

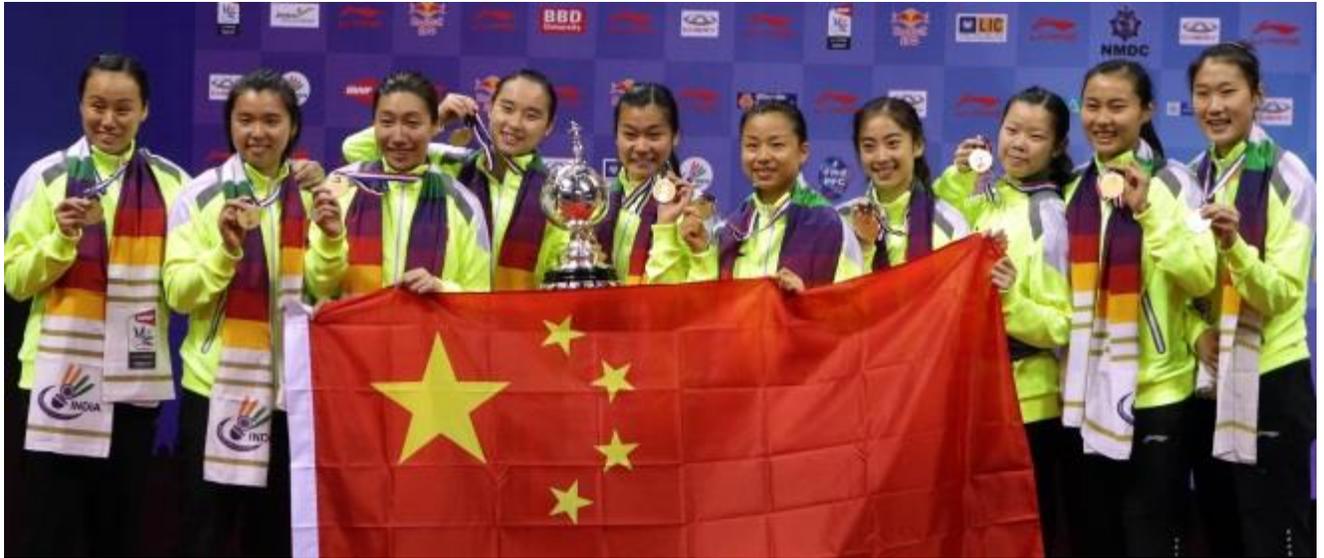
Li-Ning BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals: Day - 7: Highlights

China's powerful arsenal smashed Japan's resistance to smithereens while helping themselves to their 13th Uber Cup at the Li-Ning BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2014 today.

May 24, 2014 - Text by Dev Sukumar |



The Chinese (*above*) thus defended the trophy they had won at Wuhan in 2012. China's superiority over the rest of the women's field was starkly evident today, for not only were Japan beaten, they were nearly decimated. Only a surprise result in the first Women's Doubles kept Japanese spirits alive for a while, but that was to be extinguished with the rest of the Chinese team maintaining status quo.



Olympic Champion Li Xuerui made World No.12 Minatsu Mitani look out of her league in the opening singles. From 10-all in the first game, Li fired winners with ease from all corners of the court. Mitani was left lunging hopelessly as the missiles from Li's racket found their mark with deadly precision. Mitani was reduced to a single digit in the second game: 21-15 21-5.



The second match saw an unexpected twist. Bao Yixin and Tang Jinhua, the most dominant Women's Doubles pair over the last year with a nearly uninterrupted reign at Superseries Tournaments, ran aground against the combative Misaki Matsutomo and Ayaka Takahashi. The Japanese maintained a barrage of attacking strokes that wore down Bao and Tang, who looked out of sorts and unable to defend with their usual consistency. The 21-18 21-9 result saw Japan back in contention at a match apiece.

The rest of the Japanese Team, however, were not allowed any leeway by the Champions. All England Champion Wang Shixian was troubled early on by Sayaka Takahashi's crafty left-handed strokes, but once she started to read her opponent, Takahashi was pushed to the back court and Wang could pick her spot for the kill. Wang made it 2-1 for China with the 21-16 21-12 victory.

The tie was to end soon after, with the second Doubles. Wang Xiaoli and Zhao Yunlei's rasping smashes were too much for Miyuki Maeda and Reika Kakiwa to handle. The Japanese defence was torn apart by the sheer power of Wang and Zhao, who made it a mismatch in the second game: 21-13 21-6.

China's head coach Li Yongbo said the Uber Cup victory had much significance for this team. "This victory has two meanings for us. One was that our experienced players controlled the situation well, and the other was that our young players gained experience. We took the campaign very seriously."

Japan's (*below*) head coach Park Joo Bong had mixed feelings about his Team's loss. "Our target was the final. I'm happy with the result, as it is an improvement over our last two Uber Cup campaigns. However, our singles were not good enough. We just had a lucky draw."



Uber Cup Final Result: China 3, Japan 1

WS1: Li Xuerui beat Minatsu Mitani 21-15, 21-5

WD1: Bao Yixin / Tang Jinhua lost to **Misaki Matsutomo / Ayaka Takahashi** 18-21, 9-21

WS2: Wang Shixian beat Sayaka Takahashi 21-16, 21-12

WD2: **Wang Xiaoli / Zhao Yunlei** beat Miyuki Maeda Reika Kakiwa 21-13, 21-6

WS3: Wang Yihan vs. Akane Yamaguchi [not played]



(Uber Cup Finals 2014 Bronze Medalist Indian Women Team)
