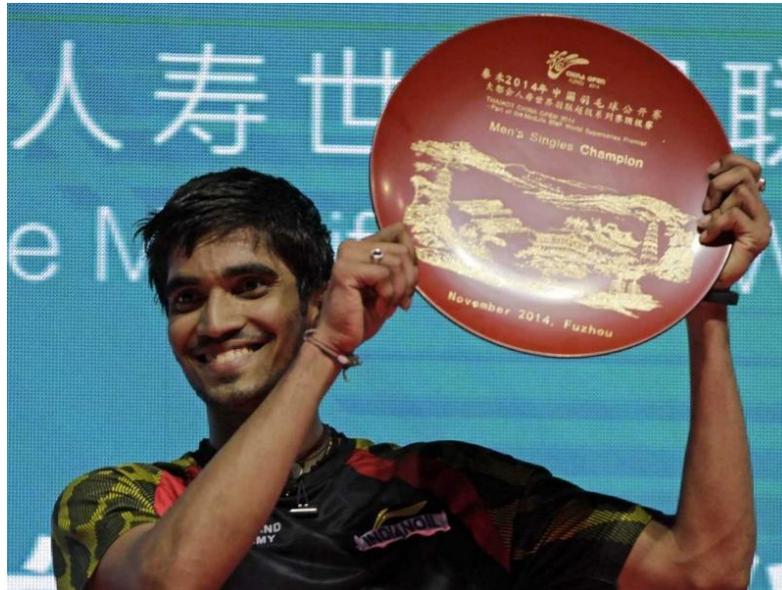


# Kidambi Srikanth stuns Lin Dan to win China Open



FUZHOU (China) November 16, 2014: In a historic day for Indian Badminton, top shuttlers K Srikanth clinched the Men's Singles title of the \$700,000 China Open Super Series Premier respectively on Sunday.

The 21-year-old Srikanth showed nerves of steel to produce a dominating performance which helped him see off five-time World Champion Lin 21-19, 21-17 in the Men's Singles final which lasted 46 minutes.



In a battle of nerve, Srikanth led 11-7 initially but Lin came back to narrow it down to 11-10. The 31-year-old showed tremendous control in his strokes but the Indian used his sharp angled net dribbles and powerful smash to keep his nose ahead at 14-12. Lin, however, soon started bothering the Indian with his delayed and precise strokes to turn the tables, reaching 19-17. Srikanth found his bearing in time and not only clawed his way back with a couple of points but also earned his game point after winning a referral. The Indian then produced a body line smash to snatch the opening game from his fancied rival.

The second game started on a similar note as both the shuttlers put their best foot forward to move together till 8-8 before Lin entered the interval with a 11-9 lead. Srikanth, however, soon drew parity at 12-12 and then moved neck and neck till 15-15. Srikanth then slowly eked out a lead and soon gained a healthy four-match point lead. Lin saved one but the Indian grabbed the next point to etch his name in the history books.



Srikanth, who won the Thailand Open Grand Prix Gold last year, had finished runners-up at the 2014 India Open Grand Prix Gold event in Lucknow and was a Quarterfinalist in this year's Malaysian Open.

The Andhra Pradesh lad was also a part of the Indian Badminton contingent that reached the Semifinals of the Mixed Team event at the Glasgow Commonwealth Games.

The China Open was Srikanth's first ever Super Series title win, and may open the floodgates for Indian Badminton in the near future, considering that beating Dan is definitely no mean achievement.

Srikanth, who hails from a typical middle class family, was an obscure player in the Badminton world in 2012, thanks to a ranking of 240, which did no justice to his now burgeoning talent. The rise from 240 to a current world ranking of 13, was no easy task for Srikanth, and the lanky lad had to sweat it out in Pulella Gopichand's Badminton Academy in Hyderabad for a while, to handle the rigours of professional Badminton.

Srikanth's first big breakthrough came in 2013, when he upstaged then National Champion, Parupalli Kashyap, in the 2013, All India Senior National Championships at New Delhi, thus heralding his rise amongst the Country's most talented shuttlers.

Up followed more glory in the international circuit, when Srikanth beat Thailand veteran, Boonsak Ponsana, and clinched the Thailand Open Grand Prix Gold, at Bangkok in 2013, which made him the second Indian player after HS Prannoy, to win a tournament of such stature.

Srikanth's plus points are his lightning quick reflexes, and also his ability to dictate play at the net, which are vital ingredients in the making of a Badminton superstar.

Fortunately, Srikanth has solid backing from the Go Sports Foundation, which has sponsored his financial needs for the sport so far, which will help him sustain himself in the competitive world of professional Badminton.

So after his historic win over Dan, the stage is set for Srikanth to achieve even greater things for Indian Badminton, and it will be no surprise if the Andhra lad does manage to emulate mentor Gopichand, and pulls off an All England win in the years to come by.

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