

# Saina Wins Syed Modi India Open - 2014

**Rakesh Rao**



**Lucknow, January 26, 2014:** At present, Saina Nehwal and P.V. Sindhu are separated by just two places in the current world ranking list. But put them on a Badminton court and even a struggling Saina, ranked ninth, looks much better than a fast-improving Sindhu.

Saina reinforced the point before a packed house here by stopping the teenager 21-14, 21-17 to regain the \$120,000 India Grand Prix Badminton Title. The triumph also ended Saina's title-drought that followed since she claimed the Denmark Open in October 2012.

Saina, winner here in 2009, collected \$9000, the winner's trophy and 7000 ranking points. For the second successive edition, Sindhu finished second best and settled for \$4,560.

On Sunday, the titles went to China and Saina. After the Chinese collected all three Doubles Titles, World number 50 Xue Song inflicted a painful 16-21, 21-19, 21-13 defeat on the National Champion K. Srikanth, ranked 30th.

When Srikanth was only two points away from winning the fast-paced final, Song dramatically turned it around. He bounced back from 12-19 in the second game to reel off the next 15 points, thereby leading 6-0 in the decider, and pushed an exasperated Srikanth to a point of no return.

No wonder, Saina held the psychological advantage of having beaten Sindhu twice in the Indian Badminton League last August — 21-19, 21-8 and 21-15, 21-7 — and never looked in serious trouble.

Sindhu, who struggled with the length of her returns throughout the contest, clawed back into the game by playing aggressively. She managed to make it 12-14 but soon it was clear that Saina was not intimidated.

In the second game, which witnessed longer rallies and some fine placements from both players, Sindhu led 5-1 and 9-7 to raise visions of a closer match. But once Saina changed gears, came up some measured forehand drops and down-the-line smashes past Sindhu's forehand, the result was never in doubt. The inevitable occurred when Sindhu missed a dribble.

"I've worked very hard and it feels great to win. Sindhu has improved a lot in the past year and I knew it would be a tough match," said the champion.

Sindhu admitted her "simple errors" cost the match. "Throughout, I played well, including the final, but I lost..." said Sindhu, with a smile that failed to hide the disappointment.

### **The Results: Finals (prefix denotes seeding):**

**Men:** 9-Xue Song (Chn) bt 6-K. Srikanth 16-21, 21-19, 21-13.

**Women:** 1-Saina Nehwal bt 2-P.V. Sindhu 21-14, 21-17.

**Men Doubles:** 4-Junhui Li and Yuchen Liu (Chn) bt 8-Huang Kiaxiang and Zhang Si Wei 21-17, 19-21, 22-20.

**Women Doubles:** Chen Qingchen and Jia Yi Fan (Chn) bt 4-Xiaohan Yu and Yaqiong Huang (Chn) 22-24, 21-19, 21-11.

**Mixed Double:** Wang Yilv and Yaqiong Huang (Chn) bt Huang Kaixiang and Chen Qingchin 21-18, 21-14.

-----