



The power of X chromosome "♀" Setting landmarks in Indian Sporting History

While India has produced a fair share of female athletes who have impacted the sporting landscape of our country, it wouldn't be preposterous to say that their biggest contribution besides of course bringing laurels to country, is the fact that they have helped break gender stereotypes.

There was a time when the only name that came to mind was P T Usha but today, the likes of Geeta Phogat, Ritu Rani, Rani Rampal, Sania Nehwal, Sania Mirza, Dipa Karmakar, Savita Punia to name a few, all give us a sense of Pride and in effect unify the World's Largest Democracy. A recent survey done by the Times of India in January 2016 has gone on to prove that the success of our female athletes has helped change the misogynist mindset in North India; where for the first time in history, 12 districts have recorded a gender ratio of above 900. Another interesting fact to note is that Sirsa, infamous for female feticide, topped the table with 999 girls per 1,000 boys.

The last few weeks in our sporting calendar have reinforced the unifying nature of sport, with the race for a spot in Rio 2016 up for grabs, the Indian Women in Sport are stealing the show! From the north eastern part of the country to the tribal areas of Jharkhand to the urbane locales of Hyderabad, the story is all about our women re-writing norms. While books can be written on these wonder women, we bring to you short snippets about a few names who deserve to be looked up on in further detail.



Bravo Dipa

The most unique achievement of them all was that of Tripura's Dipa Karmakar who became the first Indian woman gymnast to qualify for any Olympic Games. She is, in fact, the first Indian gymnast qualifying for the Games after 52 years. Dipa is now only the third woman in world gymnastics ever to land a Prodnova, a rare feat in artistic gymnastics.

Named after legendary athlete Yelena Prodnova, the move has only been completed in official tournaments by five gymnasts. The extremely difficult routine, which involves a front handspring and two front somersaults, has a 7.0 D-score.

As she did the Prodnova, she became an overnight internet sensation. While she might have just won a bronze, many missed the significance of her win. Only two current gymnasts have performed the move and none of them have garnered such a high score. In Dipa's words herself, "I'd seen boys do it, so why not? It's tough because when you land after two aerial somersaults, the weight that comes on the leg is double – if I'm 45 kg, the legs have to take 80-90 kg," she says. "Now, imagine landing on the neck instead, which can crack under such weight. I don't imagine the worst, it doesn't work like that," she added. Well the nation wishes more power each day to this daredevil.



Deepika On The Mark

Elsewhere, from the tribal regions of Jharkhand comes a girl named Deepika Kumari who is yet another archer from the state who is on the mark. She had already made an appearance at the London Olympics in 2012.

As a child, Deepika learnt archery while aiming for mangoes with stones. Later, she perfected her art using homemade bamboo bows and arrows. Now as she counts down to the Rio Olympics, she has another feather in her cap as she equaled London Games gold winner Ki Bo-bae's world record of (686/720) in the women's recurve event in the recent World Cup.



Sania Makes The Cut

The original torchbearer of this wave of Indian sportswomen making a splash worldwide, Sania Mirza, however has now moved to the next level. After finishing 2015 on a high with partner Martina Hingis, Sania has another feather in her cap. She has just been named among the 100 most influential people by the much celebrated Time Magazine.



Guts, glory redux?

While there have been plenty of stories about the wonderful laurels that our women have won, something that is close to home has hit hard. The nation's favorite and probably one of the most idolized sportswomen; Boxer MC Mary Kom, failed to qualify for the Rio 2016 Olympic Games in the 51kg category.

The battle-scarred inspirational boxer and our London Olympic bronze medallist can sadly no longer qualify for the Olympics in this specific category. But not all hope is lost. Mary can participate and train for trials in other categories under the same discipline. And given the will and sheer grit she is famous for, Mary shall surely stand up to the awe this nation has held for her. Here is wishing her all the luck!



Dreams Unlimited

But the most heartwarming story in recent times has been that of how 20 girls from India have come together to form our first-ever Women's Ultimate Frisbee team for the World Ultimate and Guts Championships (WUGC)-2016 to be held in the UK in June. Ultimate Frisbee is one of very few sports to have a mixed-gender version and is also the only sport to be self-refereed at the highest international level.

Men and women play the sport with the ratio of men to women being four to three. It is a great leveler as there are no restrictions in age (the age group ranges from 17 to 36) and social status. It is for this reason that the sport is fast catching up India.

Nearly 100 women fought for a spot on the team, including video trials sent by desi girls from Australia and USA. Apart from girls from the metros like Chennai, Bengaluru and New Delhi, there are two Indian girls from Japan and Germany on the team as well. To raise over Rs 40 lakh for their airfare, as well as for their training and expenses of the support staff on the trip, the team has created a crowd funding platform. The seven-a-side game is played in 19 cities in India by almost 5,500 people. Heres wishing our girls all the Luck!

Check out their facebook page for more updates on this exciting game- Team India Women - WUGC 2016



Spotlight IndusInd Family

We at IndusInd for Sports, believe that there is a sportsperson in everyone. Hence to showcase the greatness within our own family, we urge and invite you to send in your nomination to this email id each month. We are looking at profiling individual/ team talent and achievements and we are confident that we already have an existing bank of stories to share.

If you have run your personal best at a marathon, or scaled the Everest base camp or led / been a part of a team that won a tournament or have sport in any way in your everyday lives, then now is the time to us. Send us a 250 word descriptor of your story with a few high resolution images and your contact details and we shall shortlist the best entry to be featured under this column each month.

So dig out your episodes with sport or prepare for the next tournament and share with us the stories so we can further share with our family of 25000+ and inspire each one to #getyoursporton

Best,
Team, IndusInd For Sports