

Watch out for this bright spark

Shuttler Naresh is on a winning spree



WINNING GLORY A. Naresh with the under 13 singles trophy at the Krishna Khaitan

When A. Naresh joined the Nandi Pipes Badminton Academy in Nandyal, Kurnool, he could barely hold a racquet right. But a deep desire to excel propelled him forward. His recent run of form would amply illustrate his evolution from a novice to a skilled shuttler. In the last week of May, he was in the fray for the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) -Yonex state open championships. The elite of the state, a badminton powerhouse by itself, was there.

That left him quite undeterred as he went about his task with little fuss and high efficiency. In the under-13 category, he was an authoritative winner in the singles. He then joined hands with academy mate Vishal Reddy to clinch the doubles crown as well.

After a brief respite at his native Nandyal, he reached Kochi in Kerala for the Regional Sports Centre (RSC), all India junior ranking tournament. It was again a golden double for the talented youngster who not only clinched the singles title but combined well with Vishal for the doubles triumph.

The gruelling training sessions with coach Kattoju Venkateshwara Rao held Naresh in good stead, as he recorded one conquest after another. The hours spent with his mentor, were not in vain. Naresh's endurance didn't desert him in long-drawn contests as did his skill stand by him in the hour of need.

The Andhra Pradesh squad that included many players from the Nandi Pipes academy, then moved to Chennai for the Krishna Khaitan all India championships, that attracts the most talented players from every corner of the country. Here again, Naresh proved his mettle in the singles competition, where his supremacy went unchallenged.

The doubles final was an all-Nandi Pipes affair, for Naresh and Vishal were up against their Nandyal compatriots Jamal and Tejdeep. A hip injury hampered Naresh's court coverage and before long, the champion shuttler caved in to the challenge as the duo of Jamal and Tejdeep prevailed.

Prior to these achievements, Naresh, son of A. Pamulety, a railway employee, had a golden double at a tournament in Thane, Maharashtra. His talent surfaced at Mandya too, where he ensured AP was the winner in the under-14 category of the National School Games last year. By August, Naresh will move to a higher age category. But that is unlikely to stop this power-packed yet wristy touch artist from cornering the limelight.