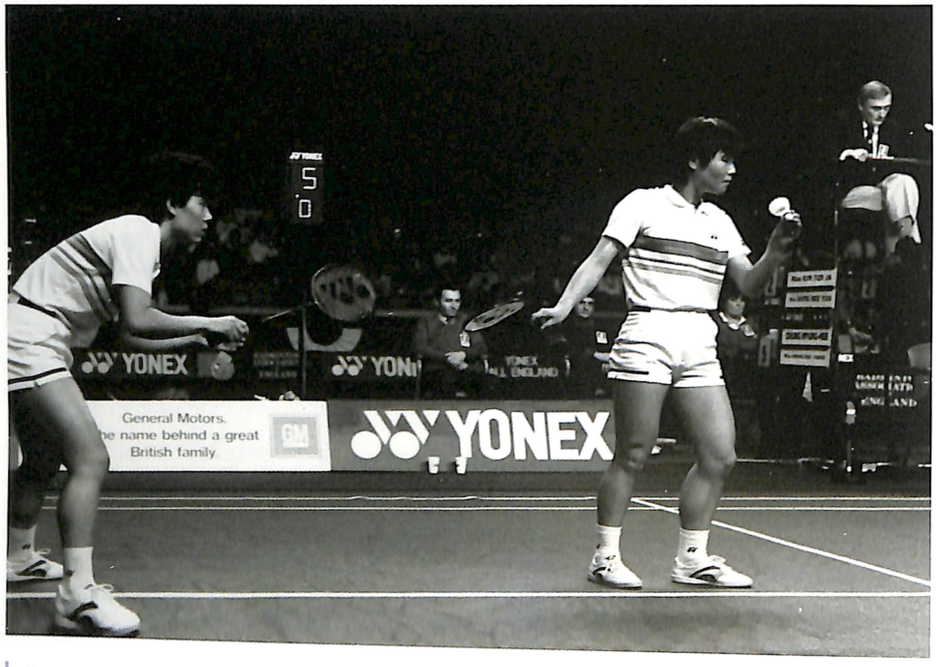
Judging from the pace of growth in recent years, by the time we celebrate the BWF's centenary it should have reached 200 member associations.



The increase in IBF/BWF membership from 1934 to 2009.

It goes to 21 – the story of scoring

When you try to change something which has lasted for an entire century, powerful opposing forces can be released. The resulting storm can make it hard to maintain the vision and courage to keep progress going.



Chung Myung-Hee (left), and Hwang Hye-Young, playing with 15-up scoring.

Despite this, badminton's urgent need for media-age scoring has settled on a 21-up, point-per-rally system. There were several disruptions which almost coerced it into returning to the hand-in hand-out system that had been in operation from the time when men played in long trousers and ladies in wide hats, but they were resisted.

Nothing is perfect, but the advantages of this change have become evident. Matches are shorter, their length is more predictable, and their progress easier to understand for non-badminton people.

All of this is important for television, which wants matches which most reliably fit its programming schedules, which don't tax the patience of the viewer, and which, while retaining some of badminton's subtleties, offer a clear and simple story of the contest.

It doesn't sound too controversial. Yet during the years in which scoring change was being attempted it was like re-cultivating the soil in a hurricane – with slow progress being interrupted by rapid evasive movement which was not always easy to control.



Malaysians cheering the 21-up game at Stadium Negara in Kuala Lumpur



Zhou Mi, BWF Super Series Masters winner.



Lee Chong Wei, 15-11 up and flying.

But now the 21-up system more nearly fits the image required of that other major change, the inception of the BWF Super Series, in which only the top 44 players in the world rankings can gain direct entry, and only the top 28 ranked can enter the main draw.

This provides a more streamlined, more consistent, and better rewarded field, creating more frequently re-appearing familiar faces and a more instantly recognisable shop-window. It meant that the 2008 BWF Super Series Masters finals in Kota Kinabalu, in which the two singles were won by Lee Chong Wei of Malaysia and Zhou Mi of China, had the world's biggest prize fund, more than one million ringgits, and a much better chance of increasing the worldwide television viewing figures.

"The rally point system to 21 is a real bonus. It has helped build a much better understanding. It's a good change which has made the game more accessible," Stuart Borrie, the BWF's Secretary General, says.

It has also tended to make tactics more positive, and – if Tine Rasmussen is to be believed – has helped spread success around the globe a little. When the Dane became world number one last year, she was the first European in ten years to resist China's dominance of women's singles.

"The scoring did help me I believe," she said. "It made the game a bit more attacking, which suited me. I like it."



These Danes have taken to the modern game.

Nevertheless the scoring still has critics, even though what badminton has been attempting is similar to other sports. Cricket has adopted two major new scoring systems for the modern age, squash similarly scrapped its hand-in hand-out scoring for its professional tours, and table tennis also devised a shortened scoring system. Despite these precedents, it took tenacity and insight for badminton to achieve it.

That's partly because traditional scoring has advantages too, especially in making long-drawn out comebacks from big deficits more possible. It has also been lodged in people's mindsets for a very long time, making it comfortable to use and resistant to change.

In this system, games were played to 15 points, except in women's singles which were played to 11. A match was the best of three games, and, crucially, a point could only be scored by a player who was serving. Many rallies were played without the score changing, something which was puzzling for outsiders.

It could be even more puzzling in doubles, for both partners served before the service would return to the opposing pair. The receiving pair had to win two rallies to regain serve, creating nuances in the scoreline. The ambiguities of, say, a 16-14 lead with the second server about to deliver, and who might actually hold an advantage, were considered too unclear.

There was also an arcane tie-break system, or setting. At 14-14 in men's singles or 10-10 in women's singles, the server could choose to play to 17 (men) or 12 (for women). If it was tied at 13-13 (men) or 9-9 (women), the server could chose to play to 18 (for men) or to 12 (for women). Get it? Many TV viewers didn't.

Several experiments took place over the years, but not until 2000 was the traditional system first officially replaced. The IBF shortened it to 5×7 – games to seven points and matches to the best of five games. When the score reached 6-6, the player first reaching 6 could choose a setting to 8.

"Initially a lot of people were sceptical, but now most of them love it."

This created more crises and faster, less defensive play, and many people liked it. But 5×7 also made the serving extremely careful and especially tended to slow down doubles matches, so that sometimes they did not become shorter, as desired.

It was regarded as still too long for broadcasting requirements. Hence opponents of this radical change got their way. Later that year, 5×7 was replaced by a modified version of traditional scoring - but the modification created controversy.

Instead of women's singles alone being played to 11-up, all events involving women were given this scoring, with women's and mixed doubles going to 11-up too, and the two men's events reverting to 15-up. The intention was consistency, but the effect was to make more visible a difference in treatment of the sexes. It brought fresh and louder criticisms from equal rights campaigners.



Fu poised and Cai pouncing: Cai Yun and Fu Haifeng 15-7 up in Beijing.

"The game is faster and for spectators and TV the game is an enjoyable experience."





Wei Yili (right) and Zhang Yawen, 19-all, one leg each in Beijing. A special sort of parity.

So, late in 2005, the BWF tried again, proposing point-a-rally scoring once more, with games lengthened to 21 points, but retaining the traditional system's best-of-three games. Again there was opposition, but now matches rarely lasted more than an hour, which pleased television producers more and many players too.

"Initially a lot of people were sceptical, but now most of them love it," said Venugopal Mahalingam, the BWF sports manager. If his view sounded like a sensible, well-contrived official line, it was nevertheless convincing.

"The game is faster and for spectators and TV the game is an enjoyable experience," he added. "Earlier you could see a single point played over and over again, but it doesn't happen with the current scoring system."

However there are bound to be losses as well as gains. The point-a-rally system did indeed create shorter matches and make their length more predictable for TV. But the qualities of stamina required for top quality singles were sometimes lost, and now there are signs of matches becoming longer again.

Nevertheless the 21-up system was tested and confirmed in time to boost the marketability of the inaugural Super Series circuit of 2007, a shop-window change which made badminton's wares more visible worldwide. That was helpful. Time will tell whether it is here to stay.

RICHARD EATON

Developing badminton – how the training centres work

by Gunther Hüber
BWF Director of Development

World training centres have become vital for badminton's future. The IBF started a training centre project back in 2005, and it has now become part of the BWF's overall development programme, which focuses on athletes' development both at grass roots and elite level.



Gunther Hüber, BWF Director of Development.

Its origins came from the introduction of athlete development programmes at nine world academies at Paris in 1995. Although these ended in 2003, the IBF checked the alternatives for making training centres permanent.

This meant doing a great deal - investigating the visa and immigration rules in different countries, evaluating training, catering, and accommodation facilities, comparing prices, and looking at offers from different centres. From all this, a training centre programme was started in three countries – Germany, Bulgaria and China.

The German centre is at the Hermann–Neuberger Sportschule Olympic training centre at Saarbrücken, which provides the high performance services, and is a partner for testing and sports medicine and a consultancy partner for high performance and sports science.

The Bulgarian centre is based at the Sofia Badminton Hall and at the National Sport Academy and is a partner for sports science, as well as research and testing; the National Sport Academy also offers accommodation and catering.

The Chinese centre is based at the Wai Lun College in Guangzhou and has training facilities, sport science and catering on site. All centres are run by a management committee, which is responsible for the centre program and operation and is chaired by a council member.

By 2005 all the centres operated with the same objectives. They were to identify talents between 18 and 23 years old in the less developed or developing countries with the potential to qualify for the Beijing Olympics in 2008, and to increase the number of participating countries from 34 at the Athens Olympics in 2004 to a higher number in Beijing.



Sofia training centre educated 238 badminton players – and used many more hundreds of shuttlecocks – between 2005 and 2008.

The three centres had operated with the same central concept and with an identical two-month identification programme which scouted for potential Olympic qualifiers for Beijing. This resulted in three intakes in Saarbrücken, two intakes in Sofia, and two in Guangzhou. Altogether 135 players from 50 different countries were trained and tested – 13 from Asia, 17 from Europe, 11 from Pan-America, 7 from Africa, and 2 from Oceania.

The players for these two-month intakes were pre-selected by continental confederations through a quota system. Their programme focused on singles only, with two practice sessions per day.



Sofia Training Centre, with Puzant Kassabian (centre under logo).

The main objective was to provide high performance training oriented around the World Class Performance level of training and to find suitable talents for the elite program; then get as many players as possible qualifying for the Olympics.

Players were assessed on a weekly basis by coaches, and according to an identical schema in all three centres, so that players' development could be co-ordinated and rated. At the end of it 40 players were identified and selected. Of these, 20 committed to join the Road to Beijing programme for Olympic qualification. Some players did not join, for various reasons including school, family, work, or having programmes of their own at home.

Further progress took place in 2006, when the objectives and the programmes changed. Saarbrücken operated as an elite and Olympic training centre, focusing on Olympic qualification. The Road to Beijing programme was permanent from June 2006 till the Olympics in 2008, with athletes training at the centre throughout all that time.

Sofia and Guangzhou provided an athletes' development centre with programmes of four to six weeks. Their main objective was to introduce high performance training to athletes from developing and less developed countries. Special development programmes were introduced, such as age group training for juniors and female training camps for athletes and coaches.

Saarbrücken's role, to host an Olympic Solidarity scholarship programme, was financially supported by the IOC, within their International Federation development programme over the four years, and the centre got 16 players to qualify for the Games in Beijing.

All the Olympic singles players from Africa trained at these training centres and qualified through the centres' programmes.



Sofia Sports Hall.

Athletes learned many other things apart from what they gained from the sporting activities and training programmes. They included building their personalities, by setting up rules for living together, respecting each other, implementing fair play, building communication, understanding each other, and respecting each other's culture and ethnicity, habits or religion.

A great deal of work was done on this kind of integration and understanding. Each centre also offered social activities for participants, which meant that everyone who came to a centre as a stranger left as a friend.

Coaches were always welcome to join in at the three centres. Many came for internships and received coach education through the centre managers and centre coaches.

Yonex was the sponsor for equipment for all centres, and other sponsors gave help in kind. This enabled the centres to offer reduced rates for accommodation and food, and free facilities. The Ford Company Cologne sponsored the Saarbrücken training centre with a minibus.

Many sports science projects were connected to the Saarbrücken centre programme. The results of these were published in articles in sport science magazines and presented at various conferences.

	Totals				
Year	**2005**	**2006**	**2007**	**2008**	**05–08**
Members Benefiting	56	48	38	49	**80 total different countries**
Male Players	76	102	79	86	**343**
Female Players	52	76	52	72	**252**
Male Coaches	0	22	16	14	**52**
Female Coaches	0	3	2	9	**14**

The programme was run very successfully over the four years, with more than 37 different camps at the three centres, thanks to the generous financial support of BWF and various partners. The table alongside shows the overall participation. The Saarbrücken centre still continues the programme as a BWF elite training centre.

First Person

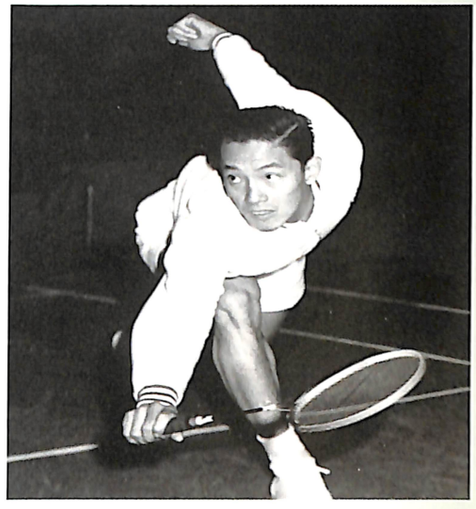
Charoen Wattanasin



***Charoen Wattanasin**, 2009.*

President of the Badminton Association of Thailand, Vice President of the National Olympic Committee of Thailand, BWF member of Hall of Fame.

THE KING AND THE MAGIC WORLD



Wattanasin – All-England 1959.

The love of badminton gives people a passport to a world with a magical feeling – an enchanting game of racket and shuttlecock which attracts special people everywhere who have this feeling in their hearts.

Badminton's unique enchantment was highlighted in the 1950's by David Bloomer, then IBF President, in one of his many beautiful speeches, when he pointed out how many special people around the globe became involved with it.

I discovered his remark to be perfectly true, that the people who played and genuinely loved badminton are indeed a unique kind of people.

Someone who became part of that world in Thailand was our king, Bhumibol Adulyadej, with his inspiring philosophy of Our Loss is Our Gain, which was used to convert hill tribe people from growing opium to cultivating other kinds of crops.

The motto meant that the loss of revenue from the high price paid to remove the opium crops brought an important social gain. It also helped propel Thailand on to the international stage.

Badminton in Thailand had a royally special place early on, for it is recorded that the game was played in the Siamese royal household in 1913, during the reign of King Rama VI.

It spread widely in Bangkok, mainly outdoors. When the Royal Academy College initiated tournaments, it was recorded, amazingly, that the most popular event was triples – three people a side playing the best of three games with 21-up games.

When Siam changed its name to Thailand in 1932, and the country's government was changed from an absolute monarchy to a monarchy under the constitution, badminton was in a state of laissez-faire.



King Bhumibol, playing with Wong Peng Soon, the great Malaysian.

This made it surprising that the scoring system in Siam was the same as in Europe and in other parts of Asia, although the service fault rules were not as strictly observed as they are today.

Credit is due to Thai students who studied in Europe and brought the early rules of badminton back to Siam. At that time of course there was no international governing body, because the IBF did not start till 1934.

Most Asian countries, particularly in South-East Asia, got a thundering wake up call when the Federation of Malaya won the Thomas Cup at Preston, England, in 1949. Thailand could not resist the trend, and the Badminton Association of Thailand was formulated the following year, becoming the 19th full member nation of the IBF in 1951.



The Thai king, Bhumibol Adulyadej, playing badminton.

That year Thailand badminton ventured on, making its debut in the Thomas Cup, which was held for only the second time. And although Thailand lost to a more experienced Indian team 9-0 in Bombay, and by 6-3 to the same country in the same city in 1954, His Majesty the King came to the rescue.

He said time and again that the game of badminton was suitable for Thai athletes. He believed strongly that Thais could use their natural agility to overcome their physical disadvantages and excel in the world arena, providing they were given proper support.

Action did indeed speak louder than words. That same year, His Majesty graciously granted royal patronage to the Badminton Association of Thailand, a great shot in the arm for Thai badminton as many sponsors began to pour in to support the national team.

His Majesty also converted a multi-purpose hall in the palace into a badminton court. He loved it so much that he played three or four times a week, summoning a few national players to play regularly with him in the palace.



Charoen Wattanasin at the peak as a player.

From then on Thai badminton escalated towards a new frontier. Thailand beat India for the first time by a convincing 8-1 in the Thomas Cup in 1957, and went on to beat Japan and Pakistan 9-0, becoming Asian zone champions and securing a place in the final in Singapore in 1958.

There Thailand created a sensation by beating the more fancied United States by 7-2. The local press gave the Thai team big headlines – marvelling that a such a small country and a newcomer nation like Thailand could create such a big upset.

Norman Siebel, of the Straits Times, commented that there was a secret weapon behind the success – Their Majesties the King and the Queen of Thailand, who directly boosted the morale of all the team.

After 1958 Thais continue to demonstrate their abilities by succeeding in many world class events, reaching the finals of All-England Championships and of other top world events on many occasions.

And so His Majesty's famous governance philosophy of Our Loss is Our Gain, which has demonstrated successes in thousands of royal projects, includes the success of Thailand badminton.

During all this time players and officials followed royal guidance, and made selfless personal sacrifices to put Thailand badminton on the world map – proving that the King's early vision was right all along. Over half a century, he never abandoned the sport.

It seems worth noting that the king's main national philosophy is The Sufficiency Economy. This does not mean that you cannot purchase a Mercedes Benz – you can buy it, or indeed anything else, if you can afford it and if it does not create problems financially for your family or for your country.

It means good governance by living in an appropriately modest life style. Had the developed nations done this over the past ten decades we would now have a far more stable world.



Charoen – a working President.

Rings of gold – Beijing Olympic review

No Olympics has provided such superb facilities, such big crowds, or such a consistently high profile for badminton as Beijing did in 2008.



Beijing's superb badminton hall.

Staging the Games in the world's largest and most successful badminton nation had clearly raised hopes of immense benefit for the sport, and these were superbly realised. The venue and the technical delivery were those of a country of many resources and great passion for the sport.



Chinese fans – and there were plenty of them – know how to celebrate.

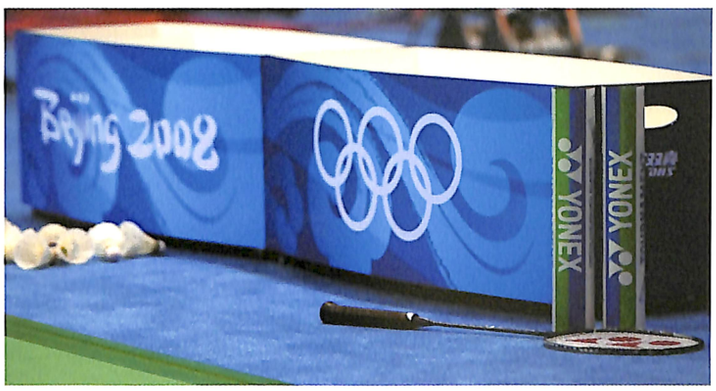
Venues were full for every session. The spectators were the most involved and the most astute so far, because badminton is widely played in China – and of course China did extremely well. These were great bonuses. It was often inspiring.



Jacques Rogge, IOC President and Dr Kang, BWF President, (front row, far left) pointing in sync to the action at the Beijing Olympics.

There were however other issues with a more mixed blessing. It is good that badminton is so strong in Asia, but the Olympics reflected something slightly different – that we are very much an Asian sport. And greater universality within sports is a strong ambition of the International Olympic Committee.

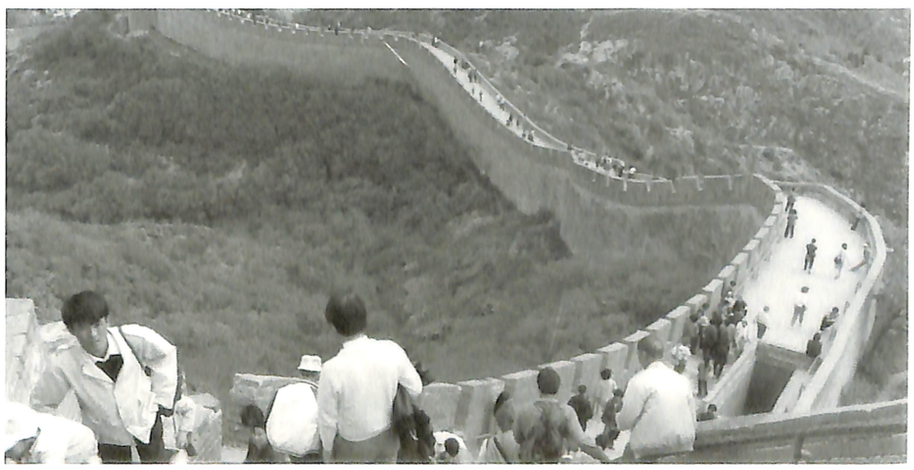
Badminton has nevertheless managed to achieve much greater diversity by getting its Olympic qualification system changed after the 2004 Games at Athens. The balance between singles and doubles was altered, allowing more singles players to be included in the quota of 172. This meant many more passports – mostly from continents other than Asia – making 50 altogether compared with 32 in Athens and 29 in Sydney.



Rings, rackets and feathers – ingredients of a golden occasion in Beijing.

This shift very considerably increased the number of badminton players worldwide that may dream about – and work hard towards – qualifying for the Olympic Games.

It happened like this. The qualifying systems developed in 1987, after badminton won the right to join the Olympics, brought a quick increase in the number of BWF sanctioned competitions in the calendar. Continental Confederations and national federations created tournaments and circuits to provide their players with opportunities for world ranking points and Olympic places.



A little extra training not far from Beijing.



Maria Kristin Yulianti, one of Indonesia's medalists.

This brought a large increase in the numbers of players competing internationally. It also improved playing standards, particularly around the borderlines for Olympic qualification, due to better preparation, more focused coaching, and competition against better opponents.

A fourth effect of the Olympics qualifying system was much better support for players' training and competition programmes from national Olympic committees. A fifth was an increase in prize money, because the higher the prize money, the greater the world ranking points available.

But after three successful systems – for Atlanta, Sydney and Athens, with only small changes since the sport's Olympic debut in Barcelona – the BWF decided it was time to take the next step to develop the game.

Because players from larger and more successful nations dominated doubles events – they had established doubles training with internal competition – success for players from developing badminton associations is more achievable in singles, provided they work hard, travel and train abroad.

And so, post-Athens, the balance between singles and doubles in the Olympic qualifying system was changed, with 38 players qualifying in men's and women's singles and 16 pairs in each of the doubles events. Additional places which became available were allocated to singles only.

Many more singles players worldwide realised in 2006 that with this change their goal of qualifying for the Olympics had become more achievable at Beijing 2008, and consequently badminton saw another major increase in international competition participation worldwide, with focus on singles events.

About 20 more national Olympic committees proved they could get players to qualify for the Games. Perhaps another 20 will realise that with a similar system likely for the London 2012 Olympics, they too may stand a chance.

But inevitably there is a dilemma. For the Olympic Games to remain badminton's top event it has to ensure that those countries with a large number of world class performers can still ensure all the world's best have the chance qualify.

"We don't want them training for 10 or 12 years and missing out on the chance because their country has four of the top ten and two can't go," said BWF Secretary General Stuart Borrie.

"Many more singles players worldwide realised in 2006 that ... their goal of qualifying for the Olympics had become more achievable at Beijing 2008."



The University of Technology, Beijing – the badminton venue at the Beijing Olympics (© IOC).



Lee Chong Wei is flying in Beijing.



Put your right leg in – Lee Hyo-Jung (left) and Lee Kyung-Won of Korea stretch in unison as they reach the final of the women's doubles.

The trick is therefore to keep one eye on universality and the other upon the quality of the entry, ensuring the best players can take part. That, after all, is not only fair, it is what makes the best television.

True, all the medals in Beijing went to Asians. At the Athens Olympics there had been three medals for non-Asian nations, but there were none in 2008. But one fear did not materialise. It was thought that China, with a home venue and great crowd support, might swamp everything, as happened at the world championships in Beijing two decades previously. China won seven medals in Athens and eight in Beijing. Strong resistance was provided by Indonesia and Korea, and especially by Lee Chong Wei of Malaysia in the men's singles.

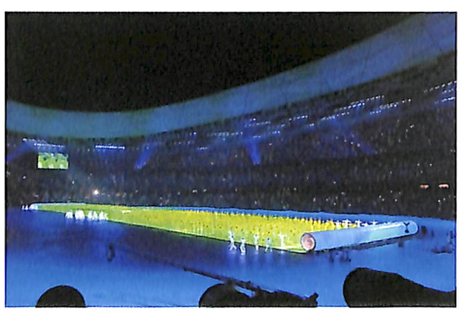
It is also true that Koreans and Indonesians won medals previously won by Europeans, which is a concern, given the need for a wider spread of medals. But it was a positive thing that Malaysia, with Lee's silver, achieved its best medal success so far.

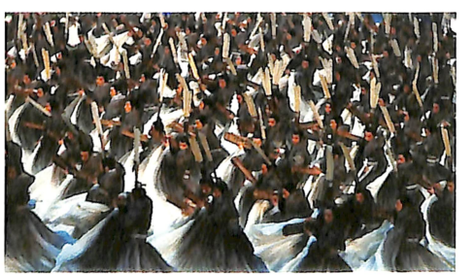
So there are contrasting lessons. In some ways the Beijing Games were the best ever – and yet there has to be a deeper understanding of how to build badminton in different parts of the world.

Nations like Denmark and England, as well as Germany and France, and as many others as possible, have to build their base and their pathways to the elite level, so that badminton gets productive finishes from another country in the 2012, 2016 and 2020 Olympics.

Badminton has not been in the Olympic movement for long. Much work is required to ensure it spreads the medals wider. But the BWF knows it must reflect on these things and communicate them to its members.

RICHARD EATON







Beijing's opening ceremony: none has been more spectacular.

On the road with badminton

by Raphael Sachetat

BWF's reporter-photographer on tour, managing director of Badzine, managing director of Global Player Services, founder of Solibad, a charity for the badminton community.



Raphael and the Parthenon at the Athens Olympics in 2004.

It was pure luck that a woman leaving death row in California back in 1999 happened at the same time and in the same region as the US Open championships.

That's not because she was a good badminton player, nor because the event was short of spectators, nor anything which was appropriate for her or for the tournament, but because it changed my life.

I was there on assignment with a French magazine to cover the life-and-death drama and, as a badminton fan and a very modest player, I was able to go to the tournament as well.

Oddly enough it was won by Pi Hongyan, who was to become my closest friend on the circuit, soon afterwards leaving the Chinese squad to join Denmark, then France. And it gave me an opportunity to offer my services to the sport's governing body, then the IBF.



Raphael and Pi Hongyan, the best player ever to represent France.

So there I was, on for a good ten years of badminton reporting. I wouldn't be able to count the sleepless nights I've had as a reporter and photographer for the BWF website and other publications since then; they have been part of a life of amazing travel, of friendship, and of stunning badminton, but of hard work too.

In these ten years there has been a lot of good memories, on and off court. There have been two Olympic Games, in Athens, and Beijing, five world championships, five Thomas and Uber Cups, and the same number of Sudirman Cups, not to mention a round-the-year calendar of Super Series tournaments, or Grand Prix, and Masters.



Interviewing Judith Meulendijks of The Netherlands at the Thomas and Uber Cups competition 2002.



With colleague Leslie Doumerc, at the Kuala Lumpur World Championships in 2007.

I've seen some incredible talents – Taufik Hidayat scooping gold in Athens, Lin Dan's supremacy, Peter Rasmussen's European title in 2002, Nathan Robertson and Gail Emms so close to gold in Athens. And lately, Zhang Ning's remarkable second success in the Olympics.

During this time, conditions for reporting have changed – for the better in most areas. I remember occasions when, arriving at a tournament, I was told that the only press facilities were a tiny room in the darkness, with a broken fax and one electricity plug.



Scribble and talk – with Saina Nehwal at the Beijing Olympics in 2008.

One former top event did not even have a press room. We were sharing a few square metres with the administration staff – and this was a six-star Grand Prix event at a time before the Super Series circuit had been born.



With Peter Gade at the French Open 2008.



A less formal meeting with Gade, this time a lunch in Paris.

When you were not travelling, it was very difficult to get the results. Despite the internet revolution, badminton seemed to be lacking the will to communicate beyond borders, or at least, in an English language website.

Fortunately, these tough times are almost behind us now. There are no more matches starting at 2 am – thanks to the change of scoring which I have found very good for the sport. Most major events provide on-line live results, and even live video streaming!

Working conditions are, for written reporters, far better nowadays than ten years ago. Although photographers have yet to see similar progress, I am sure that if I were invited to write for BWF's 100th anniversary, I would be able to say that photographers are just as pleased as me with the progress in working conditions.

Having seen fewer and fewer photographers from major agencies covering badminton events, that would be my only worry at the moment, but I certainly trust the 2009–13 Council to create suitable solutions for them.

Reporting for badminton is very fulfilling. As a young reporter, I could approach top players very easily, right from my very first assignments. This is something not given to reporters starting in some other sports. Not everyone can brag to have had few nights out dancing with Taufik in different parts of the globe, or a head-to-head classy restaurant lunch in Paris with Peter Gade, both of them having become close friends of mine.

The badminton community is both very open and friendly. From top players to top officials on the badminton circuit, everyone is very accessible, no matter how famous or busy they are.

That is, for a reporter, the best reason to keep working hard. And when passion for the sport, together with friendship and travelling, all come together, then it becomes the best job in the world...

Seeking a bigger audience

HOW BADMINTON IS MAKING THE MOST OF THE MEDIA

Badminton has always had what it takes to create a huge and fascinating image for itself. It now has what it takes to move into a new era.



Beijing created a brilliantly choreographed spectacle.



The University of Technology, Beijing – the badminton venue at the Beijing Olympics (© IOC).

The BWF and its commercial partners are taking a look at how badminton needs to develop a new voice for television and marketing, and that should only mean one thing – much wider coverage for a sport which is already a media giant in some parts of the world.

From the moment badminton entered the Olympics in 1992, when for five days of its Games debut it gained more coverage than any other sport, it was evident that the potential was vast. Coverage of the Beijing Olympics was often excellent. With a media plan from the 2012 Olympics onwards, coverage should be even better than that.



Lin Dan – athletic, charismatic, perfect for TV.

The idea is to position badminton more strategically and better. And in particular that the broadcasting rights and other rights are being bundled together properly. That the product itself is outstandingly good there can be little doubt.

Anyone who has fully observed the beauty and dynamism of badminton photographs knows that. It has amazing-looking athletes. It has men and women playing together. And, unlike the other racket sports it has three dimensions of roughly equal importance in the playing area.

Watching images of badminton offers a depth which few other sports can match because the journey of a shuttlecock frequently involves great height as well as length and width. This makes it more intriguing for the brain as well as easier on the eye.

Add the widely different motions of the shuttle, from high clears and lifts, to flat mid-court jabs, to subtle tumblers, hairpins and net shots, and then to the steep smashes, and you have a visual range which is unique.



Poul-Erik Høyer rips open his shirt to celebrate winning the men's singles gold medal at the Olympics in Atlanta in 1996.



Badminton has height as well as length and width. Taufik Hidayat, 2008 Olympic champion, about to reach high



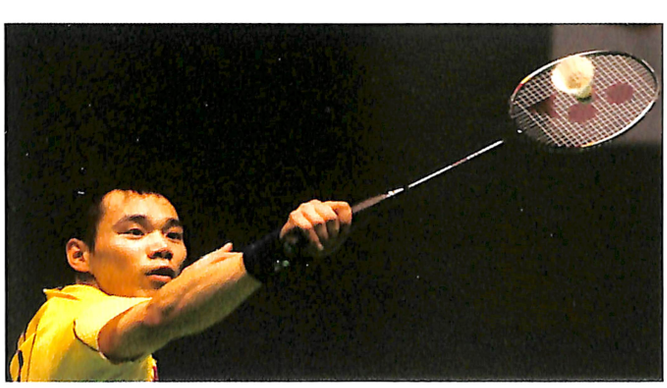
Gao Ling (top) and Huang Sui, Olympic gold medalists, – a beautiful aerial view, World Championships 2006.

From these strokes there are many more varying speeds than a ball – fast like a rocket, controlled like a parachute, and tumbling and erratic like a feather. It moves in different patterns – steep and flat, parabolic, hairpin. It is a more profound aesthetic spectacle.

There was also a famous study which showed just how many potential advantages badminton has compared with its highly successful sister racket sport, tennis. Even with stats taken before the modern scoring changes, they showed how badminton matches were faster, more continuous and shorter.

A comparison between a world badminton final and a Wimbledon final showed that two men's singles badminton players had 146 rallies with 1,972 shots while the two male tennis players had 299 rallies with 1,004 shots.

This meant that the badminton had an average of 13.5 shots per rally while the tennis had only 3.4 shots per rally including missed first serves. Tennis stats would probably show slightly longer rallies now, even on grass; nevertheless the difference between the two sports is very marked.

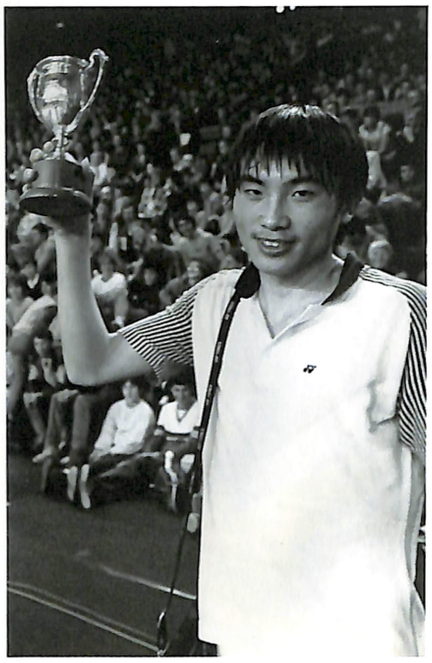


Xie Xuanze, former world champion from China: contact moment at the China Open 2005.

Perhaps more significant is badminton's greater activity compared with tennis. The world final lasted 76 minutes during which the shuttle was in play for 37 – a 48 percent activity total. The Wimbledon final lasted 198 minutes, during which time the ball was in play for only 18! The players were sitting or walking between rallies for 180 minutes. That was an activity total of 9 percent.

What should have made the badminton more attractive for the viewers and spectators is that there were almost 26 shots per minute, whereas the tennis had little more than 5, and that each badminton player ran an estimated 6 kilometres while the tennis players ran only 3.2 kilometres.

Badminton has also had its share of great characters – from Mr Versatile, Lin Dan, and the controversial Taufik Hidyat in the current era, from the masterly Gao Ling to the superbly preserved Zhang Ning and the engaging Xie Xuanze in the recent past, from the explosive Zhao Jianhua and the leaping Yang Yang to the willowy Park Joo-Bong and Mr Twinkletoes Morten Frost, and, before that, from the brilliance of Rudy Hartono to the astuteness of Imelda Wigoeno in the days when the game was going open, and from the great character of Erland Kops to the flying Mighty Mouse Eddy Choong back in the old days.



Zhao Jianhua, one of the most exciting players ever, won titles all over the world.

Increasingly all this genius is being matched by greater inventiveness off court. Badminton has undergone significant change in the last two years, enhancing accessibility and marketability for television.

The introduction in 2006 of a rally point scoring system – where each serve counts as a point won or lost – does, despite opposition to it, seem to have made the sport more accessible to spectators and television audiences.

Innovation in the graphic presentation of statistics, the use of virtual elements on court, and the introduction of speed gun technology has also enhanced TV viewers' experience. These, together with greater involvement in the scheduling of matches on the main television courts, are all seen as positive developments as the BWF moves towards 2012.

The creation in 2006 of the Super Series, a 12-leg niche circuit for the world's best players with minimum total prize money of $200,000 for each tournament, has been a significant enhancement as well, because the hosts of its tournaments are requested to provide TV production and broadcasting at their events.

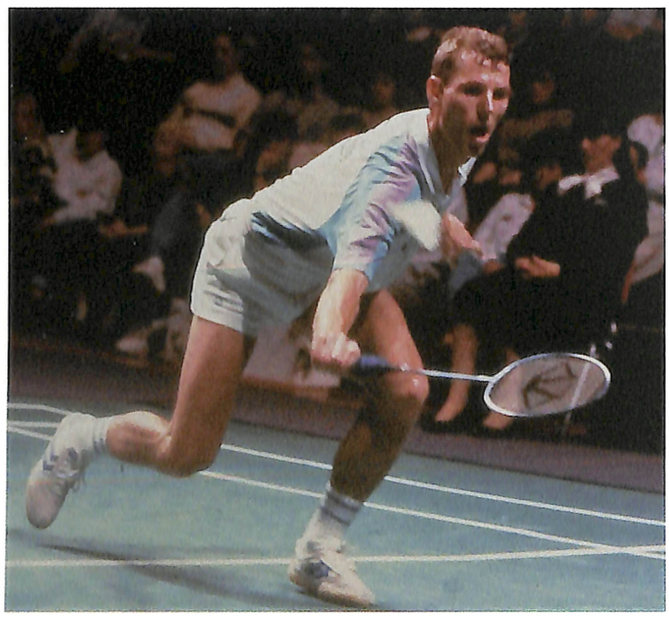


Yang Yang, one of the most acrobatic jump smashers in the sport.

The series has further engaged broadcasters and rights holders, and the Japan Open in 2007 broadcast to 160 million homes, an early illustration of how much progress had become possible.

The season ending tournament, the Super Series Masters finals, offered a massive US$500,000 in prize money in 2008, which further enhanced TV coverage, and the sport's profile.

Changes in the way broadcasters began to look at the sport and the introduction of new technology helped create a 51 percent increase in broadcast coverage of the 2007 World Championships compared with two years before. In 2005 the household reach was 340 million, but by 2007 the coverage jumped to a staggering 515 million households.



Morten Frost – twinkletoes.

Similarly, the coverage of the Sudirman Cup in Glasgow, saw a substantial increase in coverage, from 280 million households in 2005 to nearly 444 million households in 2007, an increase of almost 60 percent.

However the distribution is still not as well spread as it might be, a shortcoming which is at the top of the BWF's to-do list and which is influencing the allocation of Olympic money. About 85 percent of the coverage has been in Asia, about half of it in Indonesia, and only 15 percent in Europe and North America.

However the BWF has so far had as its broadcast rights holders Total Sports Asia (TSA) and IEC in Sports (IEC), whose engagement in the sport and active promotion of badminton as a brand has improved efforts in marketing and distributing the television packages.

TSA's range of services cover media rights sales and distribution, including mobile and broadband, broadcast production and satellite delivery, sponsorship sales and activation, and event management and promotion.



Rudy Hartono – genius with style.

IEC represents international broadcast media rights for 11 Super Series events, eight at Grand Prix level, rights for BWF major events, and claims to be the only agency which can provide extensive badminton programming to broadcasters across the globe. Revenues from right sales have contributed more than $2 million to national associations over the last decade.

The IEC is looking to expand badminton's appeal from the traditional three big markets in Asia, and is attempting to pioneer the growth and broadcasting of the sport in Japan, Korea, North America and Europe.

About 70 percent of Olympic revenues come from TV rights, which is why badminton has every reason to feel pleased about its Beijing assessment. "In terms of TV and Beijing, broadcasters did an amazing job," said Stuart Borrie, the BWF Secretary General.



Badminton watchers in the UK – Cliff Richard and Sue Barker.

"The take-up internationally was extremely good. One of the downsides in terms of competition was the scheduling, particularly for some of the medal matches. If you lose 300 million Chinese viewers out of the coverage because they choose to watch table tennis rather than badminton, then we have a problem.

"We will sort this out for London 2012 where there will be no clashes between table tennis and badminton. That will be for the International Table Tennis Federation and the BWF to do."

Meanwhile the BWF recognises that there must continue to be an appropriate balance which includes the needs of the players and teams, as well as the strategically important needs of the broadcasters, and is trying to consider its short as well as its long term objectives.

And in the medium term the BWF is trying to explore further ways to enhance event presentation, and viewer experience. Technology is playing an increasingly important role in this. And technology is changing all the time. Badminton's response will too.

RICHARD EATON



Bang Soo-Hyun, the Olympic women's singles gold medalist from Korea, eight years later at the Games in Athens as a TV commentator.



Badminton on the television – inside and out.

Making the most of the market

by Thomas Lund and Stuart Borrie



Thomas Lund, BWF Chief Operating Officer, former world mixed doubles champion and player member of the BWF Hall of Fame.



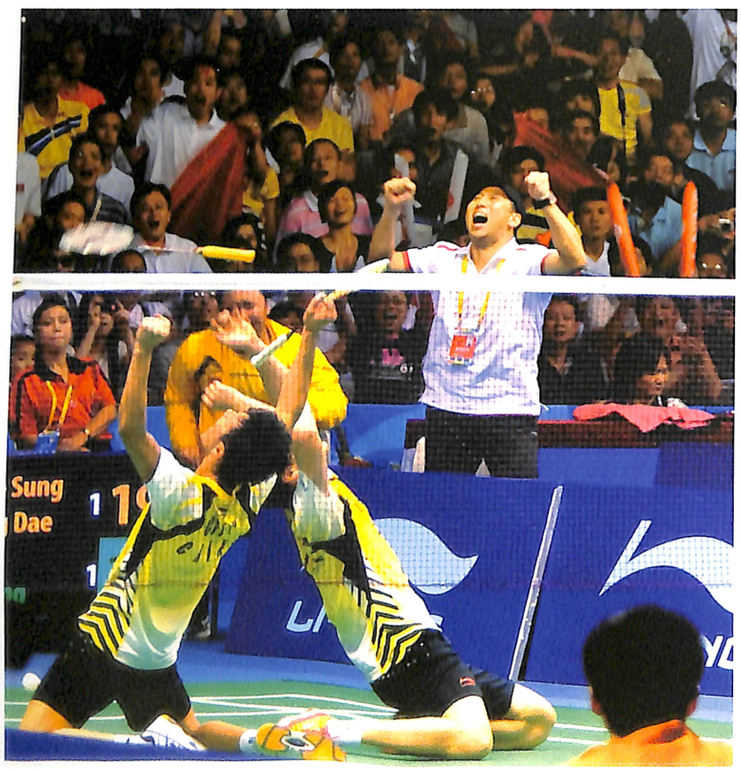
Stuart Borrie, BWF Secretary General.

An indication of badminton's great potential for a lucrative future came when there were expressions of interest from as many as 12 companies after the BWF advertised for help in investigating the commercial state of the game.

Five were shortlisted and the one which was chosen, Octagon, a highly successful worldwide company, was voted Sports Agency of the Year by Sports Business Journal, an American weekly trade publication, in 2008.

Octagon is one of the world's largest sports and entertainment marketing agencies, with expertise in sponsorship consulting, athlete and personality representation, event management, and marketing solutions.

The BWF has been particularly keen to use these abilities to discover whether the Super Series, the Thomas and Uber Cups, the world championships, the Sudirman Cup, and the world junior events are positioned advantageously on the calendar and within the market.



Sudirman Cup – China roar, takings soar.

There are other important questions too. Are the broadcasting rights and the commercial rights bundled properly? How can the sport get more television? How can the leading players achieve a higher profile?

And why has Octagon been chosen? According to its self-definition it is "the recognised, global thought leader in passion-based sports and entertainment marketing," a company which "offers a 360-degree approach to harnessing the emotive power of sports and entertainment content" and one possessing the ability "to increase a sponsor's brand awareness, consideration, sales and loyalty".

These qualities sound exciting.

This project is also very timely for the BWF given its renewed focus in developing the sport for the current Olympic cycle to 2012, and in the next quadrennial beyond 2012.

The outcome of Octagon's research is to give essential directions on how to redefine the marketing plan, something which included strategies for increasing spectator appeal, for making the BWF properties more attractive on television and for creating new media opportunities.

None of this is intended to take away from the value of what has gone before. The Super Series especially is an extremely good product. It goes to 11 nations – four in Europe and seven in Asia, with China hosting both its Masters and its Open.

It grew in popularity from the start, creating an increasingly better platform for a group of events in a series. It has certainly added value for member nations who want their tournaments to be part of it. That is because television has to be involved for any tournament to join the Super Series, and because the prize money has increased substantially.



Yonex – a great sponsor. Minoru Yoneyama, founder of Yonex (left), and Kei Yanagi, Executive Managing Director (standing), with Tom Bacher, Badminton Europe's President.

Neither does the direction recommended by Octagon belittle, unintentionally or in any other way, the value of existing sponsorships. When Yonex-Sunrise became involved in the Super Series it reduced the burden on the BWF, which had contributed substantial investment after a sponsor withdrew midway through the first cycle going from 2006 to 2009.

Since Yonex-Sunrise had already been involved in badminton it looked to upgrade the quality of events and bring in more partners. And when it sponsored the Masters final in Kota Kinabalu the $500,000 prize money was the biggest ever.

It will now help organise or underwrite other Masters finals. What happens within this scenario is an open question, though Yonex-Sunrise will build its strength within each of the events in a way which is good for the series as a whole.

The Super Series working group will come up with final criteria for each event, and contracts with the various nations will be signed early in 2010 for the next series cycle. After a difficult 18 months, things are on track again.

But other sponsorships have been – and still are – important. There has been a long-term relationship, one of 16 years, with Yonex, and one which is greatly appreciated. The All-England Open has had a 27-year association with this great company.

But though such long-term sponsorships are important, badminton needs to develop a greater sweep and a wider set of income streams. Events can have different sponsors at world level, but it is also necessary to have a second tier of international sponsors which link up.

It is necessary to continue developing the brand image of badminton in Asia and Europe – where it is already strong – because it is competing against other world sports, and needs to influence the choices which children make in schools.

Developing pathways for them, through clubs, tournaments and coaching is most important, but a general building of a brand through events is also crucial. If badminton doesn't do that it will lose out to the big sports, especially to football.



Marketable magic from Yonathan Suryatama Dasuki (white headband) and Rian Sukmawan, from Indonesia.



Good money for Tony Gunawan and Candra Wijaya (left) at the Malaysian Open 2007.

The BWF has been doing its own research, in addition to Octagon's. There are many answers to be sought about what is happening in other areas of badminton.

Do people still mostly play for fun, or have they become more competitive, as they tend to be in other high participation sports? How widely known is it that badminton is played by more than 250 million people?

The answers should offer valuable knowledge about what is happening in badminton's very widespread roots, as well as at its highest levels, which will help generate its business.

Badminton accelerates into the future

HOW THE BWF IS DEVELOPING

Looking at rows of faces – even those photographed as though they have happily set fire to what is behind them – does not usually generate much interest unless you know them.

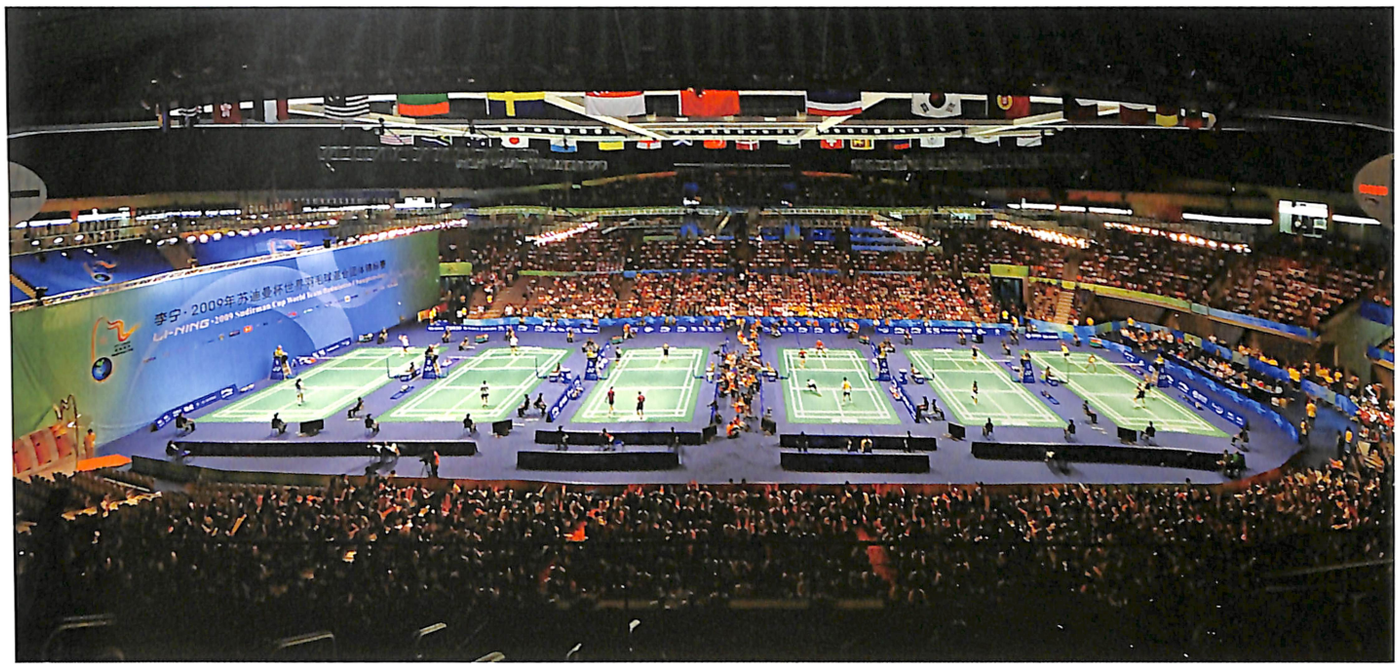
People are really interested in players not administrators, as Lu Shengrong says, but it seems possible that the striking photo of the 2009 BWF council with its unusual background may create a rare exception.



BWF council 2009 – forward together.

Just ten members survived from the previous council. All 26 are committed to a new strategy. All are part of an importantly altered structure. And all believe that badminton now has a chance of accelerating into the future. Perhaps they have indeed been burning the past.

What makes this possible is the devolution of more power, plus mutual tolerance. Each of the five continental confederations is now allowed to appoint its own Vice-President rather than have it imposed from above; each agrees to accept and support the others' choices, no matter who they may be.



The sensational Guangzhou gymnasium where badminton had some of its most wonderful moments.

This should reduce tension with the leadership, and lubricate relations with one another. The build-up to this new piece of politics could only have been possible with strong co-operation between Asia and Europe, traditionally the rival powers of the sport, which in itself is a good augury for the future.

Their common goal was stability – a stability which may make many things possible for badminton. There was agreement on maintaining an informal quota system of council members, allowing opportunities for the best persons in each region to be found. This should prevent cherry-picking, or individual campaigns.

These important political developments happened during a cathartic set of meetings during the Sudirman Cup in Guangzhou in May 2009, creating not only new methods of operating, but an altered mood. This mood came from the new emphasis – on what is to be done, rather than who is to do it.

Votes revealed that the candidates supported by the five continents scored at least 160 or 170. Those not on the continental federation list gained about 50 votes, and so it was a clear majority for the new-look council.



Dr Kang.

The continents also agreed to support Dr Kang Young-Joong as President, Paisan Rangsikitpho as Vice President, and Gregory Verpoorten as the Vice-President for Olympic relations. Verpoorten is a new young operator from Belgium who perhaps more than anyone symbolises the future of the sport and who represents its most important immediate concern.

"... continuity has been preserved because among the ten survivors from the previous council, four are chairmen of committees."

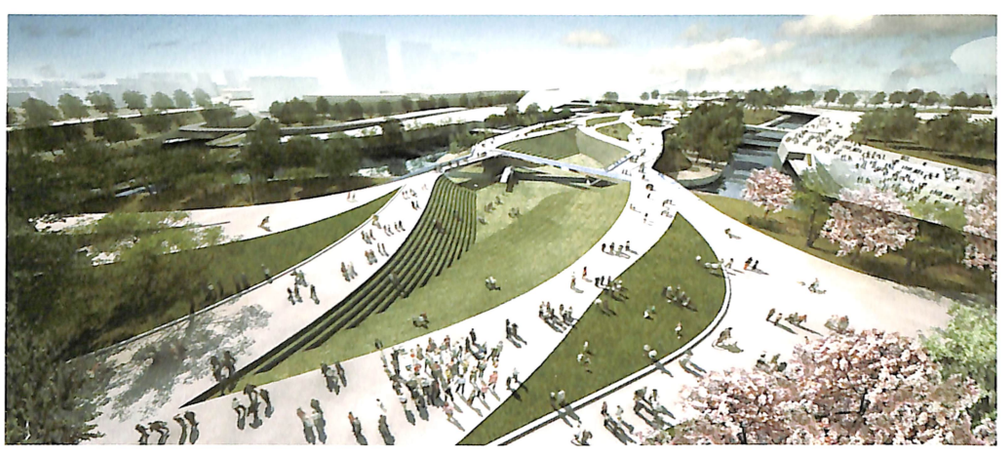
Amidst such changes, you might think that decision-making could founder on the twin rocks of inexperience and unfamiliarity. But continuity has been preserved because among the ten survivors from the previous council, four are chairmen of committees. Ongoing plans have not been disrupted.

"A lot of work was started in Guangzhou," said Torsten Berg, a BWF Vice President. "For me it was relevant that for a whole week we were discussing badminton, and how to organise badminton, and not each other."

Perhaps the most important issue is how to establish the best possible IOC relations. With a re-elected President and a dedicated IOC and International Relations Committee, the BWF should achieve a closer, more consistent dialogue with Jacques Rogge, the IOC President, and others in an Olympic movement which can have a mighty influence upon the image, funding and future of badminton.

"This new structure and these new faces offer reassurance about the effectiveness of the BWF's new political set-up, about the aim to develop equality between women and men in badminton, and about the pace of advancement into new regions of the world."





Impressions of London 2012.

This new structure and these new faces offer reassurance about the effectiveness of the BWF's new political set-up, about the aim to develop equality between women and men in badminton, and about the pace of advance into new regions of the world. In return the IOC may advise where badminton has been weak in its presentations compared with other sports.

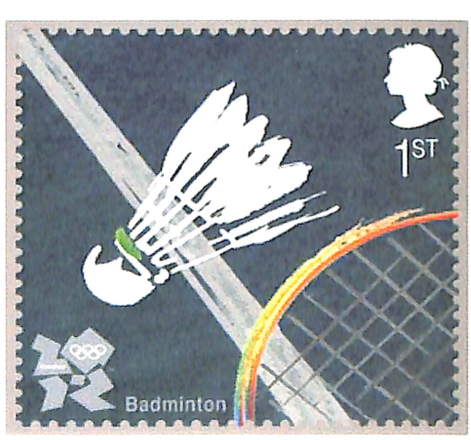
Related to Olympic issues – because Lausanne is the location of the IOC headquarters and the site of BWF offices – is what happens when Kuala Lumpur's contract as the site of the BWF headquarters ends in 2010.

Even though the relocation possibilities have been discussed, it is unlikely to mean an end to KL's role: there may be an upgrading of Lausanne's capacity. An extension of the Malaysian capital's contract has been requested because the BWF considers it needs a presence there, certainly in the short or the medium term.

But looking long term, the BWF is considering doing what some other international sports federations are doing, expanding its presence in more than one place. Lausanne could grow still further, and a commercial, marketing and administrative office could be maintained in KL, not least because labour is good and inexpensive there.



IOC President, Jacques Rogge, with the Olympic torch.



London 2012 postage stamp.

Closely linked to the development of the BWF's offices is the planning of badminton's spread around the world. The 2009 council, with its worldwide representation, is impressively well constructed for this.

It has endorsed the decision that a large proportion of Olympic money, $1,024,000, will be spent on development activities in the continental confederations. And it has been agreed to give the same amount next year.





Nora Perry and Li Lingwei, women on the BWF council.

This money is being shared, but not equally shared, among the five continents. South America and Africa get a large proportion, particularly when the quantity per capita is analysed.

These continents also have direct access to participation in the Thomas and Uber Cup finals. Africa is developing players quite well. There is no reason why, like its footballers, its badminton players can't reach world class level.

For this purpose, and also from fairness, the BWF is trying to develop the three other confederations – or perhaps two, as Oceania is fairly well developed already.

Another Olympics related task, because promoting gender equity is one of the IOC's prime requirements, is to develop the new Women in Sport working group.

Badminton has men and women playing together regularly all over the world, in Thomas and Uber Cup competitions and individual tournaments where men and women compete together at the same venues where the prize money is the same for both, and of course also in mixed doubles.

On court therefore it is making progress. In the board room and among technical officials it has a distance to go, but at least it has a new female BWF councillor, Nora Perry, who joins Li Lingwei.

Economics sometimes presents tougher obstacles than politics. But now that the BWF has unravelled some of its political difficulties, there is a chance to perform better in the market place.



Olympic flame, Lausanne (© IOC).

There was a marketing review after the Beijing Olympics. The BWF attracted more than a dozen international companies to offer their services, after advertising on its website. Five were interviewed, and two were selected to become partners. Others are partners in specific areas. Committed work towards marketing the sport is still gathering pace.

The BWF has also welcomed into its fold disabled badminton players, and there are many other pluses too. They include an increasingly stable Super Series.

Of course 2009 has been a honeymoon period for the new-look council. It has to face cold daylight and new challenges. At the time of writing it had yet to define its mission statement, for instance. But its hopes and ideals had already become evident enough to be able to compose it.

RICHARD EATON

A Galaxy of Stars 2000–2009

Zhang Ning, Olympic women's singles champion 2004, 2008, world champion 2001.

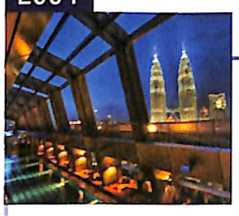


2001

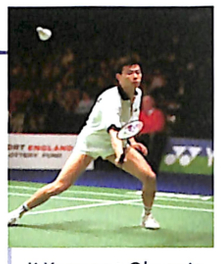


Gao Ling, the only Chinese player to have won four world titles and the first to have won all three colours of Olympic medal, partnered Huang Sui women's doubles. They became world women's doubles champions 2001, 2003, 2006, Olympic silver medalists 2004, 2008.

2004



IBF headquarters moves from Cheltenham to Kuala Lumpur



Ji Xenpeng, Olympic men's singles champion, 2004.



Taufik Hidayat, Olympic men's singles champion 2004, world champion 2005.

2006



Cai Yun and Fu Haifeng, world men's doubles champions 2006, All-England champions 2008.



Lin Dan, Olympic champion 2008, world champion 2006, 2007, and 2009.

continued from page 101

2000



Gao Ling and Zhang Jun, Olympic mixed doubles champions 2000, 2004, world champions 2001.



Tony Gunawan and Candra Wijaya, Olympic men's doubles champions 2000.

2003



Xie Xuanze, world champion 2003, Olympic bronze 2000.



Kim Dong-Moon and Ra Kyung-Min, world mixed doubles champions 1999, 2003.

2005

IBF renamed Badminton World Federation



Xie Xinfang, world women's singles champion 2005, 2006, Olympic silver medalist 2008.



Zhang Jiewen and Yang Wei, Olympic women's doubles champions 2004, world champions 2005, 2007.

2008



Lee Dong-Yae and Lee Hye-Jung, Olympic mixed doubles champions 2008.



Markis Kido and Hendra Setiawan, Olympic men's doubles champions 2008.

2009

ANNIVERSARY 75th BWF 1934 - 2009

2007

Super series

BWF Super Series circuit begins



Nova Widianto and Lilyana Natsir, world mixed doubles champions 2005, 2007, Olympic silver 2008.

2008 *cont.*



Lee Chong Wei, Olympic silver medalist 2008, BWF Super Series champion 2008.



China's latest winning Sudirman Cup and Uber Cup squads 2008.

The five continental confederations



Badminton Confederation of Africa

Raj Gaya

Best Dairy Co Ltd, Avenue Berthaud, Quartre Bornes, Mauritius

Tel: +230 424 3979, +230 427 1718 Fax: +230 424 4039

Email: gaya@intnet.mu Web: www.badmintonafrica.org

African Baobabs in a new dawn.



Badminton Asia Confederation

Kuala Lumpur Badminton Stadium, Batu 3½ Jalan Cheras,

56000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

Tel: +60 3 92845421; +60 3 92843250 Fax: +60 3 92843251

Email: bac@badmintonasia.org Web: www.badmintonasia.org

The Taj Mahal.



Badminton Europe

Brian Agerbak – General Secretary

House of Sports, Brøndby Stadion 20, 2605 Brøndby, Denmark

Tel: +45 43 262166, +45 21 680082(m) Fax: +45 43 262167

Email: gen.sec@eurobadminton.dk Web: www.badmintoneurope.com

Nyhavn, Copenhagen.



Badminton Oceania

Corinne Barnard – Secretary General

PO. Box 242 82, Wellington 6142, New Zealand.

Tel: +64 4 914 1452 Fax: +64 4 916 2494

Email: corinne.barnard@oceaniabadminton.org Web: www.oceaniabadminton.org

Oceanic continent.



Badminton PanAm Confederation

Pilar Carrillo – Chief Operating Officer

Javier Prado Este 897, Oficina 12 (1er Piso), San Isidro, Lima 27, Peru

Tel: +51 1 994225073 Fax: +51 1 251 3496

Email: panambadminton@gmail.com Web: www.badmintonpanam.org

Panama Canal, joining two oceans, linking two Americas.

The early days of African badminton

by R. Balasuperamaniam
Vice President, International Badminton Federation 1969–1978

Badminton Confederation of Africa

Ramachandra Balasuperamaniam was Sri Lanka's delegate to the IBF from 1957 to 1960,and its Vice President from 1969 to 1978. Bala served on the IBF rules and laws, tournament, and the international championships and tournament committees from 1960 to 1987, playing an important part in the changing of the "wood shot" by former president of the IBF, David Bloomer. Because he was promoting badminton in Ghana in 1965 and 1966 he was also able to take a leading role in the formation of the Africa Badminton Federation.



The Kenyan squad at the 2009 All-Africa Championships.

The year was 1976 when the inaugural meeting of the Africa Badminton Federation was held in Dar es Salaam, attended by delegates from Tanzania, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, Nigeria, Uganda and Malawi. The West African delegates were representatives from their respective High Commissions in Dar es Salaam, and the meeting was chaired by the Chairman of the Tanzanian Olympic Committee, who was also a minister in his government.

I had the privilege of addressing the meeting on the importance of forming the Federation. I pointed out that the European Badminton Union and the Asian Badminton Confederation were strong bodies and were conducting successful tournaments under their banners.

At that time Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania and Zambia were full affiliated members of the IBF, while Malawi, Mauritius, and Mozambique were temporary associate members.

The Chairman told the meeting that South Africa would not be invited to join due its government's apartheid policy, a decision in keeping with the principles of the African Olympic Committee. All other African Countries were to be invited to join the Federation. It was also decided that a formal meeting should be called during the next year, to adopt the constitution. Until that happened, Willibard Kente was to be interim secretary.

The first Tanzanian Open was held in 1977 at the Technical College sports centre in Dar es Salaam with Mr Kente as convenor and tounament director. Without his able leadership we could not have formed the Africa Badminton Federation, for he worked tirelessly round the clock to achieve this objective. It now has a membership of more than 30 countries, so it can be seen as a great success.



Ready for action at the All-Africa Championships.

Before the tournament I had to travel to Nairobi to meet Vijay Maini, the secretary of the Kenya Badminton Association to convince him and his committee that everything was okay for them to take part. Their anxiety was because all of their contingent came from an Indian background.

I gave them an undertaking that everything would be fine and had the full support of Mr Rao, Kenya's member in the Olympic Committee. They came – and won all the trophies. The Ghanaians sent a contingent, there were representatives from Zambia and Uganda, and the tournament was a great success.

The next big event, the first African tournament, was held in Beira in Mozambique in 1980. There the Africa Badminton Federation's first general meeting was held with me as interim Chairman. A constitution was adopted and officers duly elected, with Mr. Willibard Kente as the first Secretary.

Mozambique had just got independence and Beira, which had been a thriving beach resort during Portuguese rule, was now a ghost town. South African tourists were not coming any more.

Thanks to the efforts of Mr Aziz, the President of the Mozambique Badminton Association, who gained the full backing of the provincial governor, the whole thing was organised without a snag, even though players had to be linesmen, which was not altogether satisfactory.



All-Africa championships women's doubles.



The prize-giving ceremony at the All-Africa senior badminton championships of 2009.

In the same way as the Kenyans had reservations about travelling to Tanzania in 1977, Zimbabweans felt something similar about going to Mozambique. Their country, which had been Southern Rhodesia, had only just changed to Zimbabwe and immigration and customs were still handled by the old guard. My wife and I were confined to the Monamataba Hotel, the only hotel which accepted mixed race couples.

Southern Rhodesia never became affiliated to the IBF. It had a provincial association affliated to the South African Badminton Association. The Zimbabwean contingent were all white of Anglo Saxon stock and their manager came to see me at the hotel, wanting assurance that they would be safe.

Mr Aziz's protocol officer (Mr Fix It) was head of security for the region and gave me every assurance that all would be okay. He did everything to make our stay comfortable, the hotel was empty for much of the time, and the tournament was a great success.

That was the beginning of the Africa Badminton Federation. I am proud that I was part of it.



Dinner at the All-Africa Championships.

STARTING A NEW ERA

Professor Ranjit da Silva proposed an All-Africa junior championship, which started with the support of the Africa Badminton Federation in the town of Ndola in Zambia in 1993.

Professor da Silva, then President of the Zambia Badminton Association, spent 18 years in Africa, becoming a Vice-President of the All-Africa Badminton Federation (as it was then) and President of zone six, covering South Africa, Botswana, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Malawi, Mozambique and Tanzania. He also became an IBF council member in 1996 and again in 2009, representing Sri Lanka, and was awarded the IBF Meritorious Service Award.

The countries taking part in the inaugural tournament were Ghana, Mauritius, Nigeria, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Professor da Silva was chairman of the organising committee and the referee was Arthur Meakin of Zimbabwe.

Professor da Silva also donated the challenge trophy for the team championship, which was won by Nigeria.



Zambia has been given the privilege of hosting the first All-Africa Junior Badminton Championships and for this we are grateful to the Africa Badminton Federation.

The local business community enthusiastically provided financial support. A large number of companies were involved from which Dunlop Zambia Limited, Boart Zambia Limited, Cadbury Schweppes Zambia Limited and the Mahtani Group stand out for exceptional contributions.

Special thanks are due to Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines Nkana Division for provision of a range of facilities and services. The Carlton Sports Co. Ltd. of U.K. and the International Badminton Federation kindly donated the shuttlecocks for the championships.

Had it not been for the encouragement from the Ministry of Sport, the National Sports Council and the Zambia Olympic and Commonwealth Games Association, organisation of an event of this nature would not have been possible and their support is gratefully acknowledged.

We are thankful to all the visiting players and officials for their tremendous effort in coming here. We hope that this interaction between the future champions of Africa will help in initiating systematic development of the game at this level on the continent.

Professor A.R.T. de Silva
CHAIRMAN
MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN ZAMBIA

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN ZAMBIA

Professor A.R.T. de Silva (Chairman)
Messrs. P. Chisanga
G.K. Kazembe
N. Sothylingam
L. Sweeney
J. Hope
E. Kapolyo
G. Masuwa

BADMINTON HALL COMMITTEE

Messrs. J. Hope (Chairman)
M. Masumbuko
J.K. Mulenga

FINANCE COMMITTEE

Messrs. N. Sothylingam (Chairman)
E. Jayetileke
R. Arulanandan

ZAMBIA BADM'N

Message from Professor da Silva in the first Africa junior championships souvenir.



ABF President James Sekajugo receives a trophy from Ranjit da Silva of Zambia, with Harry Stavridis of South Africa (background) and Robert Leole of Tanzania.



Ranjit da Silva presents the All-Africa junior trophy to Nigeria in 1993.

The Badminton Asia Confederation – its history

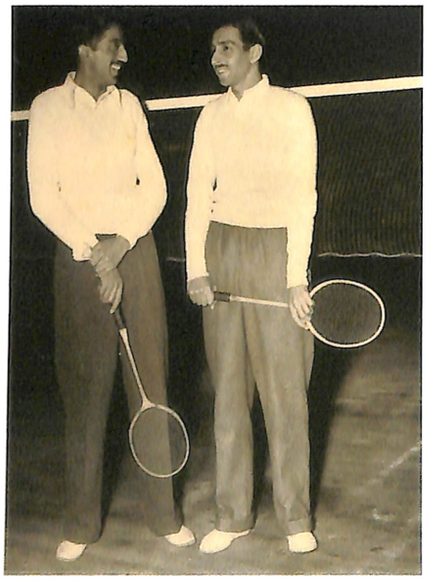
The Badminton Asia Confederation celebrated its golden anniversary on July 30th, 2009, which means it is the oldest of the five continental confederations in the BWF. Seven nations, Burma (now Myanmar), Ceylon (Sri Lanka), India, Indonesia, Malaya (Malaysia), Thailand and the Republic of China (Chinese Taipei) gathered in Kuala Lumpur 50 years earlier to set up an umbrella body which could help oversee and streamline the sport on this continent.

It was the host nation Malaya, which by then were already three times the Thomas Cup champions, which had felt the need for such a body and initiated the meeting. Badminton had been mushrooming on the continent and Malaya's international success had been an inspirational stimulus.

Also important was that Indian players were a common feature on European and American circuits during the 1940's and 50's, while Indonesia had begun to make impressive progress, having just won the Thomas Cup for the first time. This all contributed to an outpouring of interest throughout Asia. Although China was not yet a member of the International Badminton Federation, as the governing body then was, it had a huge badminton-playing population.

The meeting of the seven nations on July 30th 1959 was held at the Tunku Abdul Rahman Auditorium in Kuala Lumpur, inaugurated by Malaya's first Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, and chaired by the President of the Malayan Badminton Association, Heah Joo Seang. It formed what was then called the Asian Badminton Confederation (ABC).

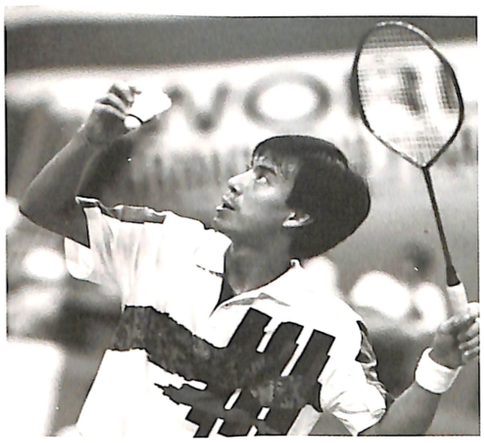
An executive committee was created, which made Tunku Rahman its President, and created Heah, S.R. Ruia from India, and Dick Sudirman from Indonesia as its Vice Presidents. The other members were Teh Gin Sooi of Malaya, who became the honorary secretary, Heah Hock Meng, also from Malaya, who became the honorary treasurer, with C. Rajalingam of Ceylon, Khoo Shih Chi of the Republic of China, and Yu Saing of Burma.



Prakash Nath and Davinder Mohan of India in 1947.



DPR Korea – North Korea – hosts Olympic Solidarity in 1994.



Thailand's Sompol Kukasemkit is now national coach.



Participants at Iran's FAJR tournament, 1991.

Among the objectives were to develop and safeguard the interests of badminton in Asia, to promote and manage tournaments on the continent, to uphold the laws adopted by the IBF, to strengthen friendship between national organisations, and to encourage the formation of new national associations.

The council formulated the rules and laws for its flagship – the Asian Badminton Championship. Its inaugural tournament was held at the Stadium Negara in Kuala Lumpur from April 21st, 1962, with subsequent tournaments being rotated among India, Indonesia, Philippines, China, Hong Kong, Thailand and Korea.

By the time the first biennial general meeting took place in Lucknow on November 1st, 1965, the confederation was firmly rooted, with a Kuala Lumpur-based secretariat managing affairs and the membership having reached a promising 17. The newcomers were Hong Kong, Japan, Khmer Republic (Kampuchea), Korea, Laos, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

During its formative years, funding for the secretariat and its activities came mainly from well-wishers. Host associations of the ABC Championship managed to organise the event mainly through donations, and sometimes through support from their governments.

But when badminton joined the Olympic Family in 1992, the era of penny-pinching came to a close. Major events of the confederation received encouraging support from commercial bodies and the confederation's coffers gradually swelled.

The impact is seen in the change in the bank balance between 1987 and 1991 – from a mere US$2,000 to a whopping US$250,000! Today the regional body extends financial, technical and staff-support services to members nations which are not financially able to organise seminars, workshops or tournaments.

However the confederation went through a lean phase during the second half of the 70s when the sport became embroiled in the two-China controversy. During this crisis some members opted out of the confederation and joined the World Badminton Federation, a rival body to the then IBF. But in 1982 reconciliation between the two world federations set the ABC back on track.



Nepal's top ladies – Sumina and Puja.

Through the last 50 years the confederation has had leaders from eight different countries – Malaysia (Tunku Abdul Rahman and Elyas Omar), India (Sushil Ruia), Hong Kong (Henry Fok and Tong Yun Kai), Thailand (General Chumbhol Lohachala and Korn Thapparansi), China (Zhu Ze), Japan (Yanagawa and Mamoru Otake), Korea (Chung Jung-Hoon and Kang Young-Joong) and Indonesia (Sutiyoso). Two of them, Korn and Kang, rose to the presidency of the international federation.

Badminton Europe

The European Badminton Union (EBU) was founded at Frankfurt am Main, in West Germany in September 1967, at a meeting of representatives from eleven national organisations. It was convened by the Deutscher Badminton Verband (DBV) on the suggestion of the IBF, after the DBV had proposed that an official European Championships should be staged.

The eleven countries all became founder members of the EBU. They were Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland. Both Scotland and Wales indicated their approval of the formation of the Union.

The first President of the EBU was H.P. Kunz of Switzerland, with S. Mohlin of Sweden and H. Brohl of West Germany making up a small committee of three, responsible for general management. It was agreed to affiliate the Union as an international member of the IBF and to seek sanction for the first European Championships in West Germany in April, 1968.



Ronnie Rowan and Emile ter Metz in Hong Kong in 1983.

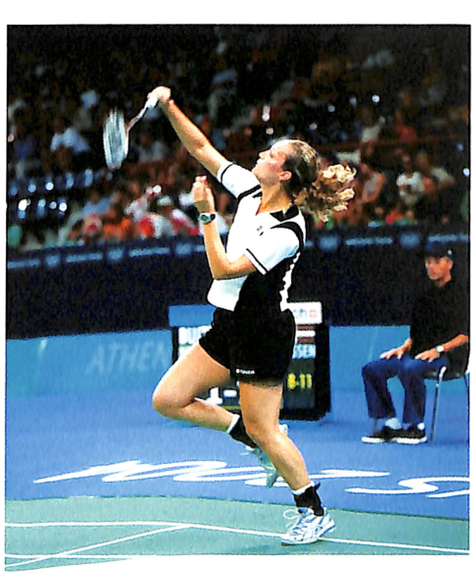
Mr. Kunz, the founder of the Cup of the Six Nations in 1961, later known as the Helvetia Cup, was one of the prime movers of this, which was discussed and prepared at the meeting of Helvetia Cup member associations in 1966 in Brussels and in 1967 in Lausanne.

From 11 members in 1967 Badminton Europe has grown to 51. From the early days development and creating European events have been key. When Stellan Mohlin took over the Presidency in 1969, he recruited Emile ter Metz of the Netherlands as the first Honorary Secretary and also as Honorary Treasurer of the Union.

In close co-operation with Joseph Benes of Czechoslovakia, ter Metz organised a system of reciprocity, which enabled players from Eastern Europe to play in the West without having to worry about hard currency restrictions. Eastern members from time to time hosted EBU events, and in this way, generally, paid back.

Ter Metz was succeeded in 1986 by Gisela Hoffmann of Germany as Honorary Secretary and by Horst Kullnigg as Honorary Treasurer, and these two created the Badminton Europe Circuit, perhaps the most useful and successful development tool of all.

This circuit has provided young players with a level and tough competitive playing field in a steadily improving environment for more than 20 years. The EBU also initiated development activities, something begun by Stan Mitchell of England, who was President from 1984 till 1992, and followed up by a committee chaired from 1984 onwards by Torsten Berg, who became President in 1992.



Tine Rasmussen, from Denmark, started 2009 as world number one.



Peter Gade, Europe's best male player for a decade.

Today Badminton Europe is responsible for a wide range of events in all age groups, which include the European championships, the European mixed team championships, the European men's and women's team championships, the European junior championships, the European junior team championships, the European club championships, the European senior championships, the Badminton Europe circuit with 27 international tournaments, the Badminton Europe junior circuit, and the Europe versus Asia match.

It is also responsible for projects such as a summer school, Team Europe 2012, coach education, technical official education, and regional and school projects. But the main objective is to promote and develop badminton in Europe, and that can be achieved in many ways.



Gisela Hoffmann (centre) with Badminton Europe President Tom Bacher (left) and Vice-President João Matos.

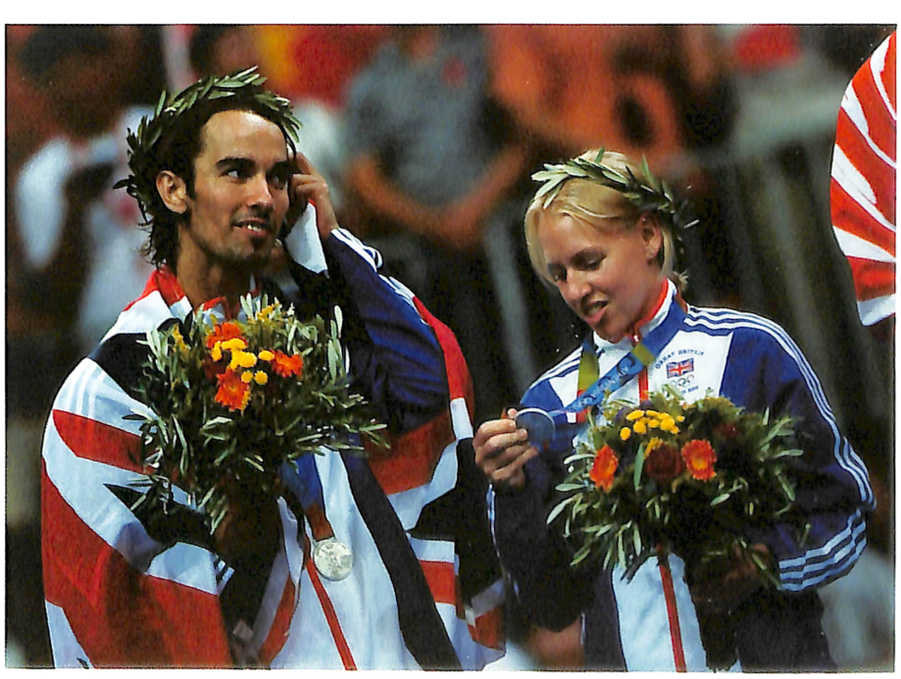
Firstly, it can be done by striving to ensure the sport is played competitively and as a sport for all in every European nation, each with its own national association. The support can be provided to every Badminton Europe member association in its efforts to establish, improve and run its organisation.

It can also be achieved by developing the Badminton Europe circuit, improving the quality of the tournaments and of the tournament system, ensuring that it is high profile, and by running an events programme of high quality tournaments which come to be recognised as the best in Europe and even the world.

Other ways are by ensuring and maintaining the very highest standard of European court officials, by creating a dynamic public relations unit for Badminton Europe and its member associations, using the latest technology and means of communication, and ensuring that badminton is presented to the market in the best possible way to attract interest from broadcasting authorities and potential sponsors.

Finally Badminton Europe seeks to position itself in a manner to be able to influence the BWF and to play an appropriate role in the worldwide development of badminton, and to assist the BWF where possible in maintaining the sport's Olympic status.

The main objectives are currently implemented by the President and the Vice-Presidents together with directors who lead the work in defined areas of activity.



Nathan Robertson and Gail Emms, England, World and European champions in mixed doubles.

Oceania Badminton

by Corinne Barnard

Secretary General of Badminton Oceania

with excerpts from the *History of the Oceania Badminton Confederation* by Roy Ward.

Oceania is a vast region of water splattered with thousands of islands, the continents of Australia and Antarctica and the large islands of New Zealand. The area begins at 90 degrees east longitude and extends to 120 degrees west. Its northern latitude begins at 20 degrees north and its southern latitude is at 80 degrees.

The eastern landmarks are Society Islands and to the west are Cocos and Christmas Islands in the Indian Ocean. Antarctica is the southern boundary and the Northern Marianas is the northern limit. Not many people can envisage the size of this continent – larger than each of the other continents but sparsely populated.

New Zealand was one of the nine founder members of the IBF in 1934, while Australia, not yet a federation, could not be a founder. Its federation was formed in 1935, and in 1936 it became the 11th IBF member.

The battle for an Oceania confederation

For many years Australia had been represented at annual meetings and sometimes on the IBF council by some very competent English people.

The name of the zone or confederation, was under discussion between New Zealand Federation and Australia, and the IBF rules and laws committee was asked to review and clarify the discussion. Names for the confederation which were discussed were Australasia, South Pacific and Oceania.

Because boundaries of this new confederation needed clarifying, the advice of the Asian Badminton Confederation was sought. Asian Badminton Confederation Secretary General Teh Gin Sooi wrote on March 6th, 1977: "I have much pleasure to inform you that my Confederation welcomes the formation of the South Pacific Confederation and congratulates you for this action. The boundaries mentioned – namely Papua New Guinea, Melanesia, and Micronesia – are agreeable."



Oceania beach badminton.

Veronica (Ronnie) Rowan, then IBF General Secretary, wrote on 7th October 1977 that "the Council of the Federation has asked me to write to you notifying you of their acceptance of the boundary lines between the proposed South Pacific Badminton Confederation and the Asian Badminton Confederation."

Oceania badminton formed

The historic day was Thursday, May 21, 1987 at 0800 hours at the Yanying Hotel in Beijing. Ian Palmer chaired a meeting with Roy Ward and Cedric Baxter of Australia, and three New Zealanders – Derek Light and Jeff and Heather Robson. They laid the foundations of the Oceania Badminton Confederation.



The late Roy Ward, an IBF Vice-President and Oceania pioneer.



Heather Robson, Oceania leader.

The OBC made Heather Robson its first President. Heather had a mass of national and international experience as a player and an official. She had represented New Zealand in 18 international contests of the Uber Cup and the Whyte Trophy, as well as been a captain and manager.

Early development

Tony Lee of New Zealand conducted the first coaching course in Western Samoa in 1990 and this was followed with a court officials course conducted by Roy Ward. Heather Robson made a formal approach to Torsten Berg for assistance from the IBF development committee to enable the appointment of a regional coach and this became a reality in 1993–4.

Still, the amount of money available wasn't sufficient to pay a full-time coach, but the small allowances made from time to time were accumulated until there were sufficient funds for the appointment of Mohan Subramaniam in 1999. Mohan had been a Malaysian schoolteacher who turned to coaching and had been working in New Zealand.

It was almost ten years after the formation of the OBC that the first championships were held at North Harbour Association in Auckland in July and August 1997.

Oceania badminton today

It is now 75 years since the IBF, now BWF, was established. The OBC is only 22 years young but has grown significantly over those years thanks to the early work of key volunteers mentioned in the History of OBC by Roy Ward.

Today Badminton Oceania, based in New Zealand, has three staff members, and there are ten members with more joining every year. Its newest member is Tahiti.

The development work carried out by the Oceania coaches since 1999 – in particular Mohan Subramaniam, Nick Marks, Lynne Scutt and Tony Mordaunt – have made a significant difference to the development position of our confederation. We now have development officers employed in Fiji and Samoa, who organise local programmes.

Another who has made significant input is Robin Bryant, of Australia, the BWF Vice President for Oceania until 2009 and a BWF council member.

The Oceania Championships, held every two years, recently added two new events – a junior continental championship and a second tier team event which has been named after the late Roy Ward.

There are now two Grand Prix events in the region, the New Zealand Open and the Australian Open, both with US$50,000 prize money. Oceania also has a full quota of umpires at international level and is the first continent to have a line judge qualification.

Today Badminton Oceania has a website, communicates with its members regularly through Skype, and has a Facebook site.

As we look to the future we need the best possible use of human resources and also to branch into new projects, particularly developing the role of women, increasing even further our professional presence in events that we host, and gaining additional funding for these events.

We must not be afraid of change, we must look forward and learn from the past experiments, and above all we must be united in all that we set out to achieve. Only then will we be successful.



Peter Cocker, international umpire from Australia.



Australia's Anna Lao (left) an Olympic quarter-finalist in Barcelona in 1992 with her compatriot Rhonda Cator.

Pan Am Confederation

AIMING FOR SEVEN NATIONS AT THE OLYMPICS

The Badminton Pan American Confederation (BPAC) is the continental branch of the BWF and promotes and regulates the sport on the Pan American Continent. The administrative office is in Lima, Peru, and is headed by the Chief Operating Officer. The Director of Development is also a member of the office staff there.



Rio de Janeiro was the venue for the 2007 Pan-American Games and will be for the 2016 Olympics.

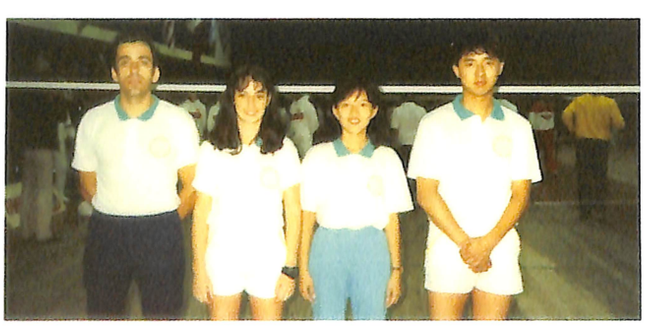
The BPAC was founded in Mexico City in 1976 by Badminton Canada, the Jamaica Badminton Association, Federacion Mexicana de Badminton, Comisión Nacional de Badminton de Perú and the United States Badminton Association. Today the BPAC has 24 active member associations in a total of 30 members. The members are grouped into four regions – North America, Central America, Caribbean and South America – each headed by a Vice President who is a member of the executive committee.

According to our by-laws the executive committee consists of the President, four Vice Presidents and a General Secretary. The BPAC has three council members of the BWF: its Vice President, deputy President and one council member, who are also executive members of the Confederation.

BPAC badminton athletes have taken part in every Games since badminton became an Olympic sport in 1992. There were players from five BAPC countries, Canada, Guatemala, Mexico, Peru and the United States at the Beijing Olympics and our aim is to get seven countries participating at London 2012.

Our member nations are at quite different stages of development. Colombia, our latest member country, hosts the South America Games in 2010 when badminton is included for the first time. We hear that Venezuela is just applying for membership of the BPAC and the BWF.

The BPAC website www.badmintonpanam.org is an important tool for communication and information about our membership, the badminton community, and the general public. It covers news about development activities, provides information for member associations, and gives important information about the tournament calendar which continues to increase its number of events.



Brazil's Luis, Soraya, Marcia, and Hwang.

This year, the start of a new Olympic cycle, the calendar has increased to 20, with a record ten events in different countries throughout the continent, in addition to our continental events. The most significant events in 2009 are the 15th Pan Am Championships and the 19th Pan Am Junior Championships, which in the last four years has been our most successful event.

Of special interest was that in the PanAm continental junior event, medals were spread between many different countries, not just three or four, with countries such as Brazil, Guatemala, Jamaica, and Puerto Rico, among others, gaining medals, as well as Canada, USA, and Peru.

In recent years the BPAC's efforts have been directed to reinforcing the structure between the office and our member associations. These have shown good results, with more communication, better structured development plans, and equipment support being given to developing countries .

Specially interesting has been the participation of some BPAC players at the BWF world training centres, which has enabled some of them to qualify for the Beijing Olympics.

Strong work has been going on with technical officials, with a need to achieve more officials from more countries, and guidelines from the BWF and other continents having been followed. There has been a distinct increase in accredited and certificated Pan Am referees and umpires.



Pedro Yang, a Guatemalan who competed in the Athens Olympics, won a gold medal at the 2002 Central American and Caribbean Games in El Salvador, and earned bronze medals at the 1999 Pan American Games in Winnipeg, has been elected as a member of the IOC Athletes' Commission.

In the development area we run regional and continental players' camps, as well as national, regional and continental coaching clinics and we give advice on development to our member associations. We have close communication with the BWF development officer in Lausanne, and some of our camps are run with the assistance of Olympic Solidarity.

Our office keeps itself updated with the BWF office in Kuala Lumpur which enables us to provide service information. We have updated our tournament regulations, bringing us in line with BWF regulations as well, and we are now responsible for all level four events in our continent.

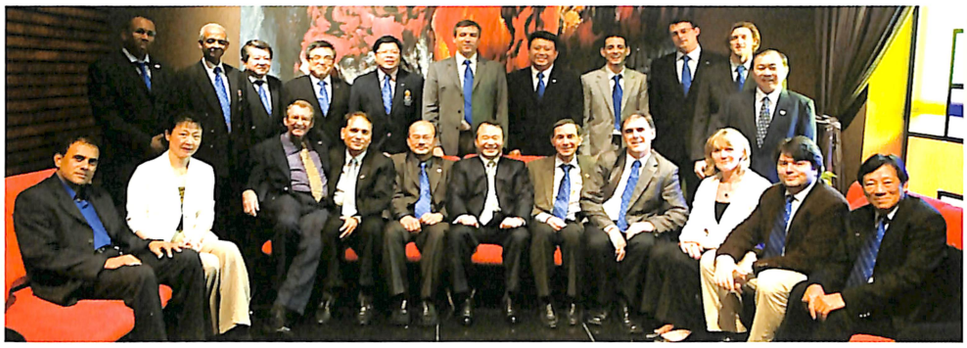


Claudia Rivero of Peru, Pan-American women's singles champion 2008.



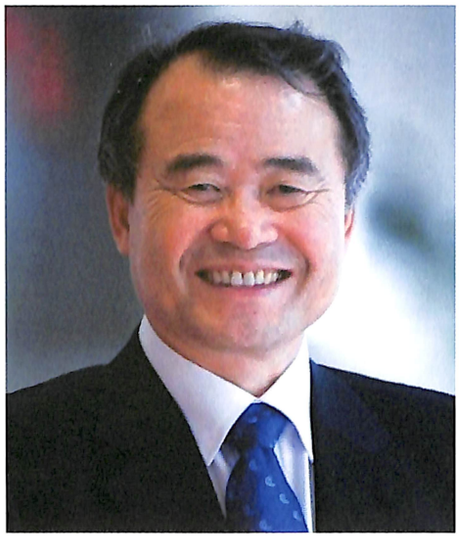
David Snider of Canada, winner of the Pan-American Games in 2007.

Those who are steering the sport



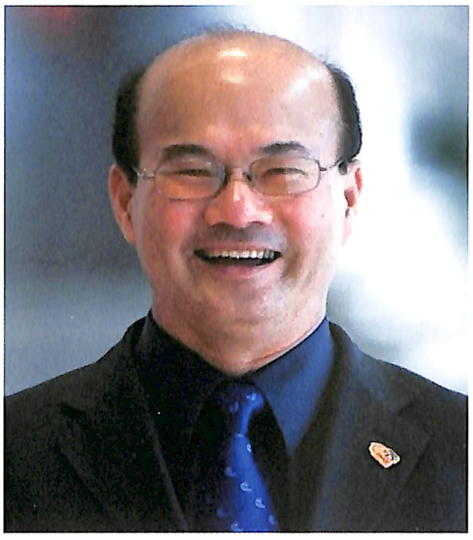
BWF council 2009–2013.

President



Dr Kang Young-Joong (Korea).

Deputy President



Paisan Rangsikitpho (USA).

Vice President (Olympic Relations)



Gregory Verpoorten (Belgium).

Vice Presidents from the five continents



Larry Keys (Badminton Africa Confederation).



Vishwa Kumar Verma (Badminton Asia Confederation).



Torsten Berg (Badminton Europe).



Nigel Skelt (Badminton Oceania).



Gustavo Salazar (Badminton Pan-America Confederation).

Council members



David Cabello (Spain).



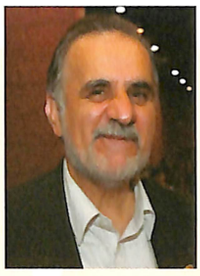
Lawrence Chew (Switzerland).



Peter Gacheru (Kenya).



Raj Gaya (Mauritius).



Mehdi Karbasian (Iran).



Lim Teong Kiat (Malaysia).



Li Lingwei (China).



Nora Perry (England).



Sergey Shakhray (Russia).



Ranjit da Silva (Sri Lanka).



Wayne Somers (Canada).



Surasak Songvarakulpan (Thailand).



Justian Suhandinata (Indonesia).



Peter Tarcala (Slovakia).



Etienne Thobois (France).



Wu Jun-Yan (Chinese Taipei).



Junichiro Yamada (Japan).

First Person

Lu Shengrong



Lu Shengrong

Former IOC member,
BWF Hall of Fame member,
and former IBF President.

WHY BADMINTON IS GAINING OLYMPIC RESPECT

People inside and outside the Olympic family are beginning to see that badminton should be more fairly treated, now that they have observed its efforts during the five Games in which it has appeared.



IOC President Jacques Rogge talks to the BWF.

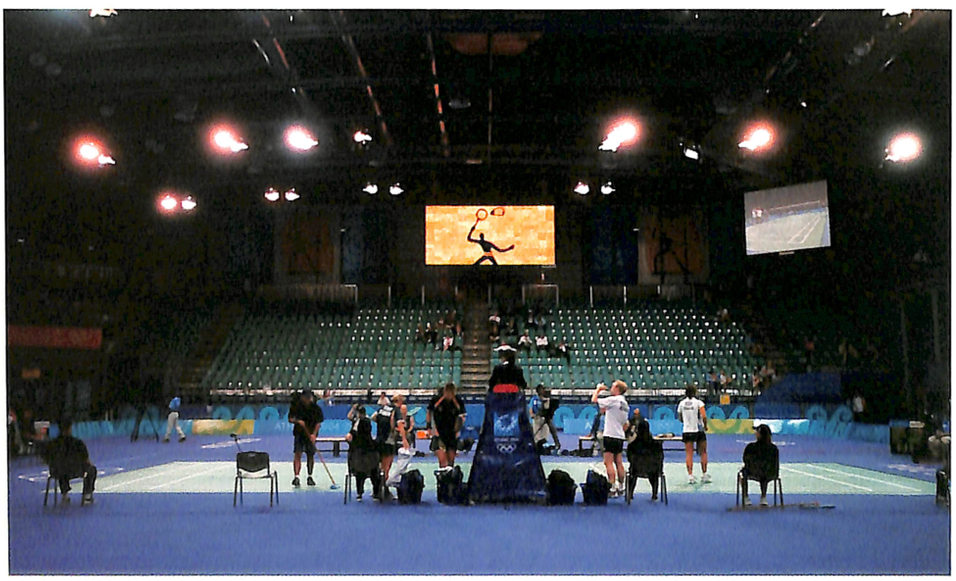
Let me give examples. Badminton was not very popular in the United States at the time of the 1996 Games, and the Atlanta organising committee did not allocate it enough seating. When I asked for a better stadium, they made some extra temporary seats in the existing stadium.

Yet even in the first few days, matches were always played to a full house. Outside there were often queues of people waiting for tickets. Former US President Jimmy Carter appeared twice to watch the badminton, President Clinton's daughter Chelsea came to the stadium, and President Clinton was on his way there too until something crucial happened and he had to turn away.

Apart from the high profile this gave the sport, there were plenty of other people wanting to see the badminton. At the end of the Olympics, the chairman of the organising committee came and spoke politely to me and apologised.

That was my first Games. At my second, Sydney 2000, everything was well prepared and presented but once again there was not enough seating. And once again I argued with the president of the organising committee. Eventually some temporary seats were provided for the final.

"... until Madame Lu nods her head, the IOC will not approve the venue ... finally we got satisfaction."



Athens venue.

"By our hard work we are becoming recognised."



Britain's Princess Anne in disguise at the Athens Olympics, hatted and sitting between (left) Anne Smillie, chief executive of Badminton Scotland, and Lars Sologub, the then British Olympic badminton manager. On the right is Simon Clegg, then BOA chief executive.

At my third Games, Athens 2004, they didn't offer badminton a good home either. Despite the success of this bid, they did not want to give it what it deserved and needed. The roof was not high enough and I was angry. The sport was not popular there and they did not care very much about it. They just came up with excuses for not being able to visit the venue.

I told Jacques Rogge, the chairman of the IOC co-ordination committee, that I felt cheated by these shortcomings. He responded by telling the Athens organisers that until Madame Lu nods her head, the IOC will not approve the venue. So finally we got satisfaction.

I didn't like complaining to the organising committee, but it showed that they didn't really know our sport. Badminton has not been that popular. But it is changing fast. Through our efforts, and with the help of the IOC, badminton at the Olympics is becoming properly run. By our hard work we are becoming recognised.

Naturally the Beijing Games in 2008 were different, because badminton was one of the most important sports there. So I don't need to say too much about that.

What should be stressed, however, is that although badminton in the Olympics is young, we know how to operate, and how to stand firmly on our own two feet. We are succeeding, not only through our work, but by letting people know what our sport is really like.



Beijing University of Technology, Games venue 2008 (© IOC).



Moment of drama in Beijing.

The IBF and BWF Presidents



1934–1955, Sir George Thomas

An English baronet. He was the founding President of the IBF and founder of the Thomas Cup, and occupied the role for 21 years, overseeing the rapid early spread of the sport.



1955–1957, John Plunkett-Dillon

An Irish lawyer who had proposed the formation of the IBF to replace the Badminton Association, the English governing body.



1957–1959, R. Bruce Hay

Another of the founding fathers, who represented the (English) Badminton Association at the first IBF meeting and became one of the IBF's inaugural Vice-Presidents.



1959–1961, A.C.J. Van Vossen

From the Netherlands, he lived in and represented Denmark, also being one of those at the historic meeting in London in 1934 in which nine countries gave rise to the formation of the International Badminton Federation.



1961–1963, J.D.M. McCallum

An Irishman who was a former major in the army and became appreciated over much of Europe for his exhibition team "The Strollers', inspiring and encouraging new associations.



1963–1965, N.P. Kristensen

For 14 years a Danish President, he oversaw the building of the Danish club and league system, inspiring others worldwide. Died while holding office.



1965–1969, David Bloomer

The co-founder of a firm of financial advisers, he was an early sports entrepreneur, attracting players from Indonesia, Malaysia, and India to invitation events in Scotland, and elsewhere in the world.



1969–1971, Humphrey Chilton

An Englishman who was a good communicator and helped get TV involved in an era when colour broadcasting began to take over.



1971–1974, Ferry Sonneville

A top level Indonesian player and a diplomat for his country who was the first Asian to become IBF President.



1974–1976, Stuart Wyatt

An Englishman described as having "a commanding presence and a wise and emollient counsel."



1976–1981, Stellan Mohlin

A Swede who did much, along with Craig Reedie, to bring about the reunification of badminton after the potentially disastrous IBF-WBF split.



1981–1984, Craig Reedie

A Scot whose special powers of diplomacy got badminton accepted into the Olympics in the eighties.



1984–1986, Poul-Erik Nielsen

Prominent in the ministry of taxes, with a legally trained mind and a fit body enabling him still to win titles into his fifties, this Dane reflected the sport's growing professionalism.



1986–1990, Ian Palmer

A New Zealander who was forthright about players meeting their obligations to major tournaments.



1990–1993, Arthur Jones

An Englishman who was President when badminton made its debut in the Olympic Games in Barcelona, and did much to build the federation's administration.



1993–2001, Lu Shengrong

From China. She worked to get the status of badminton raised in its early years in the Olympic movement, and became an IOC member in her role as an international federation president.



2001–2005, Korn Thapparansi

A cabinet minister from Thailand who oversaw the move of the IBF headquarters from the UK to Malaysia.



2005–Present, Kang Young-Joong

A successful Korean businessman leading the federation, now called BWF, into the future. He builds the BWF on the strength and values of the five continental confederations.

The Family 2009

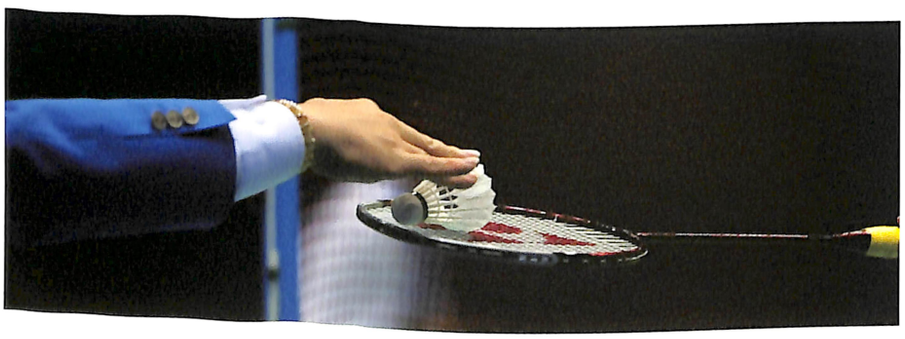
Badminton Confederation of Africa

BWF Membership – Africa

Badminton Confederation of Africa
Raj Gaya c/o Best Dairy Co Ltd
Avenue Berthaud, Quartre Bornes, Mauritius
Tel: +230 424 3979 Fax: +230 424 4039
Mobile: +230 253 3902
Email: gaya@orange.mu

ALGERIA
Algerian Badminton Association
Nourredine Nemla, Cnosaos, BP88 Alger (El Biar), Algeria
Telephone No: +213 61 60 14 32
Fax No: +213 27 77 21 99
Email: z_moncef@hotmail.com

BOTSWANA
Botswana Badminton Association
Kunyalala Hamilton Mphinyane, Dept of Primary Education, University of Botswana
Post Bag 0022, Gaborone, Botswana
Telephone No: +267 7186 4495 (M)
Fax No: +267 390 1352
Email: botsbadm@yahoo.com
kunyalalam@yahoo.co.uk



BURUNDI
Burundian Federation of Badminton
Biziman Jean-Marie, Kirimaro Avenue 15, Robero II, Bujumbura, Burundi P.O Box 7033
Telephone No: +257 799 34640 (m); +257 222 52697
Email: absc2001fr@yahoo.fr

CAMEROON
Badminton Federation of Cameroon
Afane Roger Stephan (Sec-Gen), BP 13718, Yaounde, Cameroon
Telephone No: + 237 7742 5254, +237 9484 0626 (M)
Fax No: 237 2222 1873
Email: camfebad@yahoo.fr

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC
Central African Badminton Federation
Mrs Ionela Gouandjika, BP 923, Bangui Central African Republic
Telephone No: +236 77 4468 45
Fax No: +236 21 61 0109
Email Id: ionela512@yahoo.fr

CONGO
Commission Adhoc Congolaise de Badminton
Bilou Mathias, BP5718, Brazzaville, Congo
Telephone No: +242 5360 107
Fax No: +242 825393
Email Id: bilou_frcg@yahoo.fr

EGYPT
Egyptian Badminton Federation
Prof Dr Mahmoud A Enan (President), Building No 109/1991, 35 Faisal Street, Montasire Building, El-Ahram, Giza, Egypt
Telephone No: +20 2 585 406
Fax No: +20 2 585 8046
Email: alyhassaballa_46@hotmail.com

EQUATORIAL GUINEA
Equatorial Guinea Badminton Federation
Ela Nguema Lino, Av Independencia, BP 325, Malabo, Equatorial Guinea Republic
Telephone No: +240 750 66
Fax No: +240 930 28

ERITREA
Eritrean National Badminton Federation
Yemane Frezeghi, P.O Box 1149. Bedho St Asmara, Eritrea
Telephone No: +291 1 119522
Fax No: +291 1 120967
Email: ande@un.org

ETHIOPIA
Ethiopian Badminton Federation
Dagmawit Girmay Berhane, PO Box 5610, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Telephone No: +251 1 568962
Fax No: +251 1 513 345
Email: dagm-amsal@ethionet.et

GHANA
Badminton Association of Ghana
Elletey Ignatius, c/o National Sports Council, Accra Sports Stadium, PO Box 1272, Accra, Ghana
Telephone No: +233 21 663924; +233 21 663925
Fax No: +233 21 662281; +233 21 667267
Email: elleteyignatius@yahoo.com

KENYA
Kenya Badminton Association
Fred Gituku, PO Box 12500, 00100 GPO Nairobi, Kenya
Telephone No: +254 722 643 575
Fax No: none
Email: fredgituku@yahoo.co.uk

LESOTHO
Badminton Association
Miss Moneang Makoele, c/o National University of Lesotho, PO Box Roma 180 Maseru, Lesotho
Telephone No: +266 58850068
Fax No: +266 22340000
Email: mjmakoele@nul.ls

MADAGASCAR
Federation Malagasy de Badminton
Ravalison Jean Aime, Lot 1A 47, Isoraka Antananarivo 101 Madagascar
Telephone No: +261 33 11 641 08
Fax No: TBC
Email: jaime.nestle@iris.mg; hitomi@moov.mg

MALAWI
Badminton Association of Malawi
Ackim Mukolongo, Private Bag 48, Zomba, Malawi
Telephone No: +265 1 525 577; +265 1 526 262
Fax No: +265 1 526 432
Email: mwbd2005@yahoo.com

MAURITANIA
Mauritanian Badminton Federation
Mohamed Ould Lahah, BP1372 Nuakchott Mauritania
Telephone No: +22 26 304206
Fax No: +22 25 292039
Email: mhca@maktoob.com

MAURITIUS
Mauritius Badminton Association
Thivyananden Sooben, National Badminton Centre, Duncan Taylor Street, Rose Hill, Mauritius
Telephone No: +230 4545158
Fax No: +230 4545158
Email: badminton@intnet.mu
Website: www.badmintonmu.multimania.com

MOROCCO
Fédération Royale Marocaine de Badminton
O Bellali, Complexe Sportif Mohamed V, Porte 10, Bureau 20, BP 15902, Casablanca, Morocco
Telephone No: +212 2 942 506
Fax No: +212 2 485 476
Email: o_bellali@msn.com

MOZAMBIQUE
Federacao Mocambicana de Badminton
M Diogo da Silva, Box No 301, Beira, Mozambique
Telephone No: +258 3 322354
Fax No: +258 3 325047
Email: charif@intra.co.mz

NAMIBIA
Badminton Union of Namibia
Edward Ward, P.O Box 31528, PionierSpark, Windhoek, Namibia
Telephone No: +264 61 227097
Fax No: +264 61 227097
Email: eward@mtc.com.na, ace@namibnet.com

NIGERIA
Badminton Federation of Nigeria
Patricia Nnoshiri-Ayinde, National Stadium, Box 145, Surulere, Lagos, Nigeria
Telephone No: +234 1 264 6444; +234 1 545 4472
Fax No: +234 1 585 0530; +234 1 585 0529
Email: obamiduro@yahoo.com

SEYCHELLE ISLANDS
Seychelles Badminton Association
Michael Bau, c/o Stad Limite, Roche Caiman, PO Box 580, Mahe, Seychelle Islands
Telephone No: +248 323908
Fax No: +248 324 066
Email: mibau@hotmail.com
seychellesbad@yahoo.com

SOMALIA
Somali Badminton Federation
Mrs Idil Ibrahim Osman, PO Box 1110, Mogadishu BN 03040, Somalia
Telephone No: +252 1 229884
Fax No: +252 1 265434
Email: somintoni@yahoo.com

SOUTH AFRICA
South African Badminton Union
Wilson Makomene, PO Box/Postbus 11191, Centurion 0046, South Africa
Telephone No: +27 12 6633292
Fax No: +27 12 6638462
Email: badmintonsa@mweb.co.za

ST HELENA
Badminton Association of St Helena
Gilbert J Yon, Ye Olde Yarde, Half Tree Hollow, Island of St Helena
Telephone No: tba

SUDAN
Sudan Badminton Federation
Miss Hanadi Siddig A Allah, PO Box 1111, Khartoum, Sudan
Telephone No: +249 18 3781788
Fax No: +249 18 3781788
Email: hanaditop@hotmail.com

SWAZILAND
Swaziland National Badminton Association
Mbali Ginindza, P.O Box 339, Corner Lalufadiana & Mdada Streets, Mbabane, Swaziland
Telephone No: +268 404 1537 Ext 130
Fax No: +268 404 7862
Email: snba@sportscouncil.org.sz
pgwebu@nedbank.co.sz
tsandzeka@yahoo.com

TANZANIA
Tanzania Badminton Association
Simon Maganga, PO Box 737, Morogoro, Tanzania,
Copies to: Secretary General, National Sports Council, PO Box 2182, Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania
Telephone No: +255 56 3093; + 255 56 4370, Tlx: 55310 MZIMA TZ
Fax No: +255 56 3106 (Attn: S Maganga)
Email: andjsamo@yahoo.co.uk

TOGO
Federation Togolaise de Badminton
c/o Comite National Olympique Togolaise, Boite Postale 1320, Lome, Togo
Telephone No: +228 250 161
Fax No: +228 214 546 Tlx: 5015 CNOT TG
Email: cnot@laposte.tg
fetobad@cramail.com

UGANDA
Uganda Badminton Association
Simon Mugabe, c/o National Council of Sport, P.O Box 20077, Uganda, Kampala
Telephone No: +256 414 254477
Fax No: +256 414 258350
Email: smugabi@hotmail.com
Website: www.badmintonuganda.org

ZAMBIA
Zambia Badminton Association
Godfrey Masuwa, P.O Box 50435, Lusaka, Zambia
Telephone No: +260 955 814768; +260 211 250006
Fax No: +260 212 613001
Email: masuwagodfrey@hotmail.com

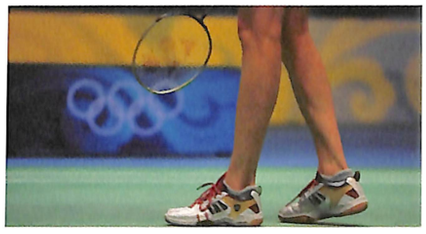
ZIMBABWE
Zimbabwe Badminton Association
Miss Chipo Zumburani, P.O Box BE487, Belvedere Harare Zimbabwe
Telephone No: +2639 12777513, +2639 1237 6627
Fax No: +2637 98358
Email: zumburani@kingdom.co.zw

Badminton Asia Confederation

Ms Fong, Stadium Badminton Kuala Lumpur
3 1/2 Mile Jalan Cheras
56000 Kuala Lumpur
Tel: +60 3 92845421
Fax: +60 3 92843251
Email: bac@badmintonasia.org

AFGHANISTAN
Afghanistan Badminton Federation
Sayed Gul Zahoori, PO Box 957, Kabul, Afghanistan
Telephone No: +93 79216504
Email: afg_bad_fed@gmail.com

KOREA
Badminton Korea Association
Seo Myung-Won, Room 501, Olympic Centre, 88 Oryun-dong, Songpa-Gu,
Postcode: 138-749 Seoul, Korea
Telephone No: +82 2 4226173; +82 2 4226174
Fax No: +82 2 420 4270
Email: badmin98@chol.com
Website: www.koreabadminton.org



BAHRAIN
Bahrain Badminton & Squash Federation
Suhail Abdulhameed (Secretary General), PO Pox 26902, Manama, Bahrain
Telephone No: +973 17292 662
Fax No: +973 17290 144
Email: bbsf2006@batelco.com.bh
sam.assiri@gmail.com
hussamis@batelco.com.bh

BANGLADESH
Bangladesh Badminton Federation
Kamaluddin Ahmed, Moulana Vasani Stadium, Room No 261 – 264, Dhaka 1000, Bangladesh
Telephone No: +880 2 9571756; +880 1711 531098 (m)
Fax No: +880 2 9568913
Email: bbadmint@aitlbd.net
badminton.bangladesh@gmail.com

BHUTAN
Bhutan Badminton Federation
Sonam Wangdi, PO Box 929, Thimpu, Bhutan
Telephone No: +975 223 594
Fax No: +975 223 153
Email: dhital_626@hotmail.com
swangdimoa@yahoo.com

BRUNEI
Brunei National Badminton Association
Awang Haji Antin Bin Ahad, 11th Floor,
Bangunan PGGMB, Jalan Kianggeh,
Bandar Seri Begawan, BS8111, Negara Brunei
Darulssalam
Telephone No: +673 222 1999
Fax No: +673 222 2803
Email: bruneiba@yahoo.com
bruneibadassn@hotmail.com

CAMBODIA
Badminton Federation of Cambodia
Prof Meas Sarin, PO Box 101, #1, St.276,
Sangkat Boeung Keng Kang II,
Khan Chamkamon, Phnom Penh Cambodia
Telephone No: +855 23 836 123
Fax No: +855 23 364 752
Email: camnoc@everyday.com.kh
genlykosal@yahoo.com

CHINA
Badminton Association of the People's Republic
of China
Liu FengYan, No. 4 Tiyuguan Road,
Beijing 100061, PR of China
Telephone No: +86 10 8718 3487/3
Fax No: +86 10 6714 3494
Email: bdchnoffice@yahoo.com.cn

CHINESE TAIPEI
Chinese Taipei Badminton Association
Lim Kheng Tee, Room 810, 8 Floor,
No 20 Chulun Street, Taipei, Taiwan
Telephone No: +886 2 8771 1440;
+886 2 8771 1509
Fax No: +886 2 2752 2740
Email: chntpe.ba@msa.hinet.net
chntpe@ms33.hinet.net
Website: www.ctb.org.tw/

DPR KOREA
Badminton Association of the Democratic
People's Republic of Korea
Pak Chan Sun, Kumsong-dong 2, Mangyongdae
District, Pyongyang, DPR of Korea
Telephone No: +850 2 18 000 (Ext 8164)
Fax No: +850 2 3814403
Email: noc-kp@co.chesin.com

HONG KONG
Hong Kong Badminton Association Limited
Chau Yat Kong, Room 2005, Olympic House,
1 Stadium Path, So Kon Po
Causeway Bay, Hong Kong
Telephone No: +852 25048318
Fax No: +852 28828450
Email: hkba@hkolympic.org
Website: www.hkbadmintonassn.org.hk

INDIA
Badminton Association of India
Girish Natu, 418, Shaniwar Peth, Pune 411030,
India
Telephone No: +91 20-66027980(O);
+91 20-24451597(R);
+91 98220-84688(M)
Fax No: +91 20-66028085
Email: honsec@badmintonindia.org
info@badmintonindia.org
Website: www.badmintonindia.org



INDONESIA
Persatuan Bulutangkis Seluruh Indonesia
Yacob Rusdianto, Jl Damai Raya, Kelurahan
Cipayung Kec Cipayung Jakarta Timur 13840
Jakarta
Telephone No: +62 21 844 5078,
+62 21 57951721-23
Fax No: +62 21 57951689
Email: pbsi_secgen@cbn.net.id
Website: www.pb.pbsi.com

IRAN
Badminton Federation of the I R of Iran
Mehdi Karbasian, No. 14, Hejab Street,
Keshavarz Blvd., Tehran, Iran
Telephone No: +98 21 88984439,
+ 98 21 8898 4441
Fax No: + 98 21 88984438
Email: bad.fed@sr.co.ir
zahrarhag@yahoo.com
Website: www.iranbadfed.com

IRAQ
Iraqi Badminton Federation
Oday Z Jasim, c/o Iraqi National Olympic
Committee, PO Box 441, Palestine Street,
Baghdad, Iraq
Telephone No: +964 1 7748261
Fax No: +964 1 7728424; +964 1 8854321
Email: iraq_bf@yahoo.com
pshtewan_majeed@yahoo.com
doybadfed@yahoo.com

JAPAN
Nippon Badminton Association
Yoshio Sekine, 1-1-1 Jinnan, Shibuya-ku,
Tokyo 150-8050, Japan
Telephone No: +81 3 3481 2382
Fax No: +81 3 3481 2456
Email: jpnbad@badminton.or.jp
Website: www.u-netsurf.ne.jp/nichiba

JORDAN
Jordan Badminton Federation
Mohammad Oda Al-Jbour, Box 961908,
Tla' Al Ali, Amman 11196, Jordan
Telephone No: +962 6 46424449
Fax No: +962 6 46424449
Email: jorbf@orange.jp
Jbour_61@hotmail.com

KAZAKHSTAN
Kazakhstan National Badminton Federation
Mussafirov Anuar, Samal District 12, 17 Floor,
Astana Tower
Astana 010000 Republic of Kazakhstan
Telephone No: +7 701 999 9683 (m)
Fax No: +7 717 2 979675
Email: kazbad@mail.ru
annuar.mussafirov@kmgc.kz

KUWAIT
Kuwait Badminton Federation
Ali Al-Marri, Bayan, Block 13, St.6, Building 2,
Kuwait
Telephone No: +965 571 7196
Fax No: +965 573 4973
Email: almarri@ocasia.org

KYRGHYZTAN
Kyrghyz National Badminton Federation
Natalia Kuligina,, 236 Bokonbaev Str,
Bishkek 720010, Kyrghyzstan
Telephone No: +996 331 225 3483
Fax No: +996 331 2653363
Email: sportunion@yandex.ru

LAOS
Laos Badminton Federation
Dr. Bounleua Sinxayvoravong, National Stadium,
PO Box 3183, Vientiane, Lao PDR
Telephone No: +856 21217994
Fax No: +856 21 216 008
Email: toukda@yahoo.com.au
blf_lao@laopdr.com

LEBANON
Federation Libanaise de Badminton
Jassem Kanso, Hoops Club, Airport New Road -
facing Fantasy World, Beirut, Lebanon
Telephone No: +961 1 454 596; +961 3
584147(m)
Fax No: +961 454 586
Email: jassem@hoops-club.com
paulroukoz@hotmail.com

MACAU
Badminton Federation of Macau
Maria Carvalho, Rua Francisco Xavier Pereira,
Complexo Desportivo de Mon-Ha, Macau
Telephone No: +853 2823 8035
Fax No: +853 2823 8038
Email: macauabm@gmail.com
Website: www.macaubadminton.org.mo

MALAYSIA
Badminton Association of Malaysia
Kenny Goh, Stadium Juara, Kompleks Sukan
Bukit Kiara, Jalan 1/70D, Bukit Kiara
60000 Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
Telephone No: +60 3 2093 9220;
+60 3 2093 9280; +60 3 2093 9297
Fax No: +60 3 2094 5855
Email: admin@bam.org.my
Website: www.bam.org.my

MALDIVES
Badminton Association of Maldives
Moosa Nashid, Male Sports Complex,
384 Maafaiythakurufaanu Magu,
Male, Republic of Maldives
Telephone No: +960 331 4059
Fax No: +960 331 7896
Email: badmnton@dhivehinet.net.mv
mnashid@badmintonmaldives.org

MONGOLIA
Mongolian Badminton Association
Nyam Zulbaatar, PO Box 693, Orkhom Aimag,
Erdenet City, Mongolia
Telephone No: +976 13 5221280
Fax No: +976 13 5221280
Email: twf@magicnet.mn
Website: www.badmintonmongolia.com

MYANMAR
Myanmar Badminton Federation
Robin Tin, No. 320/332, Anawrahta Street, West Gymnasium, Lanmadaw Township
Yangon, Myanmar
Telephone No: +95 1 221496
Fax No: +95 1 227163
Email: nblnte@yagon.net.mm
mbfrobin@gmail.com

NEPAL
Nepal Badminton Association
Mr.Prakash Bahadur Shahi, P O Box No.21230 Dasarath Stadium, Tripureshwor
Kathmandu, Nepal
Telephone No: +977 1 4212337
Fax No: +977 1 4212337
Email: nepalbadminton@info.com.np
coxkings@ccsl.com.np
Website: www.nepalbadminton.org

PAKISTAN
Pakistan Badminton Federation
Aamer Hayat Khan Rokhri (Secretary General), 55 Lawrence Road, Lahore, Pakistan
Telephone No: +92 42 6313751, +92 300 8470000 (m)
Fax No: +92 42 6304855, +92 42 6313751
Email: aamer.rokhri@yahoo.com
presidentpbf@hotmail.com
Website: www.pakistanbadminton.org

PALESTINE
Palestine Badminton Federation
Nabil Elturk, PO Box 1195, Omar El Mokhtar Office, Gaza, Palestine
Telephone No: +972 5994 18100
Fax No: tbc
Email: palbf@hotmail.com
info@palbf.com

THE PHILIPPINES
Philippine Badminton Association
George Piano, Badminton Hall, Rizal Memorial Complex, Pablo Ocampo Sr St, Malate, Manila, Philippines
Telephone No: +632 3031070, +632 303 2431
Fax No: +632 3031070
Email: joebm_13@yahoo.com
philippineba@gmail.com
gqpiano2003@yahoo.com

SINGAPORE
Singapore Badminton Association
Edwin Pang, 3, Champions Way #03-50 Singapore 737912
Telephone No: +65 63441773
Fax No: +65 67672868
Email: secretariat@singaporebadminton.org.sg
edwin@singaporebadminton.org.sg
Website: www.singaporebadminton.org.sg

SRI LANKA
Sri Lanka Badminton Association
Prof Ranjit de Silva, Maitland Crescent, Colombo 07, Sri Lanka
Telephone No: +94 11 2686264
Fax No: +94 11 2686264
Email: rlsdes@hotmail.com
slbahq@sltnet.lk

SYRIA
Syrian Arab Badminton Federation
Ms Kholoud Bitar, General Sports Federation, PO Box 421, 976 Baramike, Damascus, Syria
Telephone No: +963 11 2123346
Fax No: +963 11 21313 39
Email:syroc@mail.sy
ahma.sy@mail.sy
bitar.kholoud@yahoo.com

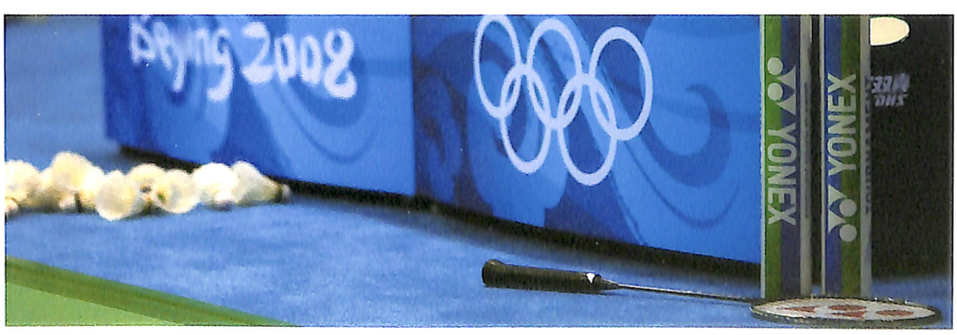
THAILAND
Badminton Association of Thailand
Prof Charoen Wattanasin, Badminton Association of Thailand Building, Lumpinee Park, Wittayu-Sarasin Road, Patumwan, Bangkok 10330, Thailand
Telephone No: +66 2 255 3391; +66 2 5398768
Fax No: +66 2 255 3392; +662 530 5440
Email Id: info@badmintonthai.or.th
charoen@ji-net.com
Website: www.badmintonthai.or.th

TIMOR LESTE
Federaçao de Badminton de Timor-Leste
Pedro M Carrascalao, Complexo De Surik Mas, Fatu Meta Dili, Timor Leste
Telephone No: +670 7285888, +670 7285777
Email Id: joaocarracalao@bigpond.com

TURKMENISTAN
Turkmenistan Badminton Federation
Natalya Shtyrova, Frunze Str 25, "6" 5, 74400 Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
Telephone No: +7 3632 253 844; +7 3632 292761
Fax No: +7 3632 510484
Email Id: noctkm@online.tm

UZBEKISTAN
Uzbekistan Badminton Federation
Oleg Savatugin, 700011, Navoi St 11 Tashkent Uzbekistan
Telephone No: +998 71 241 0050
Fax No: +998 71 2410850
Email Id: uzbadfed@gmail.com

VIETNAM
Vietnam Badminton Federation
L T Sang, 36 Tran Phu Str, Hanoi, Vietnam
Telephone No: +84 4 747 2079
Fax No: +84 4 733 6046
Email Id: vbf@fpt.vn; hcmba@vnn.vn



BADMINTON EUROPE

Badminton Europe

Brian Agerbak, Idraettens Hus, Brøndby Stadion 20, 2605, Brøndby, Denmark
Tel: +45 43 262166
Fax: +45 43 262167
Email: brian.agerbak@badmintoneurope.com
info@badmintoneurope.com
Website: www.badmintoneurope.com

ALBANIA
Albanian Badminton Federation
Mishel Pili, Rr "Laske Shuli", Nr1/1, Korce, Albania
Telephone No: +355692402729
Fax No: +355692402729
Email: mishel_pili@yahoo.com

ARMENIA
Badminton Federation of Armenia
Hrachya Poghosyan, 9, Abovian Street, Yereven, 375001, Armenia
Telephone No: +374 1520770
Fax No: +374 10 585473
Email: armbadfeder@yahoo.com

AUSTRIA
Österreichischer Badminton Verband
Manuel Rösler, Österreichischer Badminton Verband Jedlersdorfer Strasse 94 1210 Wien AUSTRIA
Telephone No: +43 7614 21349
Fax No: +43 7614 21349 4
Email: sport@badminton.at

AZERBAIJAN
Azerbaijan Republic Badminton Federation
Prof Kamal Abdulla, S Rustam 25, A21014 Baku, Azerbaijan Republic
Telephone No: +994 12 4402770
Fax No: +994 12 4402770
Email: bakslavuniver@hotmail.com

BELARUS
Belarussian Badminton Federation
Sviatlana Lialkwaskaya, 2-305 Surganova Str, 220012 Minsk, Belarus
Telephone No: +375 2857913
Fax No: +375 17 2857913
Email: belarusbadminton@mail.ru

BELGIUM
Belgian Badminton Federation
Marina Roosebrouck, rue des Fosses 19/5 B4140 Sprimont, Belgium
Telephone No: +32 4 368 6309
Fax No: +32 4 368 6309
Email: belg.bad.fed@skynet.be
info@belgianbadminton.be



BOSNIA & HERCEGOVINA
Badminton Association of Bosnia & Herzegovina
Brane Srdic, Novice Cerovica 13 Banja Luka 78000 Bosnia & Herzegovina
Telephone No: +387 65 330 754, +387 65 666 434
Fax No: +387 51 325 851
Email: bbosneihercegovine@yahoo.com

BULGARIA
Bulgarian Badminton Federation
Puzant Kassabian, 75 Vasil Levski Blvd., 1040 Sofia, Bulgaria
Telephone No: +359 2 9300 550, +359 2 986 7781
Fax No: +359 2 986 7781
Email: badmintonbg@gmail.com
Website: www.badmintonbg.org

CROATIA
Croatian Badminton Association
Jasmin Majstorovic, Trg Kresimira Cosica 11, 10000 Zagreb, Croatia
Telephone No: +385 1 309 1610
Fax No: +385 1 309 1610
Email: crobad@cba.hr
Website: www.cba.hr

CYPRUS
Cyprus Badminton Federation
Michalis Christodoulou, 21, Amfipoleos Str. P.O Box 23931 1687 Nicosia, Cyprus
Telephone No: +357 22 449868
Fax No: +357 22 449869
Email: badminton@cytanet.com.cy
Website: www.cyprusbadminton.com

CZECH REPUBLIC
Cesky Badmintonovy Svaz
Helena Bizova, Atleticka 100/2, PO Box 40, 160 17, Prague 6, Strahov, Czech Republic
Telephone No: +420 2 2051 3351
Fax No: +420 2 2051 3351
Email: badminton@cstv.cz
Website: www.czechbadminton.cz

DENMARK
Danmarks Badminton Forbund
Charlotte Trip Malmroes, Idraettens Hus, Brøndby Stadion 20, DK-2605 Brøndby, Denmark
Telephone No: +45 43 262145
Fax No: +45 43262150
Email: dbf@badminton.dk
chma@badminton.dk
Website: www.badminton.dk

ENGLAND
Badminton England
Adrian Christy, National Badminton Centre, Bradwell Road, Loughton Lodge, Milton Keynes, MK8 9LA, England
Telephone No: +44 1908 268 400
Fax No: +44 1908 268 412
Email: enquiries@badmintonengland.co.uk
adrianhill@badmintonengland.co.uk
Website: www.badmintonengland.co.uk

ESTONIA
Estonian Badminton Federation
Robert Anthropov, Pirita Tee 12, 10127 Talinn, Estonia
Telephone No: +372 55 673 473
Fax No: +372 627 5858
Email: info@badminton.ee
robert@portofpaldiski.ee
Website: www.badminton.ee

FAROE ISLANDS
Badmintonsamband Foroya
Jan Arge Joensen, P.O Box 223, 110 Torshavn, Faroe Islands
Telephone No: +298 794286
Fax No: +298 347281
Email: hca@att.fo
Website: www.bsf.fo

FINLAND
Finnish Badminton Association
Mika Heinonen, Radiokatu 20, Fin-00093 SLU, Finland
Telephone No: +358 9 3481 2530
Fax No: +358 9 3481 2509
Email Id: mika.heinonen@badminton.fi
mika.heinonen@sulkapallo.fi
Website: www.badminton.fi

FRANCE
Federation Francaise de Badminton
Pocholle Jean-Marc, 9-11 avenue Michelet, 93583 Saint Ouen Cedex, France
Telephone No: +33 1 49450707
Fax No: +33 1 49451871
Email: ffba@ffba.org
dtn@ffba.org
Website: www.ffba.org

GEORGIA
Georgian Badminton Federation
Mrs Liana Davidova, 30 Paghava Str, 0102 Tbilisi, Georgia
Telephone No: +995 32 775024
Fax No: +995 32 001153
Email: geonoc@access.sanet.ge

GERMANY
Deutscher Badminton-Verband e.V.
Christa Schweichler, Südstrasse 25, D-45470 Mülheim a.d. Ruhr, Germany
Telephone No: +49 208 308 270
Fax No: +49 208 308 2755
Email: office@badminton.de
Website: www.badminton.de

GIBRALTAR
Gibraltar Badminton Association
Ivan de Haro, c/o 12 Laburnum Lodge, Montagu Gardens, Gibraltar
Telephone No: +350 44045
Fax No: +350 75536
Email: president@badmintongibraltar.com

GREECE
Hellenic Badminton Federation
Kontos Panagiotis, Spirou Loui Ave, Olympic Stadium Indoor Basketball Hall 15123, Marousi Athens, Greece.
Telephone No: +30 210 680045 /46 /48
Fax No: +30 210 6800047
Email: info@badminton.gr
Website: www.badminton.gr

GREENLAND
Greenland Badminton Federation
Michael Kleist, PO Box 221, Marralinnguaq 43, 3952 Ilulissat, Greenland
Telephone No: +299 54 5217
Fax No: +299 94 5555
Email: michaelkleist@rocketmail.com
Website: www.badminton.gl

HUNGARY
Magyar Tollaslabda Szovetseg
Tibor Bálega, Magyar Sport Haza, Istvanmezei ut 1-3, H-1146, Budapest Hungary
Telephone No: +36 1 460 6903
Fax No: +36 1 460 6904
Email: office@badminton.hu
Website: www.badminton.hu

ICELAND
Badmintonsamband Islands
Asa Palsdottir, Ithrottamidstodin Laugardal, Engjavegi 6, 104 Reykjavik, Iceland
Telephone No: +354 5144 045
Fax No: +354 514 4046
Email Id: bsi@badminton.is
Website: www.badminton.is

IRELAND
Badminton Union of Ireland
Colm McCashin, Baldoyle Badminton Centre, Baldoyle Industrial Estate, Grange Road, Baldoyle, Dublin 13, Ireland
Telephone No: +353 1 839 3028
Fax No: +353 1 839 3028
Email: info@badminton.ie
colm.mccashin@badminton.ie
Website: www.badmintonireland.com

ISRAEL
Israel Badminton Association
Alisa Eshet, 9 Marmorek Str Tel Aviv, Israel
Telephone No: +972 54 644 3190(m)
Fax No: +972 989 92110
Email: israel.badminton.association@gmail.com
Website: www.badminton-israel.co.il/eng

ITALY
Federazione Italiana Badminton
Alberto Miglietta, Viale Tiziano 70-00196 Rome, Italy
Telephone No: +39 06 3685 8721/7
Fax No: +39 6 3685 8235
Email: federazione@badminton-italia.com
Website: www.badminton-italia.com

LATVIA
Latvian Badminton Federation
Gunars Lusveris (President), Kalmju Iela 34, LV 1023, Latvia
Telephone No: +371 2911 1100(President's mobile), +371 29434482(Ms. Aija Metra)
Fax No: +371 67348579
Email: info@badminton.lv
Website: www.badminton.lv

LIECHTENSTEIN
Liechtensteiner Badminton Verband
Michael Litscher, Madliweg 25a, CH9470, Werdenberg, Principality of Liechtenstein
Telephone No: +41 79 750 28 92
Email: lbv@gmx.net; michael.litscher@rsnweb.ch

LITHUANIA
Lithuanian Badminton Federation
J.Spelveris, Plechaviciaus str 16-29, 30 Kaunas, Lithuania
Telephone No: +370 699 47787
Fax No: +370 37 401114
Email: spelveris@badminton.lt
Website: www.badminton.lt

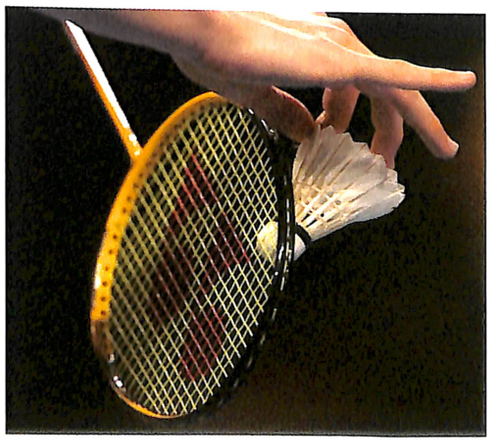
LUXEMBOURG
Federation Luxembourgeoise de Badminton
Smit Robert, 3 Rte D'Arlon, L-8009, Strassen Luxembourg
Telephone No: +352 484 486
Fax No: +352 484 502
Email Id: feluba@feluba.lu
Website: www.feluba.lu

MACEDONIA
FYR of Badminton Association of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
Dime Stefanovski,, "Dame Gruev", 28 1000 Skopje, Republic of Macedonia
Telephone No: +389 2 3166 223
Fax No: +389 2 3166 223
Email: macedonianbf@yahoo.co.uk
pujovski@yahoo.co.uk
Website: www.badminton.com.mk

MALTA
Badminton Malta
John Attard, PO Box 599, Valletta, VLT 1000, Malta
Telephone No: +356 21312697
Fax No: none
Email: jfattard@onvol.net
Website: www.badmintonmalta.org

MOLDOVA
Badminton Federation of the Republic of Moldova
Serghei Ursatii, 27 Armenian str., Office 11, Chisinau 2012, Republic of Moldova
Telephone No: +373 22 276 227; +373 22 275364
Fax No: +373 22 275 364
Email Id: moldbadfed@yahoo.com
sergey@badminton.moldline.net
Website: www.iatp.md/moldbadfed

MONTENEGRO
Montenegro Badminton Association (MNEBA)
Zoran Lalic, Iva Mikovica 15, 86310 Budva Montenegro
Telephone No: +382 33 451 627
Fax No: +382 33 451 627
Email: klmont@cg.yu
badminton.cg@cg.yu



THE NETHERLANDS
Nederlandse Badminton Bond
Rob Ridder, Postbus 2070, 3430CJ Nieuwegein, The Netherlands (visitors' address: Gelderlandhaven 5, Nieuwegein)
Telephone No: +31 3060 84150
Fax No: +31 3060 40811
Email: dir@badminton.nl
info@badminton.nl
Website: www.badminton.nl

NORWAY
Norges Badminton Forbund
Espen Larsen, Serviceboks 1 – Ulleval Stadion, 0840 Oslo, Norway
Telephone No: +47 21029760; +47 99 724340 (m)
Fax No: +47 21029761
Email: badminton@nif.idrett.no
Website: http://www.badminton.no

POLAND
Polski Zwiazek Badmintona
Michal Mirowski, Stadion X-lecia, Zieleniecka str 1, 03-727 Warsaw, Poland
Telephone No: +48 22 617 5881;
Fax No: +48 22 616 2455
Email: sekretariat@badminton.com.pl
Website: www.badminton.com.pl

PORTUGAL
Federacao Portuguesa de Badminton
Joao Silva, Apartado 139, Rua Julio Cesar Machado No 80, 2500-225 Caldas da Rainha, Portugal
Telephone No: +351 262 839020
Fax No: +351 262 839026
Email: sede@fpbadminton.pt
Website: www.fpbadminton.pt

ROMANIA
Romanian Badminton Federation
Corina Dan, Vasile Conta Str Nr 16, Sect 2, Bucharest 70139, Romania
Telephone No: +40 21 3171 037
Fax No: +40 21 21 04952
Email: frb@badminton.ro
corinadan67@yahoo.de
Website: www.badminton.ro

RUSSIA
National Badminton Federation of Russia
Antropov Andrey, Luznetskaya nab.8, Office 411, 430, Moscow, 119992, Russia
Telephone No: +7 495 637 92 04
Fax No: +7 495 637 92 04
Email Id: info@badm.ru
Website: www.badm.ru

SCOTLAND
Badminton Scotland
Anne Smillie, Cockburn Centre, 40 Bogmoor Place, Glasgow, G51 4TQ, Scotland
Telephone No: +44 141 445 1218
Fax No: +44 141 425 1218
Email: enquiries@badmintonscotland.org.uk
Website: www.badmintonscotland.org.uk

SERBIA
Badminton Association of Serbia
Predrag Vukovic, Arcibalda Rajsa 3, 11030 Belgrade, Serbia
Telephone No: +381 11 231 7711
Fax No: +381 11 231 7711
Email Id: predragv@telekom.rs
badmint@verat.net
Website: www.badminton.org.rs

SLOVAKIA
Slovak Badminton Federation
Peter Tarcala, Slovenska 19, 080 01 Presov, Slovakia
Telephone No: +421 51 7734 662, +421 905 257 791 (m)
Fax No: +421 51 7734 662
Email: sekretar@bedminton.sk
Website: www.bedminton.sk

SLOVENIA
Badmintonska Zveza Slovenije
Matevz Srekl, Ostrovrharjeva 4, 1215 Medvode, Slovenia
Telephone No: +386 31 325 194
Email: info@badminton-zveza.si
matevz.srekl@gmail.com
Website: www.badminton-zveza.si

SPAIN
Federación Española de Badminton
David Cabello Manrique, Avda Filipinas 26-1, 28003 Madrid Spain
Telephone No: +34 91 542 8384
Fax No: +34 91 535 2343
Email: secretaria@badminton.es
Website: www.badminton.es

SWEDEN
Svenska Badmintonförbundet
Hans Lenkert, Fiskartorpsvagen 15A, Idrottens Hus, 11473, Stockholm, Sweden
Telephone No: +46 8699 6000
Fax No: +46 8 6996030
Email: sbf@badminton.nu
Website: www.badminton.nu

SWITZERLAND
Swiss Badminton
Magali Sollberger, Haus des Sport, Postfach 606 3000 Bern 22, Switzerland
Telephone No: +41 31 359 7255
Fax No: +41 31 359 7259
Email: info@swiss-badminton.ch
msollberger@swiss-badminton.ch
Website: www.swiss-badminton.ch

TURKEY
Turkish Badminton Federation
Haldun Aydin, Emek Ishani, A Blok Kat 10, Ulus, Ankara, Turkey
Telephone No: +90 312 310 8054
Fax No: none
Email Id: tbfed@mynet.com
aydinhaldun@hotmail.com
Website: www.badminton.gov.tr

UKRAINE
Ukrainian Badminton Federation
Victor Shvachko, Esplanadnaya Str 42, Office 721, Kiev 01023, Ukraine
Telephone No: +380 44 289 0369
Fax No: +380 44 289 0369
Email: victor_shvachko@mail.ru

WALES
Welsh Badminton Union
Gareth Morris, Unit E4, South Point Industrial Estate, Foreshore Road, Cardiff, CF10 4SP S. Glamorgan, Wales
Telephone No: +44 29 20 49 7225
Fax No: +44 29 20 49 7224
Email: wbu@welshbadminton.net
Website: www.welshbadminton.net

Badminton Oceania

Corinne Barnard,
P.O Box 242 82, Wellington 6142
New Zealand
Tel: +64 4 914 1452. Fax: +64 4916 2494
Email: corinne@oceaniabadminton.org
Website: www.oceaniabadminton.org

AUSTRALIA
Badminton Australia
Paul Brettell, Unit 15, 8 Techno Park Drive, Williamstown North, Victoria 3016, Australia. Telephone No: +61 3 9397 4722.
Fax No: +61 3 9397 4733
Email: admin@badminton.org.au
paul.brettell@badminton.org.au
Website: www.badminton.org.au

COOK ISLAND
Badminton Association of The Cook Islands Inc.
Maveni Kaufononga, c/o Cook Islands Sports and Olympic Association, P O Box 569 Rarotonga, Cook Islands.
Telephone No: +682 20940
Fax No: +682 22095
Email: admin1@cisnoc.org.ck

FIJI
Fiji Badminton Association
Margaret Whiteside, Fiji Olympic House, 17, Bau Street,
Suva, Fiji Islands. Telephone No: +679 330 7220, +679 9953735 (mobile)
Fax No: +679 301647 (Fiji NOC)
Email: twoofus@ghw.com.fj

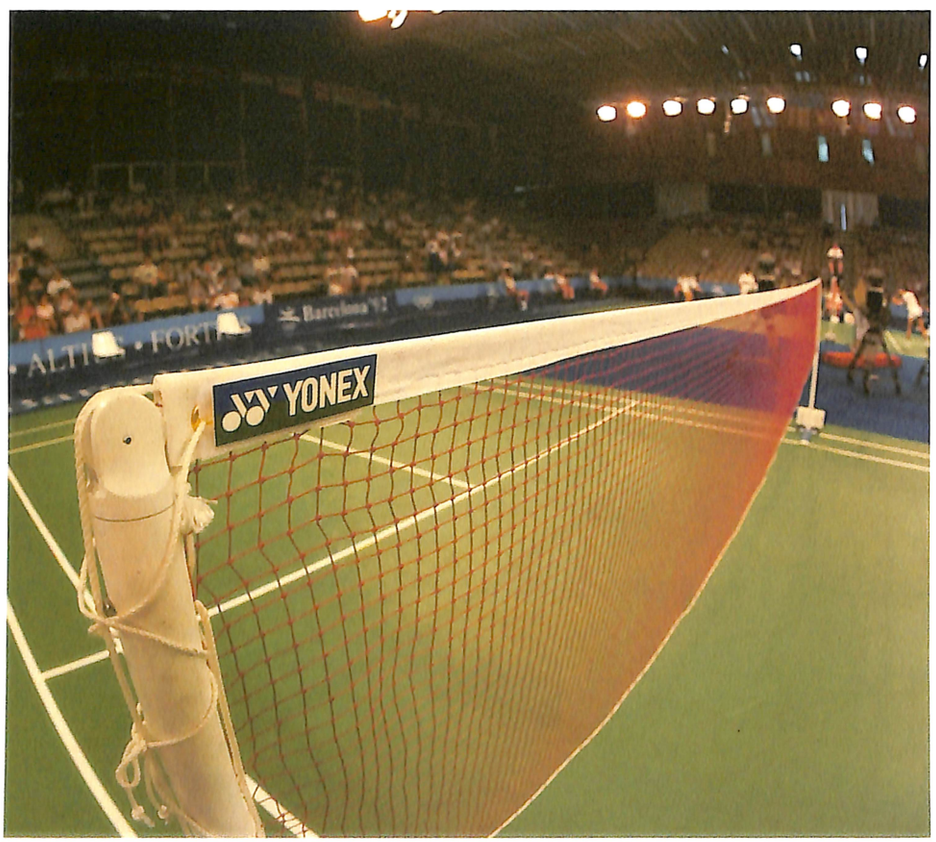
NAURU
Nauru Badminton Association.
Mrs Carmen Willis, GPO Box 267, Civic Centre, Aiwo District, Republic of Nauru, Central Pacific
Telephone No: +674 444 3325
Fax No: +674 444 3352
Email: craven54@hotmail.com

NEW ZEALAND
Badminton New Zealand
Mike Kernaghan, PO Box 11-319, Wellington, New Zealand
Telephone No: +64 4 9162450
Fax No: +64 4 9162494
Email: office@badminton.org.nz
mike@badminton.org.nz
Website: www.badminton.org.nz

NORFOLK ISLAND
Badminton Norfolk Island
Jo Snell, PO Box 554, Norfolk Island, South Pacific
Email: jonnoandjo@norfolk.nz

SAMOA
Samoa Badminton Association
Toala Pule Risale, PO Box 5251, Apia, Western Samoa
Telephone No: +685 20278
Fax No: +685 26366
Email Id: akeripa@pacificcomms.com
risaler@lesamoa.net

TUVALU
National Badminton Association of Tuvalu
Matilda Lopati, c/o Sports Officer, Ministry of Education & Sports PMB, Funafuti, Tuvalu
Telephone No: +688 20332
Fax No: +688 20331
Email: matilda09lopati@gmail.com



Badminton Pan American Confederation

Pilar Carrillo, Av Javier Prado Este 897 Ofic 12 (1er Piso) Lima 27 Peru
Tel: +51 1 994 225 073
Fax: +51 1 251 3496
Email: panambadminton@gmail.com
Website: www badmintonpanam.org

ARGENTINA
Federacion de Badminton de la Republica Argentina
Oscar Malamud, Ituzaingo 1150 San Fernando (CP:1646), Argentina
Telephone No: +54 11 47445486, +54 11 15 51519253 (m)
Email: badarg@hotmail.com
Website: www.badmintonargentina.tk

ARUBA
Aruba Badminton Club
Olga Versteeg, Tanki Leendert 194c, Aruba (Lower Dutch Antilles)
Telephone No: +297 587 3253
Fax No: +297 587 3253
Email: olgaoparuba@hotmail.com

BARBADOS
Barbados Badminton Association
Dave Forde, PO Box 75, Welches Road, St. Michael, Barbados, West Indies
Telephone No: +1 246 426 2636, +1 243 6899 (mobile)
Email: bba.association@gmail.com
cd2002@hotmail.com

BERMUDA
Bermuda Badminton Association
Kenneth Bremar, PO Box DV 730, Devonshire, Bermuda
Telephone No: +441 3349265 (K.Bremar), +441 299 5177 /+ 441 3354264 (T.DeSilva)
Fax No: +1 441 238 3298
Email: bdabadmnton@yahoo.com

BRAZIL
Confederacao Brasileira de Badminton
Celso Wolf Junior, Rua Firmino Costa, 27, 13076-625, Taquaral Campinas, Sao Paulo, Brazil
Telephone No: +55 19 32534936, +55 19 92993292 (m)
Fax No: +55 19 32534936
Email: presidencia@badminton.org.br
badminton@badminton.org.br
Website: www.badminton.org.br

CANADA
Badminton Canada
Kyle Hunter, 2201, Riverside Drive, Suite 98, Ottawa ON K1H 8K9
Telephone No: +1 613 5692424
Fax No: +1 613 5693232
Email I: badminton@badminton.ca
Website: www.badminton.ca

CAYMAN ISLANDS
Cayman Islands Badminton Association
Wray Banker, PO Box 30172, Seven Mile Beach Post Office, Grand Cayman, Cayman Islands, BWI
Telephone No: +1 345 949 3322; +1 345 915 5232
Email: balan.murugesu@ogier.com

CHILE
Federacion de Badminton de Chile
Mr. Carlos Figueroa Gonzalez, Av. Providencia 1765, Dpto. 2305, Providencia-Santiago-Chile
Telephone No: +562 264 1133
Fax No: +562 2351655
Email: febadminchile@gmail.com
Website: www.badminton.cl

COLOMBIA
Colombian Badminton Federation
Andres Dario Tigreros Ortega, Coliseo Cubierto El-Campin, (CR30, DIAG) Entrada 17 Ofician 3, Bogota DC Colombia
Telephone No: +57 1 2356941/5, +57 3106669210 (m)
Fax No: +57 1 211 9340
Email: badmintoncolombia@gmail.com
dariotigreros@gmail.com
Website: www.badmintoncolombia.com

COSTA RICA
Asociacion Costarricense de Badminton
Adrian Gomez, Residencial Villa Flores, Tercera Etapa, Xasa No. 143, Coronado, San Jose, Apartado 1160-7050, Cortago, Costa Rica
Telephone No: +506 3864820
Fax No: +506 7130154
Email:adbcostarica@yahoo.es

CUBA
Federacion Cubana de Badminton
Miguel Diaz Fernandez, Calle 13, # 601 Esquina C, Vedado, Habana, Cuba CP 10400
Telephone No: +53 7 6487099 (Office)
Fax No: +53 7 545017, 537-8816486
Email: fcbad@inder.co.cu
Website: www.inder.cu

CURAÇAO
Badminton Bond Curaçao
Jason Smit, PO Box 4092, Curaçao, (Netherlands Antilles)
Telephone No: +599 9 864 8707
Fax No: +599 9 868 9291
Email: jasonsmit@curinfo.an

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC
La Federacion Dominicana de Badminton
Generoso Costillo, Unidad de Medicina Deportiva, Centro Olimpico Juan Pablo Duarte, Santa Domingo, Distrito Nacional, Republica Dominicana
Telephone No: + 1 809 8461299
Fax No: +1 809 732 1533
Email: genecalia@yahoo.com
gcastillofedobad@gmail.com
Website: www.fedobad.org.

ECUADOR
Federacion Ecuatoriana de Badminton
Armando Arce, Edificio de Federaciones Ecuatoriana por Deportes, Av. de las America, Explanada del Estadio Modelo, Guayaquil, Ecuador
Telephone No: +593 4 2296388
Fax No: +593 4 2296388
Email: buddyarce@gmail.com

EL SALVADOR
Federacion Salvadorena de Badminton
Claudia Linares de Zepeda, Direccion, Alameda Juan Pablo II, Calle Bustamante y Rivero, Centre de Gobierno, Palacio de los Deportes Indes
Telephone No: +503 2270 6957
Fax No: +503 2270 6957
Email: fesalbad@hotmail.com
dignagladis@hotmail.com

FALKLAND ISLANDS
Stanley Badminton Club
Rosemarie King, 10, Jeremy Moore Avenue Stanley, Falkland Islands FIQQ 1ZZ
Telephone No: +500 21451
Fax No: +500 21451
Email: prrking@horizon.co.fk

GRENADA
Grenada Badminton Association
Ms M Hercules, PO Box 326, St George's, Grenada WI
Telephone No: +1 473 440 1777
Fax No: +1 473 440 4112

GUATEMALA
Federacion Nacional de Badminton de Guatemala
Jose Gabriel Del Busto, PO Box 3624, Guatemala City, Guatemala, C.A.
Telephone No: +502 2331 2417, +502 56300971
Fax No: +502 2331 2417
Email: badmintonguate@gmail.com
Website: www.badmintonguate.org.gt

GUYANA
Guyana Badminton Association
Gokarn Ramdhani, 201 Republic Park, Peters Hall, East Bank, Demerara, Guyana
Telephone No: +592 233 5784
Fax No: +592 233 5126
Email: gokarnnr@hotmail.com

HONDURAS
Federacion Nacional de Badminton de Honduras
Maria Valladares Lagos, Complejo Deportivo 'José Simón Azcona', Casa Olímpica 'Julio C Villalta', Apartado postal 3143Tegucigalpa M D C, Honduras, CA
Telephone No: +504 2357 400
Fax No: +504 2393928
Email: conversarte@yahoo.com
badminton@honduras.com

JAMAICA
Jamaica Badminton Association
Vishu Tolan, 41A, Young Street, Spanish Town St, Catherine, Jamaica, W.I
Telephone No: +1 876 907 5456
Fax No: +1 876 984 9556
Email: vishu@mail.infochan.com
jamaica.badminton.association@gmail.com

MEXICO
Federacion Mexicana de Badminton
José Ramon Noria Guzmán, Real de San Javier Lote 7C, Casa 19 Metepec Edo Mex CP52168
Entre Sur 4 y Av Heriberto Enriquez
Telephone No: +52 722 2105 458, +521 722 5713311 (m)
Fax No: +5+52 722 2173410
Email: josenoriag@hotmail.com

PANAMA
Panama Badminton Association
Arsenio Fernandez, Calle 50 Y,61 Obarrio Panama
Telephone No: +1 507 2266077
Fax No: +1 507 2261357
Email: arsenio@pisagrey.com

PERU
Comision Nacional de Badminton del Peru
Zarko Cukic, Avenue Chachi Dibos 1201, Charrillos, Peru
Telephone No: +51 1 99 824 9684
Fax No: +51 1 251 7986
Email: badmintonperu@gmail.com

PUERTO RICO
Federacion Puertoriquena de Badminton
Pedro V Blach Brana, Calle Dallas 1738 Urb San Gerardo San Juan,
Puerto Rico 00926
Telephone No: +1 787 751 3938, 787 347 2116
Fax No: +1 787 751 3938
Email: fepurba2010@yahoo.com

ST LUCIA
St.Lucia Badminton Association
Marceline Myrtle Alexander, P.O Box 1967, Castries St. Lucia
Telephone No: +1 758 717 5110, 1 758 489 3686
Fax No: +1 758 451 8737
Email: myrtle.alexander@gmail.com

SURINAM
Surinaamse Badminton Bond
Rynia Haynes, Gideonlaan #5, PO Box 1053, Paramaribo, Suriname
Telephone No: +597 465 633, +597 474180
Fax No: +597 465 633
Email: hayn@sr.net
unicar@sr.net
united@sr.net

TRINIDAD & TOBAGO
Trinidad & Tobago Badminton Association
Randolph Rampersad, PO Box 448, Wrightson Road, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad
Telephone No: +1 868 625 6553, +1 868 683 3365(m)
Fax No: +1 868 625 6747
Email: tt.badminton@gmail.com

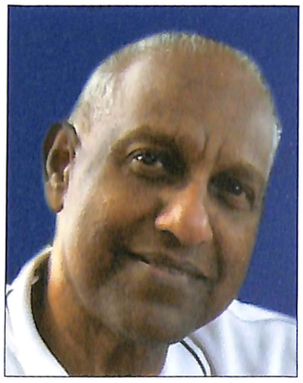
USA
USA Badminton
Dan Cloppas, 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80909, USA
Telephone No: +1 719 866 4808
Fax No: +1 719 866 4507
Email: usab@usabadminton.org
Website: http://www.usabadminton.org

URUGUAY
Asociacion Uruguaya de Badminton
Paola Collerati Mezgolits, Avda Gral Rivera 2108-10, CP 11200
Montevideo, Uruguay
Telephone No: +598 2 409 7405
Fax No: +598 2 400 7641
Email: enrique@collerati.com

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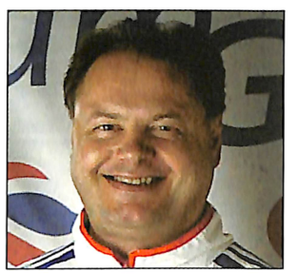


Ronald Jeyanathan.

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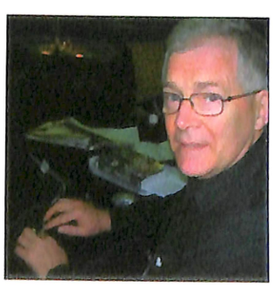
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Lars Sologub.

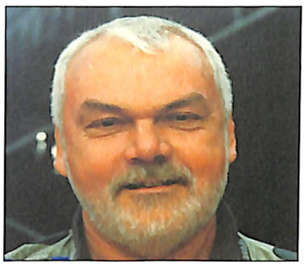
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Richard Eaton.

Richard Eaton, former editorial consultant for World Badminton magazine, has written and broadcast on badminton for more than 30 years for newspapers, agencies, websites and radio stations all over the world. For many years the badminton correspondent for *The Times*, he has also contributed regularly to the BBC World Service, and been co-author of ten books on racket sports.



Preben Soborg.

Preben Søborg, a Danish photographer with a large personality has travelled all around the world many times. He has worked for the Danish Badminton Forbund since 1969, and for the International Badminton Federation from 1980–2000 and then later for the Badminton World Federation, and been present at many Olympic Games. He can be contacted at sportsfoto@sport.dk



Steve Line.

Steve Line has travelled the world as a freelance sports photographer for over 25 years covering many major badminton events. He supplies to international newspapers and magazines and has been the official photographer at the All England Championships since 2000. He also regularly undertakes photo-shoots for many of the leading equipment manufacturers within the game.



Louis Ross.

Louis Ross has been photographing badminton since 1972, during which he and his court-side stool became a famed combination. He has both produced and contributed to books and provided images for magazines and papers all over the world. Recently he was given the English Badminton Award for longstanding exceptional service to the sport.



Raphael Sachetat.

Raphael Sachetat is a Paris based French photo-reporter who has specialized in badminton for the past 10 years, with over 150 international tournaments covered. Having written and taken photos as a free lance for many different medias, he has also been a TV consultant for the past 10 years in France. Raphael Sachetat is behind the only badminton specialized photo agency – Badmintonphoto – as well as the channel of websites "Badzine".

Yves Lacroix is editor of Badzine Quebec, and is French- and English-speaking badminton fan, living in Montreal. He joined the Badzine team in the early stages, and as an archivist and photographer, is behind the success of the photo website as well as his own Badzine version for French-speaking Canadians.



Ronnie Rowan and Ian Palmer

Ronnie Rowan came from a badminton family and has been involved in badminton all her life – as a player, an administrator, and an enthusiast, and then as the first paid professional at the International Badminton Federation when she became General Secretary. Her work and her love for badminton have taken her all over the world.

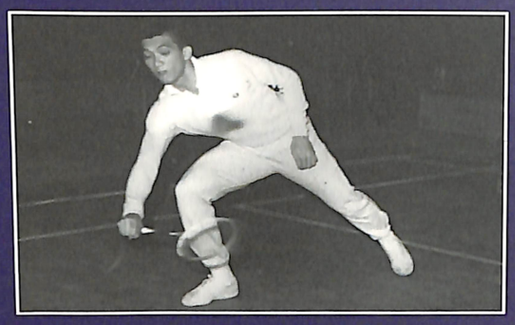
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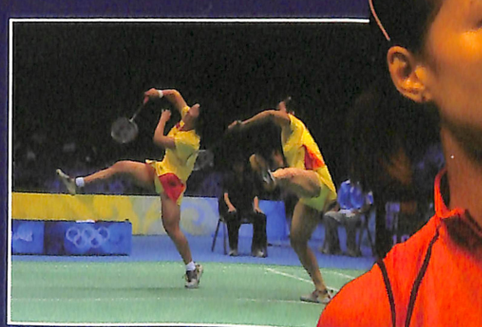












It began 3,000 years ago with women in a highly decorated kimono and men in loose-fitting hanfu, yet it is now pursued by some of the sleekest clad, most fiercely trained athletes on the planet.

It is named after the home of an English aristocrat and became popular with leisured classes, but versions have been played by ordinary folk both before and since.

It is played by millions from 166 nations for no reward other than fun, fitness and friendship. Yet when it became an Olympic sport it acquired fame and fortune beyond dreams.

It is the oldest, fastest, and probably the fastest growing racket sport in the world. It is badminton.

This is the sport which has faced the divides between East and West, between communism and capitalism, and even between warring sexes, and crossed them all. It faced its own fault-lines and set about transcending those too.

This book, celebrating the 75 years of organised international badminton, tracks the course of this fantastic history, mixes expert analysis with story-telling, offers celebrity first person anecdotes, juxtaposes humour with polemics, and sprinkles it with hundreds of images.

It highlights playing legends from Sir George Thomas to Judy Hashman, from Eddy Choong and Erland Kops to Rudy Hartono, and from Park Joo-Bong and Susi Susanti to Lin Dan and Zhang Ning.

It tells of shuttle-kicking in China and Korea, of slow wobblers and rockets in England, of the man who ran the sport from his spare room and the woman who administered it from her bedroom, how a Mandarin-speaking interpreter became its leader, how a secret conference moved to Scotland to prevent the sport falling apart, and how a golden romance led to two famous gold medals. It explains how the many facets of badminton developed, and speculates on what needs to be done next.

Badminton is proud of its spread in emerging nations, and proud of its ability to improve the role of women, but also grateful for the diplomacy which helped heal a schism.

Badminton has achieved these things because it is not principally about power and money but about people – and people who care about each other. Its special sense of humanity speaks to the world from this book.



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