

Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu and Jwala-Aswini sail into World Badminton Championship Quarters

- Saina Nehwal overcame a seven-point deficit to win the first game.
- P V Sindhu stuns Olympic Champion Li Xuerui.
- Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa fought hard to enter the Women's Doubles last eight.

PTI | Jakarta, August 13, 2015



Jakarta: Saina Nehwal sailed into the women's singles quarterfinals after an easy win in the World Badminton Championship in Jakarta on Thursday. London Olympics Bronze Medallist Saina overcame the 14th-seeded Sayaka Takahashi of Japan 21-18 21-14 in 47 minutes. Saina would be up against the winner of the match between Wang Yihan and Bae Yeon Ju in the quarters.

World No. 2 Saina, despite struggling in the opening game, managed to come from behind and live up to her reputation to advance to the next stage. Saina conceded an 0-7 lead in the first game before she slowly clawed back into the game, winning a point or two to keep up with her Japanese rival. She finally could catch Takahashi at 16-16 and the game went on neck-and-neck till 18-18 before she bagged three points on the trot to win it 21-18.

In the second game, Saina took an early lead and was sailing along smoothly before she was caught by Takahashi at 12-12. After a brief battle, however, the Indian once again broke away with a three-point lead and then earned another five consecutive points to win it comfortably.

P V Sindhu celebrates after winning her pre-quarter match against Li Xuerui.

The Chinese seem to have no answers to PV Sindhu. At the Guangzhou Worlds 2013 it was Yihan Wang, at Copenhagen 2014 it was Shixian Wang, and at Jakarta 2015, it is the turn of the greatest of them all Xuerui Li, Olympic Champion and former World No. 1 who has been dumped out of the World Championship. In a top-quality pre-quarterfinal game where Sindhu dominated the Chinese at every step of the way, the 21-17, 14-21, 21-17 victory was a resounding assertion of how much the Indian World No. 11 has gotten inside Chinese heads.

At the end of the 50 minutes, Chinese Coach Chen Jin had agony written all over his face. Sindhu's control of the shuttle as she pulled off a high risk game of playing to the corners and baseline and getting points off shots that skimmed the lines along with the court drift had upset Xuerui's calculations completely.

The 20-year-old from Hyderabad defied all odds to beat the third seeded Xuerui 21-17, 14-21, 21-17 in 50 minutes to enter the last eight. This was 11th seed Sindhu's second win out of four meetings against the World No.3.

After sharing the first two games, it all boiled down to the crucial third game where Sindhu took a solid 8-3 and then later a 12-7 advantage. However, the reigning Asian Games Champion bounced back to go 14-13 up. The World No.13 Indian used cross court smashes and drops to make the Chinese run for the shuttle and win the next five points to take a solid 18-13 lead.

It was only a matter of time before Sindhu closed the match in her favour, knocking out the Chinese who reached the finals of the last two editions to claim two silvers.

Sindhu was coming off an injury lay-off that has kept her away from the courts for four months this year, but she moved brilliantly on court today, using the lifts to the back of the court precisely and showed steady nerves and precision when playing her smashes even as she drew errors from Xuerui in a tactical battle.

Sindhu ended with 56 points and Xuerui with 55, but the pressure of Sindhu's game during which she upped her aggression yet kept laser control over where she placed the shuttles, stunned Xuerui who could not stem her errors.

The mental confidence that Sindhu enjoyed after having broken the Chinese barrier in her first ever Worlds Bronze at Guangzhou continues to elevate her game.

Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa of India celebrate after defeating Reika Kakiwa and Miyuki Maeda of Japan in the round of 16 Women's Doubles match of the 2015 World Badminton Championships in Jakarta.

Later, Jwala and Ashwini earned a thrilling three-game win over Japanese eighth seeds Reika Kakiwa and Miyuki Maeda. The 13th seeds took just two minutes less than an hour to win 21-15, 18-21, 21-19 and advance to the last eight.

The 2010 Commonwealth Games Champions will look to repeat their 2011 Worlds performance when they brought home a Bronze, which turned out to be India's first Medal at the Worlds in 28 years.

: