



DUBAI SUPERSERIES FINALE

HIGHLIGHTS

'HAWK-EYE' TO DETERMINE 'IN OR OUT'
(PAGE 4)

MOVING AHEAD WITH COACH
EDUCATION (PAGE 8)

KEY DATES

01-06 April	Yonex-Sunrise India Open (Superseries) - New Delhi
07-18 April	World Junior Championships 2014 (BWF Event) - Alor Setar (Malaysia)
08-13 April	OUE Singapore Open 2014 (Superseries) - Singapore City
15-20 April	China Masters - BWF Grand Prix Gold - Jiangsu (China)
18-25 May	Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2014 (BWF Event) - New Delhi
24 May	BWF Annual General Meeting - New Delhi
10-15 June	Yonex Open Japan (Superseries) - Tokyo
17-22 June	Indonesia Open 2014 (Superseries Premier) - Jakarta
24-29 June	Australian Open 2014 (Superseries) - Sydney

Come December, this season's top badminton players will be packing their rackets and shuttles and heading to the exciting, year-ending BWF Destination Dubai World Superseries Finals.

Thanks to a new four-year partnership between Badminton World Federation (BWF) and Dubai, superstar shuttlers such as Lee Chong Wei, Chen Long, Jan Jorgensen, Saina Nehwal and Ratchanok Intanon will touch down in the glamorous city annually until 2017 to battle for the coveted BWF World Superseries Finals titles.

In bringing the BWF Destination Dubai World Superseries Finals to the UAE and wider Middle East region, the hosts now also have naming rights for the 'Destination Dubai Rankings' via which the top-eight singles players and doubles pairs in the five traditional categories will qualify for the stellar showdown to be held at the impressive Hamdan Sports Complex. These rankings will be generated from points gathered on the 12-stage MetLife BWF World Superseries in which badminton's elite players have been competing since January. Three events have already taken place with nine remaining across Asia, Australia and Europe; the India Open is ongoing in New Delhi.



MetLife
BWF WORLD
SUPERSERIES

Under the agreement, the BWF's grassroots programme, Shuttle Time, currently operating in 65 countries worldwide, will be launched in Dubai later this year to increase participation in the sport across the emirate. The aim is to encourage people from all walks of life – regardless of age, ability or fitness level – to play badminton as a fun and social way of being more active.

Badminton is one of the world's most popular sports with historically strong connections across Europe and Asia. By partnering with the BWF, Dubai can expect to gain from increased exposure in these markets that are of strategic importance, both in terms of trade and cultural dialogue.

"We are extremely happy to welcome Dubai and the sense of style which it brings to the MetLife BWF World Superseries," said BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer.

"Our tour is becoming increasingly popular and is televised throughout the year with a household reach of more than 300 million. Dubai's global connectivity, accessibility and track record in hosting world-class sporting events can only help us to grow the sport and make badminton even more accessible to fans."

His Excellency Mattar Al Tayer, Deputy-Chairman of Dubai Sports Council, spoke in support of the partnership, saying, "Badminton is a sport that is open to everyone and there is already an active scene in Dubai. The partnership with the BWF provides us with an exciting opportunity to build on that interest, to promote the sport to new levels and to develop grassroots initiatives such as Shuttle Time that will help to drive community engagement and physical activity across the city."



Poul-Erik Høyer
BWF President

Dear Colleagues and Friends

We held our first BWF Council meeting of 2014 recently in Birmingham, England, at which the focus was a review of the BWF Strategic Plan 2012-2016: the blueprint for our work as an International Federation (IF) in developing and promoting our sport.

As we are at the halfway mark of the four-year period for which this plan was implemented, it was essential to evaluate our progress and determine how we are performing in key result areas such as the Olympics; Development; Events; Para-Badminton; Governance/Administration; Communications and Marketing.

The overall observation is that we are well on track. Badminton and the BWF are performing well and, in many critical aspects, we are ahead of our targets. Most important are the strides being made at the opposite ends of badminton's spectrum – the elite and grassroots levels – and the rise of badminton as a sports-entertainment commodity, thus attracting greater commercial interest and revenues.

Badminton's position as a core sport in the Summer Olympics and its elevation to Group C (sports ranked 9-16) by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are the ultimate confirmation that our work at the highest ranks is reaping rewards. Similarly, the global expansion of our schools-based programme, 'Shuttle Time' – rolled out in 65 Member Associations so far with resources available in 14 languages – underlines the success of our grassroots initiative. We have launched Level 2 of our coach education resources and this is being implemented globally with various language versions becoming available as we focus on our goal of making badminton the No. 1 schools sport worldwide.

We have excelled elsewhere too – constitutional reforms and enhanced regulations; the development of our top-tier tournaments (BWF Major Events and BWF World Superseries); welcoming para-badminton into the BWF fold and working towards its inclusion in the 2020 Paralympic Games; and the promotion, exposure and marketing of badminton on multiple platforms. The latest broadcast statistics for BWF events show we have a household reach of more than 300 million.

This is all great news but we cannot afford complacency. There is room for improvement in certain areas and we have noted them, including the ambition of spreading our signature events to new markets. We will continue working diligently on this and other objectives. In late 2015 we will update the plan, thereby transforming it into the BWF Strategic Plan 2016-2020.

Speaking of our goals, para-badminton's progression to the second stage of application for inclusion into the 2020 Paralympic Games is a major step in our quest to secure the opportunity for our impaired athletes to compete in the most prestigious multi-sport event for para-athletes.

The decision will be announced in October and, during the crucial intervening months, we will continue working hard to put forward the best case possible for para-badminton which is a wonderful sporting spectacle that would add to the stature of the Paralympic Games.

Finally, I wish to say heartfelt appreciation to everyone who has extended well wishes on my recent election to the International Olympic Committee. Thank you for your kind words and support.

It is a significant and humbling honour and I will always strive to live up to the confidence and trust placed in me at this the highest level in international sport and, of course, to represent the BWF with distinction.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which reads "Poul-Erik Høyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'P' and 'H'.

Poul-Erik Høyer

PARA-BADMINTON - BEYOND BOUNDARIES!

More than 240 players from 39 countries participated in the BWF Para-Badminton World Championships 2013 held in Dortmund, Germany. The event saw several champions emerge but perhaps more important were the self-belief and fighting spirit which all participants demonstrated. Here are some of their voices:



RICKARD NILSSON (SU5) - SWEDEN

Nilsson has been playing badminton since he was five years old but the Para-Badminton World Championships 2013 was his first major tournament.

"It's a big honour. I'm not used to this competition. I think it's awesome. I never thought it would be this nice."

Nilsson hails from a small town in Sweden. His main hobbies are watching football and playing computer games. Nilsson has a deformity in his back and neck and has been categorised in SU5. As he cannot run quickly, he depends on his racket skills and tactical ability.

"It's my biggest strength because I cannot run like the others and am not strong like others. My back almost looks like an 'S' and my neck is only one bone, so I have trouble in looking to the sides."



EDUARDO OLIVEIRA (SU5) - BRAZIL

Oliveira suffered an accident a couple days after he was born, affecting the use of his right arm. He says he has enjoyed playing many

sports, but he fell in love with badminton at the first instance. Oliveira works in a project in a 'favela' (low-income neighbourhood) in Brazil with around 50 poor children, helping transform their lives through badminton.

"They have no opportunities, not many things to do in the favela," said Oliveira. "This sport is so important to them. It's a pleasure to teach and play with them and watch them transform into better people. They make me cry a lot of times. To see the smiles in their eyes is priceless."



Oliveira believes in giving his best on court without thinking of victory.

"Happiness is not about winning always – but to do your best when you come on court. I'm playing for everyone. I think about the children, about my family. I like to represent Brazil."



PARUL DALSUKBHAI PARMAR (SL3) - INDIA

Parmar suffered from polio as a three-year-old. However, she never let that hinder her pursuit of sport, thanks to her father, who was a national badminton player.

"He always told me to get better and better," she recalled. Parmar believes sport is important not just for competitive players, but for everybody.

"Sport, in my view, is for everybody. The main purpose of sport is health."

Parmar has represented India in about ten international tournaments, including three World Championships. She is particularly thankful to badminton because it has helped her find a job in the postal department and represent the country several times.



ISA KASADHA (SU5) - UGANDA

Kasadha sees himself as an ambassador for his country Uganda through badminton. For the left-hander whose right hand is impaired, this is uppermost in his thoughts when he competes internationally.

"I love my country," he declared, clearly proud of his nationality.

"I put Uganda in all that I do. We have many tribes, but I put my nation first. I have something so good. (For me, it is) Uganda first – then Africa."

'HAWK-EYE' TO DETERMINE 'IN OR OUT'

Badminton fans – Hawk-Eye technology is coming to a video board or television near you soon.

The world-famous tracking system used in many sports to determine line calls has made its badminton debut in the MetLife BWF World Superseries tournament in New Delhi and spectators in the stadium and watching at home will eventually be able to see instant reviews of challenges which happen in matches on the TV court.

After testing various instant-review technologies in recent months, the Badminton World Federation has contracted Hawk-Eye Innovations to provide instant-review services for the World Superseries as well as for BWF Major Events. This includes Hawk-Eye's popular graphics implementation which pinpoints the exact spot on which a ball – or in badminton's case, a shuttle – lands. These are often shown in sports venues worldwide and broadcast to fans elsewhere.

"We have been testing various systems and we have determined Hawk-Eye to be the most trusted and reliable option by which to track line-call challenges," said BWF Secretary General Thomas Lund.

"As a brand, it has built a strong reputation and enjoys global recognition among other sports – and indeed among sports fans – as an accurate and highly innovative technology which adds value to the spectatorship of sporting events."

Hawk-Eye's system will gradually be integrated with the in-venue video boards and live worldwide broadcast feed, allowing fans to see instant reviews and decisions on challenges.

"Since we introduced instant reviews in last year's World Superseries Finals, many people have been asking when we would take the next step – add the graphics which they are accustomed to seeing in tennis and



other sports. Now, with Hawk-Eye on board, we are ready to progress to that stage.

"The integration of these graphical elements will be tested in India and ultimately we will get operations running smoothly. It's another significant and innovative step for badminton in the sporting world," added Lund.

The India Open 2014 is the fifth BWF tournament at which instant reviews are available to players since the BWF World Superseries Finals last December in Malaysia. The other tournaments at which they have been in place are the Victor Korea Open, the Maybank Malaysia Open and the Yonex All England Open.

REVIEWING INSTANT REVIEWS

Badminton entered a new era with the implementation of the instant review system (IRS) at the BWF World Superseries Finals in December 2013.

The system has been operational at each of the three Superseries events since then and a fair picture of its usefulness has emerged. There is consensus among players and technical officials that the IRS has made a big difference towards ensuring greater accuracy in line calls.

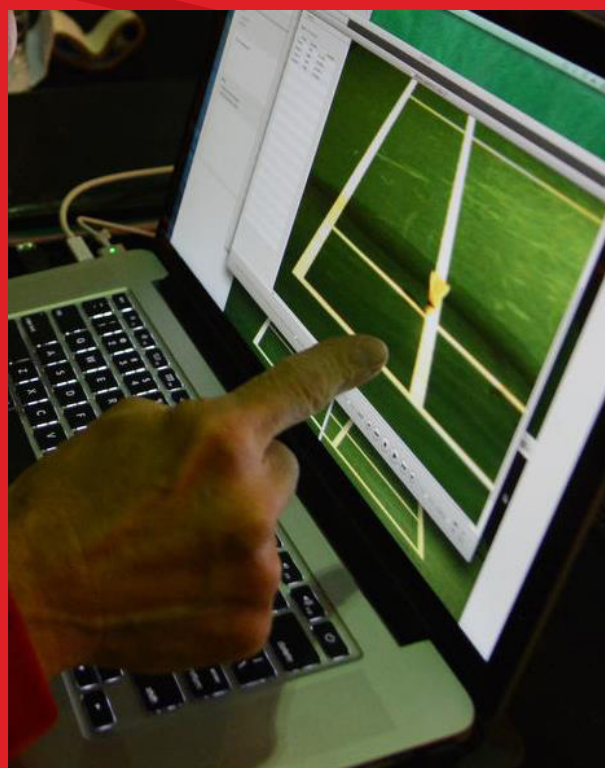
Following a proposal in the Events Working Group in March 2013, an experimental law was passed in May to allow testing. Only controlled testing by BWF was allowed. The first tests were done at the BWF Sudirman Cup 2013. Eventually, the first event at which the IRS went live was the World Superseries Finals 2013, followed by the MetLife BWF World Superseries tournaments in Korea, Malaysia and Birmingham (the All England) this year.

The system used consisted of eight cameras (more specialised than the ones used for television). Once a player decided to challenge a line call or an overrule of a line call, they raised a hand and the umpire relayed the challenge to the referee who checked the television monitor and signalled the decision to the umpire.

Here are some statistics on the referrals from three events (no statistics were available from the Victor Korea Open 2014):

BWF World Superseries Finals 2013: Total challenges: 33. Line call changed: 13. No IRS decision: 1.

Maybank Malaysia Open 2014: Total challenges: 33. Line call changed: 11.



Yonex All England Open 2014: Total challenges: 42. Line call changed: 17. No IRS decision: 1.

At both the Malaysia Open and All England, two challenges each on the final day were accepted, showing how important the technology is particularly in later rounds when a point or two can make the difference between a title win or defeat.

Considering the human eye is capable of picking up only 25 frames a second, in contrast to the camera (over 200 frames a second), it is no surprise there is the occasional incorrect decision. The assistance of technology will therefore enhance matches and give players an extra layer of security if they have any doubts.

WOMEN CELEBRATE CHANGING TIMES



Winner of the inaugural Oceania Badminton's President of Oceania Women's Award, Val Nesbitt (second left), is congratulated by (from left) Judith Cousins, Leody Vainikolo, Diane Gallagher and Geraldine Brown.

Women in badminton have been told attitudes towards women in sport are continually changing for the better and this is creating more jobs and other opportunities for women.

As if in synch, this was the topic of speeches given by English Women's Rugby Under-20 Coach, Amanda Bennett, to Badminton Europe's Women in Badminton (WIB) Working Group and by Diane Gallagher – Sport Operations Manager with the Australian Commonwealth Games Association – to Badminton Oceania's Women in Badminton Working Group.

Addressing her European peers at a networking breakfast in Birmingham on the morning after International Women's Day, Bennett recalled as a schoolgirl being told women weren't allowed to play rugby. She also recounted that when she represented Wales internationally in the same sport, they only received tracksuits thanks to a manufacturer's error of sewing the pockets on the wrong way so the suits could not be sold. Such incidents are in stark contrast to the situations in which the women's Welsh rugby team and most female players would now find themselves.

Touching on the media's presentation of female athletes, Bennett – who was also Director of Fair Play and former Head of Governance for UK Sport – observed women's sport often faces a problem in garnering equal television interest and coverage and she believes one of the problems is the way women's sport is valued. She also pointed out what she termed "badminton's advantages over other sports", noting men and women compete together, in equal events and with equal prize money.

The breakfast was well attended by various badminton stakeholders including BWF Council members, Badminton Europe council members, representatives of Badminton England, FISU, Peace and Sport as well as four members of Badminton Europe's WIB Working Group – Emma Mason, Cheryl Evans, Kristiina Dansken and Corina Dan. The breakfast was a relaxed gathering to recognize the achievements of women in sport as well as to consider areas where improvements can still be made.

Meanwhile, at a dinner to mark the inaugural Oceania Badminton's President of Oceania Women's Award (POWA) in February in

Australia, Diane Gallagher spoke of her experiences in sport administration; starting as a volunteer and then transitioning to the professional level.

She indicated there are numerous opportunities within the sporting world for women to pursue careers, including coaching and medical jobs. Citing how many support staff the Australian Commonwealth Games Association takes to Commonwealth Games and the prospects in other multi-sport events, Gallagher concluded that attitudes towards women in sport are changing.

Held to recognise the achievements of women in badminton from the region, the dinner was attended by all the players, officials and volunteers from the 2014 Oceania Championships including the Chair of BWF Women's Commission Geraldine Brown, Badminton Oceania Board members, representatives of Tonga's National Olympic Committee and BWF referees.



Emma Mason (left) thanks Amanda Bennett for her speech.

Brown welcomed and introduced the finalists for the POWA who were:

Judith Cousins (Western Australia): She has been involved in badminton administration for 40 years; as president, secretary and committee member of Western Australia. She was also a Badminton Australia Board member.

Val Nesbitt (Victoria, Australia): She has spent 60 years in the sport as a Badminton Victoria Board member, Junior Board member, originator of the Australasian Under-17 tournament and also the Atalanta Badminton Jamboree which has more than 300 women competing annually.

Leody Vainikolo (Tonga): Leody set up Tonga Badminton about five years ago. She is president and all her children now play. Thanks to her foresight and organisational skills, Tonga now has National Development Officers delivering BWF's Shuttle Time programme. They have received funding to continue this wonderful work started 5 years ago.

Finally, **Val Nesbitt (Victoria)** was declared the winner.



BWF Council members (from left) Wayne Somers, Geraldine Brown, BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer, Lawrence Chew and Peter Tarcala attended the Badminton Europe WIB networking breakfast.

'PARLONS BADMINTON!'

Haiti will be among the first BWF members to benefit from a new accord between the Badminton World Federation and the Federation Francaise de Badminton (FFBaD).

The agreement, signed on 8 March by BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer and FFBaD President Richard Remaud, sealed long-discussed plans between the two organisations to promote badminton in francophone countries, using each other's resources and expertise.

BWF will identify training needs of specific French-speaking Member Associations to improve the administration of badminton and would then invite FFBaD to support particular development projects in those Members. Among the areas in which it is envisaged FFBaD will offer assistance are: schools badminton, coach education, administration, governance, technical officials and tournament organisers training; identifying potential funding streams and partners for specific projects; and planning the implementation of projects in francophone countries in consultation with the relevant Continental Confederation.

Additionally, FFBaD will help in the translation of BWF resources into French and liaising with relevant francophone organisations, including the Francophone Badminton League.



BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer (right) and FFBaD President Richard Remaud seal the francophone agreement.

"The French federation is well developed re. resources so we can call on their expertise and resources to advance our development plans and goals among our francophone membership," said BWF Development Director, Ian Wright.

"Haiti will be one of the first to benefit. We have ongoing projects there and we will use French expertise to deliver a range of development activities for the Haiti Badminton Federation."



Høyer (left) with Geoff Rofe

BIRMINGHAM MEMORIES

The camaraderie of badminton's family was to the fore when Badminton England hosted a celebratory dinner at the recent Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships.

Among those marking the 104th anniversary of badminton's oldest tournament were BWF Council members; executives of title sponsor, Yonex; officials from Birmingham City Council and Badminton England's Board members and staff.

The evening's festivities included brief speeches and presentations, with Badminton England President Geoff Rofe highlighting the fact that current tournament venue, the National Indoor Arena (NIA), will continue hosting the prestigious event until 2021.

BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer presented tokens of appreciation to Badminton England, Yonex and Birmingham City Council in recognition of their contribution to the popular tournament which is part of the MetLife BWF World Superseries.

NEWS IN BRIEF

27 and Counting: The BWF Council will welcome a new member to its fold at the BWF Annual General Meeting in New Delhi, India, in May.

One nomination has been received to fill the additional seat on the BWF Council and the nominee will formally be elected at the AGM before participating in the BWF Council meeting the following week.

This addition will take the total number of Council members to 27, including the President, Deputy President and five continental Vice Presidents.

Events Cancelled: This year's SCG Thailand Open 2014 and London Grand Prix Gold have been cancelled. Both were scheduled to be part of the new Grand Prix Gold circuit.

AND THE WINNER IS...

There were countless unforgettable performances in 2013 but which players showed staying power and consistency from January to December?

Who lifted the big trophies?

Who won the most titles...and who deserves to be Player of the Year?

Well, that time has come again and, though the winners won't be known until May, here are the nominees for the BWF Player of the Year Awards for 2013.

Let the debate begin!

MALE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Chen Long
Lee Chong Wei
Lin Dan
Mohd Ahsan/Hendra Setiawan
Ko Sung Hyun/Lee Yong Dae

FEMALE PLAYER OF THE YEAR

Ratchanok Intanon
Li Xuerui
Wang Yihan
Wang Xiaoli/Yu Yang

PROMISING PLAYER OF THE YEAR (EDDY CHOONG AWARD)

Heo Kwang Hee (M)
Aya Ohori (F)
Busanan Ongbumrungpan (F)
Wang Tzu Wei (M)
Akane Yamaguchi (F)



MOVING AHEAD WITH COACH EDUCATION

BWF's Level 2 Coach Education resources are being well received by member associations and are continuing to be rolled out globally.

The follow-up manual and resources to the successful Level 1 have been implemented in Asia and Europe and now – with the Spanish version available – the Pan American region has recently held its second Level 2 tutors' course. This took place in Lima, Peru, in March, with Professor Fran Dacal spearheading the training.

BWF Deputy President Gustavo Salazar Delgado and President of the Peru Badminton Association Zarko Cukic visited the participants and gave their full support to the programme. The benefits of the Level 2 course for the development of badminton in the Pan Am region were highlighted. The tutors – who have already passed Level 1 – discussed their experiences over the past year as well as the future of badminton coaching regionally.

The Level 2 Coach Education programme was previously piloted in Costa Rica with coaches from Central and South America



Tutors and badminton officials at the BWF Coach Education Level 2 course in Lima, Peru. Fourth right is BWF Deputy President Gustavo Salazar Delgado.

attending. The course content requires candidates to demonstrate more advanced coaching competencies in the context of an annual coaching plan. Assessment is conducted throughout the course via a combination of theoretical and practical tasks.

"Piloting the programme gives us the opportunity to test the resources with candidates who have graduated from our Level 1 course. Their feedback has been vital in helping us refine it to meet the needs of candidates from a wide range of backgrounds and cultures," explained BWF Development Director, Ian Wright.

"It is our aim to have certified coaches at all levels across our continental confederations and, while we are rolling out our Level 2 course, we are progressing with the BWF Level 3 Coach Education resources. We expect to launch this towards the end of 2014."

COACHING FOCUS IN COPENHAGEN



Specialised coaching expertise will be on offer in the upcoming World Championships Coach Forum 2014 to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark, in August.

Badminton World Federation is partnering with Badminton Denmark to showcase an international line-up of presenters on various coaching topics in a two-day (29-30 August) event which will coincide with the BWF World Championships 2014.

The agenda will include the following areas: Women's Singles Training; Doubles Training; Talent Development; Teaching Games for Understanding/Activity-based Learning; and the Latest Badminton-Specific Sports Science Research.

Highly experienced and competent, the speakers will alternate between theory sessions and practical on-court sessions which will cater to dedicated and ambitious coaches. All speakers are highly qualified experts in their specialties and there will be opportunities

to meet and discuss badminton with other highly experienced coaches.

Among those already confirmed on the programme are:

- Thomas Laybourn: world champion and coach of young talents
- Frank Dick: world-renowned athletics coach, coach educator and motivational speaker
- Bo Ømosegaard: Badminton Denmark's Manager of Talent Development
- Christian Møller Madsen, High Performance Coach (physical training and testing of badminton players)
- Top Asian singles and doubles coaches

All sessions will be conducted in English and the times are: Friday 29 August; 4-10.30 pm and Saturday 30 August; 9 am-4.30 pm. For more information: www.denmark2014.com.

RIO 2016 FUNDING

Badminton players trying to qualify for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games can now apply for Olympic Solidarity scholarships.

Among other needs, this funding will help elite athletes with access to proper training facilities, specialised coaching, accommodation expenses and travel subsidies to international Olympic qualification competitions.

Athletes must be proposed by their respective National Olympic Committees (NOCs). This programme runs until 31 August 2016.

DONATING 'GIFT OF BADMINTON'

Ghana will be the first beneficiary of the BWF Equipment Donation Project – thanks to the generosity of Badminton England.

The African nation will receive a gift of rackets, nets and other equipment collected at this year's Yonex All England Open Badminton Championships at which the initiative was launched. This is the first in a series of benevolent drives by BWF World Superseries and Grand Prix Gold hosts to help lesser developed BWF members accumulate badminton equipment to continue their Shuttle Time programmes. Well-known badminton equipment manufacturer, Yonex, was among the contributors to Badminton England's campaign, with a donation being made by the company's Europe Managing Director, Kei Yanagi.

This assistance could not be more opportune as Shuttle Time is just being introduced to Ghana; with the first phase of the training for tutors and teachers having begun on Monday 31 March and conducted by Badminton Confederation of Africa's Development Manager Dajee Annirao. While BWF always sends an initial equipment package to kick-start Shuttle Time, the challenge is for members to sustain and spread the grassroots project with a limited inventory of rackets, shuttles and other necessities.

That's where the BWF Equipment Donation Project hopes to help bridge the gap by asking more developed member associations to be "their brother's keeper" by adopting Shuttle Time in developing countries with donations of equipment from fans, players and friends of badminton. Persons are invited to bring their "used but still good equipment" to specially-marked booths at various BWF tournaments. The equipment will then be packaged and sent to the selected beneficiary member association.

"We have initiated this project to encourage the public to donate badminton rackets and other equipment which they may not be using anymore but which are still in good condition.

"All the rackets, shuttles, etc. we collect through the Equipment Donation Project will be sent to schools in lesser developed countries to deliver badminton to children. It's another aspect of Shuttle Time – our grassroots development programme which is focused on schools," explained BWF Secretary General, Thomas Lund.

"We want to make badminton the No. 1 schools' sport and this will help our efforts."

World No. 1 Lee Chong Wei was the first player to contribute to the project whose slogan is: **"Giving Every Child a Chance to Play. Donate Equipment Today."**

N.B. Badminton England is still accepting donations for Ghana. Anyone wishing to contribute should contact **Head of Major Events and Competitions, Nicola Moloney**, at + (44) 01908 268400.



Yonex's Europe Managing Director, Kei Yanagi.



BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer (left) presents Badminton England's Chief Executive, Adrian Christy, with a commemorative certificate to mark the first implementation of the BWF Equipment Donation Project.

BWF & WAoS: BUILDING EXPERTISE WITHIN

The BWF is seeking to help its membership develop expertise in key areas, thanks to a new partnership with the World Academy of Sport.

Administration, event management, player development and coaching are just some of the development programmes will now be available to continental confederations and member associations wishing to enhance their skills – thereby "strengthening the badminton family worldwide".

The recently-signed agreement, noted BWF Secretary General Thomas Lund, is part of BWF's ongoing plan "as an expanding International Federation, to help its members develop expertise in important areas".



The World Academy of Sport (WAoS) has worked for many years with several international sport federations to develop and implement industry-leading education programmes specific to their respective needs.

"We are well on our way to achieving our strategic objectives under our current strategic plan. In the development area we have made great strides in recent years through the implementation of Shuttle Time and it is now appropriate that we extend such programme resources," added Lund.

"WAoS is a natural fit with BWF as we have observed the work it has undertaken with its partners such as the International Paralympic Committee, International Basketball and the International Rugby Board. We look forward to working with WAoS and providing programmes from the second half of 2014 onwards."

The partnership allows new programmes to be developed and rolled out throughout 2014 and 2015 based on the needs of the BWF membership. These programmes shall provide further structure and resources to nations and continents as they address practical topics to allow growth of badminton at the local and national level. The BWF's continental confederations shall undertake the first workshop during the world-governing body's General Assembly in May.

"It is exciting to extend our sport partnerships with badminton. We aim to help achieve the relevant strategic objectives of the BWF through this partnership and help enhance the quality of individuals throughout the BWF family with engaging and practical programmes," said World Academy of Sport Director, Chris Solly.

THE GLORY OF THOMAS & UBER CUP FINALS



The world's strongest badminton teams will compete in New Delhi in May for the prestige of lifting two trophies – one 71cm high and the other, 45.7cm.

The Thomas Cup, the older and the larger of the two, will be awarded to the best men's team. Made by Atkin Bros of London, the silver-gilt trophy consists of a cup on a plinth, with the figure of a player atop the lid. Its name honours Sir George Thomas, legendary Founder-President of the International Badminton Federation (now BWF), who was keen that badminton should have its own version of the Davis Cup in tennis.

was awarded the tie due to spectator trouble in the final at Jakarta. Changes were made to the format soon after. Until 1966-67, the inter-zone winners had to play the defending champions in the final of the Challenge Round for the trophy but, after that year, the Challenge Round was abolished.

China's entry into the international fold in the early 1980s provided another twist. The Chinese, despite their limited international exposure until that time, proved they were already world-beaters. The final, against holders Indonesia, would prove to be one of the most riveting encounters of all time: 5-4 for

designed by Betty Uber, consists of a female player on a swivelling globe, mounted on a plinth, and was made by London's silversmiths Mappin and Webb. The format in its early years consisted of three singles and four doubles but, from 1984 onwards, the number of matches per tie was reduced to three singles and two doubles, similar to the Thomas Cup.

Although there are similarities between the two championships, there was a difference in the early patterns of dominance. USA, headed by such stalwarts as Judy and Sue Devlin and Margaret Varner, picked up a hat-trick of titles in



China's Chen Long celebrates winning the decisive tie in the Thomas Cup 2012 Finals.



Seoul Satisfying: Korea's women savour victory in the Uber Cup 2010 Finals.



The Thomas Cup.

The Thomas Cup has come a long way – 66 years, to be precise – but it did not have an auspicious start. Shortly after Sir George proposed the idea for an international men's team championships in 1939 (just five years after IBF was founded), World War II broke out. The plan however was not shelved and in 1946, at the Council's first AGM since 1940, the men's championship was planned for 1948-49.

Nations were divided into four zones: Pan American, Asian (East and West), Australasian and European. The competition was to be held once in three years, the format consisted of best-of-nine ties: five singles and four doubles. In the first final, Malaya overcame Denmark 8-1. Sir George presented the trophy to winning captain Lim Chuan Geok.

The Thomas Cup would go on to see many more famous battles. Malaya swept the first three editions but by 1957-58 it would be Indonesia that rose like a phoenix, decimating all challengers for the next two decades. The only interruption to its reign was in the 1966-67 edition, when Malaysia

China on debut, with Han Jian being the star of the event by beating three-time All England champion Liem Swie King 15-12 11-15 17-14. By the next edition (1984), two significant changes were made: the Thomas Cup was to be conducted simultaneously with the Uber Cup every two years instead of three, and ties would be fought over five matches instead of nine. More changes in the competition format would be made in subsequent editions.

Since China's arrival, the battle for the Thomas Cup has often pitted them against Indonesia; the exception being 1992 when Malaysia wrested the trophy. Overall, Indonesia leads the tally with 13 titles and China is second with 9. Since 2004, China has dominated, winning on every occasion. No team has come close to dislodging it.

The Women's World Team Championship was proposed in 1950 by England's great pre-war player Betty Uber (supported by New Zealand's Nancy Fleming), and eventually came into being in 1956-57. The trophy, donated and

the first three editions beginning 1956-57. The balance of power then shifted to Asia, with a 5-2 victory for Japan in a captivating final against USA in 1966. Japan went on to win four of the next five editions; the only interloper being Indonesia (1974-75).

China announced itself with a bang in 1984 and, except for three occasions (1994, 1996 and 2010), have won the Uber Cup ever since. In 2012, in Wuhan, China, they recaptured the championship from Korea, 3-0 in the final. Coincidentally, their male team-mates dismissed Korea's men by the same margin to wrest the Thomas Cup.

The 2014 edition of the Li-Ning BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals (New Delhi in May) has seen another change in the qualification process. Unlike in earlier editions where teams qualified from their continental zones, the top 16 teams, based on team rankings, will be divided into four groups and face off for the title.