

## ALL ENGLAND 2017: Easy draw for Saina, Sindhu

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**Hyderabad:** If all goes well for them, both PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal have a decent chance of winning the All England Title this year. The draw which was released on Tuesday makes their bid a strong one as the shuttlers have an easy path to quarterfinals.

**So far only two Indians -Prakash Padukone in 1980 and Pullela Gopichand in 2001 -have won this prestigious Title.**



Saina is pitted against defending Champion Nozomi Okuhara of Japan in the first round. Despite winning the title last year, Okuhara is not expected to give a tough

fight to Saina. The Japanese youngster is nursing a shoulder injury and had played her last international match in November where she withdrew half-way through the firstround encounter. This Sunday , Okuhara was on the reserve bench as her team Unisys played the crucial title-deciding match against Saishunkan in the Japan League. With the All England starting in three weeks time on March 7 it is unlikely that Okuhara could make a major impact. Moreover, Saina enjoys a healthy 5-1 win-loss record against the Japanese shuttler. If she clears the first round, Saina will face a qualifier in the second round and third seed Ji Hyun Sung in the quarterfinals.

Sindhu squares up against Denmark's Mette Poulsen in the first round and is likely to meet world No.1 Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei in the quarterfinals. If she beats Tai, Sindhu may face Saina in the Semifinals.

The three Indian men in the main draw -Kidambi Srikanth, Ajay Jayaram and HS Prannoy have all got tough draws.

**Indian Badminton legend Prakash Padukone will be the guest of honour at this year's All England Championships The 1980 Champion will be the VIP guest speaker and will be at the venue on March 11 and 12.**

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