

FOR THE FAMILY

These fired up the mental network involved in understanding other people's intentions. The researchers also found that sarcasm triggered greater activity in semantic networks in the brain regions involved in humour.

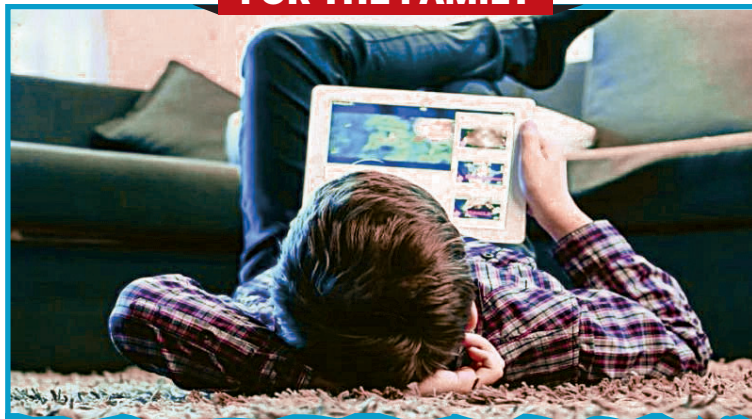


Photo: TOI



PULLELA GOPICHAND | BADMINTON

The beginning: After retiring as a player, Gopichand was named coach of the Indian national badminton team in 2006.

Credentials: He served as the official coach for the Indian team at the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro. A slew of well-known players have won career-making titles under him: Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu, Sai Praneeth, Parupalli Kashyap, Srikanth Kidambi, Arundhati Pantawane, Gurusai Datt, and Arun Vishnu, among others. Saina Nehwal won the bronze medal at the 2012 Summer Olympics under his guidance. PV Sindhu, likewise, won the silver medal at the 2016 Summer Olympics, the bronze medal at the 2020 Summer Olympics, and became the first Indian to win a gold medal at the BWF World Championships.

Awards: Gopichand received the Arjuna Award in 1999, the Dronacharya Award in 2009, and the Padma Bhushan, India's third-highest civilian award, in 2014.

The beginning: Vijay Sharma was a well-known weightlifter, winning a bronze at the 1992 National Championships. He turned coach after a wrist injury in 2000.

Credentials: Sharma has mentored many of India's well-known weightlifters. Jeremy Lalrinnungas, Chinta Sheuli, and Vikas Thakur won

VIJAY SHARMA | WEIGHTLIFTING

laurels at the Common Wealth Games. His most famous pupil, however, is Mirabai Chanu, who won a Gold at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, and silver at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

Awards: He received the Dronacharya Award in 2018.

Present role: National coach.

Present role: Pulela Gopichand is the chief national coach for India's national badminton team.



Photo: NDTV-Sports

JUDE FELIX SEBASTIAN | HOCKEY

The beginning: Sebastian was an international hockey player for over 13 years. Following a successful playing career, he began coaching at the Singapore Recreation Club in 1995. He began coaching the Indian senior men's hockey team in 2014, and now, has over 21 years of experience as a coach under his belt.

Credentials: He has been an important factor in India's hockey success in the last decade. Under his mentorship, the senior

men's hockey team won a gold at the 2014 Asian Games, and the junior men's team won a silver at the 2018 Sultan of Johor Cup as well as a silver at the 2014 Commonwealth Games, in Scotland.

Awards: He is a recipient of the Arjuna Award and Dronacharya Award for excellence as a player and coach.

Present role: Jude Felix Sebastian is currently head coach of the junior national team.



Photo: Dronacharya

L IBOMCHA SINGH | BOXING

The beginning: L Ibomcha Singh came to prominence as a boxer when he won a bronze medal for Manipur in the 1981 National Games, a first for the state of Manipur. Thereafter, he joined the Sports Authority of India (SAI), Imphal, in 1987 as a coach.

Credentials: Ibomcha Singh coached a number of beginners at SAI, of whom 38 have participated in international championships, including two Olympians, two Arjuna awardees, and one World Military Games Champion. Some of India's most prominent boxers – L Sarita, NG Dingko Singh, P Narjit, S Suresh, and M Suranjay – have trained under him. He is most well-known, however, as the coach to MC Mary Kom. Under his guidance, she won her 2012 Olympic bronze, her 2014 and 2018 golds at the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games, and gained her international first-rank position. Ibomcha Singh has also given training to athletes from other parts of the country, most famously, Olympian Vijender Singh.

Awards: L Ibomcha Singh was conferred the Dronacharya Award in 2010, in recognition of his invaluable contribution as a boxing coach.

Present role: Singh continues to train boxers at SAI, Imphal.



Photo: The Bridge

The beginning: The late Syed Abdul Rahim (1909 - 1963) is widely hailed as one of India's greatest-ever football coaches. In 1943, he began as coach of Hyderabad City Police FC. Rahim's first assignment as the coach of India was to train the team that toured Ceylon in 1949.

Credentials: Rahim is widely credited as the architect of Indian football's golden age. At the Asian Games in 1951, Syed led the team to a gold medal, a feat repeated at the 1962 Asian Games. In 1956, under his supervision, the Indian team made it to the semi-finals of the Melbourne Olympic Football Tournament, making India the first ever Asian team to do so.

SYED ABDUL RAHIM | FOOTBALL

Under his coaching at that tournament, players like Neville D'Souza, Samar Banerjee, P K Banerjee, and J Krishnaswamy, achieved fame worldwide.

Photo: Wikipedia

The beginning: The late Ramakant Achrekar (1932 - 2019) began his coaching career in 1967-68. However, the turning point in his career came when he founded the Kamath Memorial Cricket Club at Shivaji Park, in Mumbai, where he ran cricket trials, regular training, and summer camps.

RAMAKANT ACHREKAR | CRICKET

Credentials: Achrekar is credited with moulding the talent of many iconic cricket players across generations. Ajit Agarkar, Chandrakant Pandit, Vinod Kamble, Ramesh Powar, and Pravin Amre passed through his hands, though he is most famous for being the coach of Sachin Tendulkar.

Awards: He was conferred the Dronacharya Award in 1990, and received the Padma Shri in 2010.

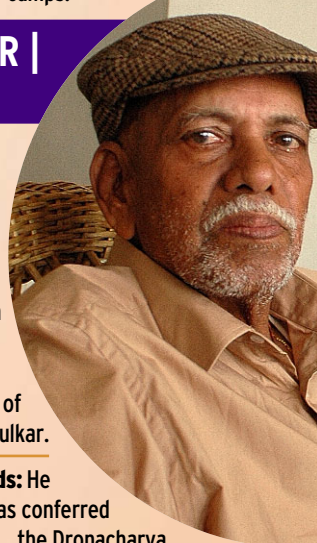


Photo: TOI

THE GUIDING FORCE

They are the force behind the power. The people who put in as much hard work as the players. They count their achievements by the accomplishments of their trainees - the mentors and coaches, who often remain unacknowledged. We take a look at a few of the best coaches our country has had



Photo: Jamshedpur News

PURNIMA MAHATO | ARCHERY

The beginning: Purnima Mahato won a silver medal at the Commonwealth Games in 1998. However, by then she had already begun her coaching career, having joined the Tata Archery Academy as a coach in 1994. She balanced her career as a player and a coach, simultaneously, for many years before going into coaching full time.

Credentials: Mahato has coached a number of India's archery talents. She trained Deepika Kumari during her 2012 Olympic stint. She coached the Indian national team at the 2010 Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. Under her coaching, the Indian archery contingent brought home two bronze medals at the 2010 Asian Games, and three gold and two bronze medals at the 2010 Commonwealth Games.

Awards: She was awarded the Dronacharya Award in 2013.

Present role: Purnima Mahato continues to coach cadets at the Tata Archery Academy in Jamshedpur, Jharkhand.



Photo: ANI

SATPAL SINGH | WRESTLING

The beginning: Satpal Singh emerged as a leading wrestler in India after winning several titles at the Asian Games and Commonwealth Games. Following his successful run as a wrestler for India, he retired as a player and opened his own Akhda in New Delhi in 1988. A number of India's wrestling champions have emerged from his Akhda.

Credentials: Satpal Singh's Akhda nurtured wrestling talents like Amit Kumar, Yogeshwar Dutt, Sushil Kumar, and Ravi Kumar Dahiya. Under Singh's coaching, Sushil Kumar bagged five gold medals, two silver medals, and four bronze medals across his career in the Olympics, Asian Games, and the Commonwealth Games. Meanwhile, Dahiya, also a disciple of Singh, won four gold, three silver, and one bronze medal in the Commonwealth Games and the Olympics.

Awards: In recognition of his invaluable role as a coach and his contribution to Indian wrestling, he was conferred the prestigious Dronacharya Award in 2009. He was awarded the Padma Shri in 1983, the Arjuna Award in 1974, and the Padma Bhushan in 2015.

Present role: Singh continues to run his Akhda, training wrestlers. He also serves as Deputy Director of Education, New Delhi, and is President of the School Games Federation of India.

The beginning: Madhukant Pathak spent much of his early career not as a bowls coach, but as a cricket umpire. However, his interest in lawn bowls was piqued, and in 2007, in Ranchi, he began to handpick and train players in the game of lawn bowls.

Credentials: Pathak is India's only certified lawn bowls coach. He was the national coach from 2010 to 2019. The men's team of Dinesh Kumar, Sunil Bahadur, and Chandan Kumar Singh, who won a silver medal at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, were all personally picked by him. However, his greatest success so far has been his coaching of the women's team. In his latest moment of glory, the women's team won a gold medal in the

MADHUKANT PATHAK | WOMEN'S LAWN BOWLS

fours team event at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games 2022. India also won a silver in men's singles.

Present role: In addition to training up-and-coming lawn bowls players in Ranchi, he is also president of Jharkhand Athletics Association.

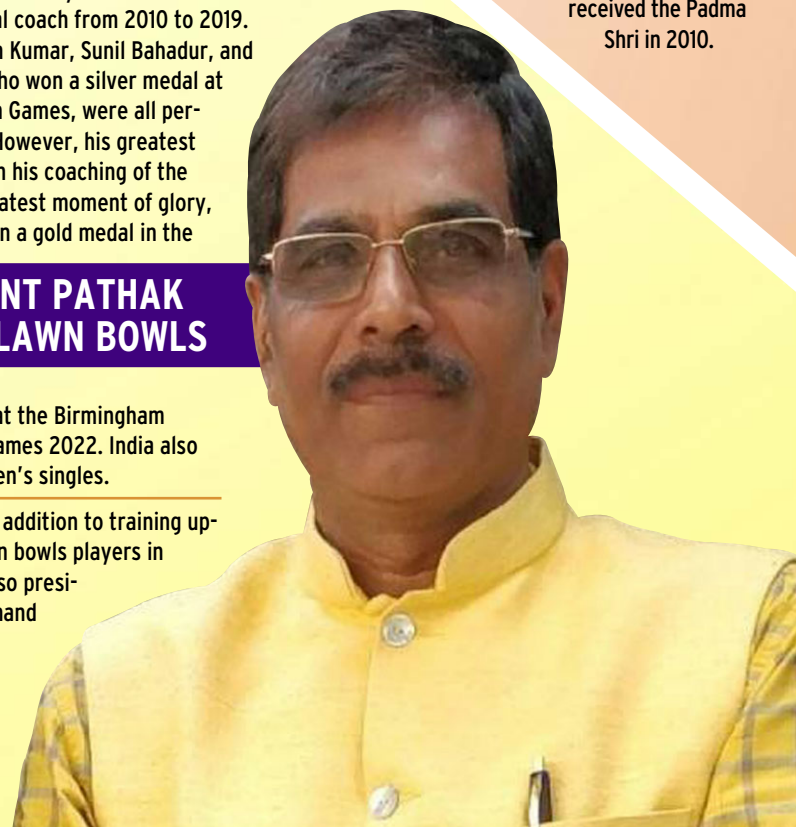


Photo: TelegraphIndia

OTHERS WHO MADE AMARK



Balkrishan Singh

He was coach of the hockey team that brought home the gold medal at the Moscow Olympics, in 1980



Bisweshwar Singh Nandi

A prolific gymnast himself, he was five times National Champion in gymnastics, and represented India in 12 instances. Dipa Karmakar is one of his most successful students. He won the Dronacharya Award in 2016.



OM Nambiar

Famously known as the man behind honing the talent of youngsters such as PT Usha. The former Air Force Sergeant-turned-athletics coach was awarded the Padma Shri decades after PT Usha shone for the country.



Gurbaksh Singh Sandhu

The man behind Indian boxing was the national coach from 1993 to 2013. He has trained the likes of Vijender Singh, and was instrumental in his 2008 Olympics bronze medal win.



Baldev Singh

Hockey players Sandeep Singh, Rani Rampal, and Harpal Singh have all been trained by this legendary coach. He has trained around 80 international stars in both the men's and women's teams.