

State shuttlers corner glory

The players from the State proved that they are more than a match



Success story The boys had a ball

One week of training with S.M. Arif transformed a bunch of badminton players into champions. The boys had come visiting from the Nandi Pipes Badminton Academy.

The youngsters had visited the city in April and barely a month later, the results were there for all to see. The enthusiastic lads from the academy made their presence felt in the first week of June at the all India Regional Sports Centre (RSC) junior ranking tournament, held at the Rajiv Gandhi Indoor Stadium in Kochi. Laa Talar of Arunachal Pradesh, who joined the academy just a couple of months before, struck gold in his first major outing, claiming the boys under-13 singles crown. In the final, he subdued Harshel Dhani of Maharashtra 21-18, 21-10.

In the same age group, C. Upendra combined well with K.P. Chaitanya to overcome Suresh Shetty and Akhil of Karnataka 21-13, 21-9 to lift the doubles title. In the under-16 competition, A. Naresh paired with A.K. Srikanth to defeat Rohit Yadav and N.V.S. Vijeta, also of Andhra Pradesh 20-22, 21-18, 21-10 for the doubles laurels.

Incidentally, Naresh and Srikanth had halted the advance of academy teammates Khaja Jaleel and Sriteja in the semi-finals. Jaleel acquitted himself honourably in the singles, losing to Vijeta in the last eight stage. Later, Naresh achieved doubles glory with Vishal Dev Reddy in the Union Bank all India tournament at Bangalore, the former withdrawing from the singles, hampered by corns in his feet.

Badminton greats Prakash Padukone, Vimal Kumar, his brother Vinod Kumar of the Tata-Padukone Academy in Bangalore and George Thomas in Kochi, have invited players from the Nandi Pipes academy for weekend exchange tournaments.

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