

Gopichand gets Candid

He shares with ODE about his Life, Game and beyond

A steady passion for badminton, relentless efforts and lots of practice is what makes a great personality like Gopichand. It's indeed a great pleasure and a treat to one's spirit to talk to a person like him. The spark in his eyes and command in his voice instantly unveils the person that he is. Here's an interview that reveals the secrets behind the treasure of success.

Here are a few questions we shot at him. He was at ease addressing the youth of today! We list down a few for our readers.

Why badminton?

We used to live close to the Badminton stadium. So I was always excited by looking at the players play badminton there. It slowly caught my attention and I used to visit the stadium often. Gradually, I started playing and that has become my "everything today".

Given a choice, what will be the one thing you would want to change or do differently if you started your career afresh now?

In the circumstances that I had faced, I strongly believe I have taken the best decisions. Everything that I have done, I did it perfectly with all my effort. I took risks, and I never regret any of those. In fact, it feels good to think that I dared to take those risks which made me what I am today.

Do you ever feel it would have been better if you had done your PG?

Well, maybe I should have. But then, my practical experiences have taught me the true lessons of life, and that's what counts. Because I read extensively, I am able to stay abreast and so I don't miss doing my PG.

How do you keep yourself mentally strong during a really tight moment, and maintain your calm during clinching moments?

It all depends on the motivation levels. I make sure they are always high for me before a match. At times, a good crowd helps you to strengthen your confidence. But you should have the ability to take zeal from even a negative crowd and motivate yourself. That's the true test of confidence!

Which was the match that you cherish the most?

It was with Peter Gade, a Danish guy. It was a tough match, and as I said, I had to keep my motivation levels much high through out the match.

After winning so many titles, did you get closer to your fans or has the distance increased? What role did the media play in this?

Well, frankly speaking, I have been the same person before and after my achievements. I still have the same set of people around me and I enjoy their company. But yes, I have to admit that I am not able to spend that much of time as I did before with either my family or friends. But as they say, Success comes at a cost; but I am glad I am still able to strike equilibrium. But at any point of time, the Values of a person should remain the same. Regarding media, even today I don't interact with the media. I am talking to you now as I was impressed with your innovative idea of starting the first feel-write-publish magazine in town. Otherwise generally, I interact with the media only to the necessary extent.

What is it that you do to relieve your stress?

Badminton court is my best stress-buster! My game relieves me of all my stress. So I never actually needed a separate place to relieve my stress.

Do you freak out with friends?

Well, even before, I never used to go out much with friends. But yes, I go with them once in a while, and we enjoy every moment spent together.

What's your opinion about majority of today's youth not considering sports as a career option?

Fortunately or otherwise, today a lot of things revolve around money. Give an option of not considering the money factor; I am sure more than half of them will choose some other career option than what they are presently pursuing right now! We should understand that money will flow in when you give your best efforts.

Who are your Role models?

I had learnt a lot from my Dad during my childhood. He has taught me the lessons of life with utmost care and love. On a professional front, I had learnt many moral values from my co-players and coaches. I am a constant learner, and even today I learn from people around me.

How do you feel on coaching young players and bringing out the right output from players like Saina Nehwal?

She always had an intense desire to perform, and that made me more enthusiastic to coach her for 4 1/2 years. At the end of the day, it is her hard work and dedication that has paid back.

Apart from being on court, what are your activities during leisure?

I listen to a lot of music to keep my mood pleasant and be focused. Apart from that I read non-fiction books during breaks.

As a seasoned coach, what would be your tips and advice to young players?

If someone is really serious with the game, I would advise them to be ready to make sacrifices for a period of 10 years. If they are ready for this, any coach would be more than ready to train them!

What is your schedule before a match?

I make sure my day goes very sacred before my match. I stay away from the regular busy routine, take time out for myself and relax. Some good breathing helps you relax totally and some good music, as I said, can boost up the spirit.

What would your advice be to today's youth?

“Keep life simple. Spend less than you earn. Don't get addicted to credit cards! That's it. This might sound bland, but it means a lot when you look back at life!”

You being a frequent traveler, what is the place you like the most?

Hyderabad! This is my place, and no matter how much globetrotting I do, Hyderabad can replace no other place to me!

“I see a lot of budding players taking interest in the game these days. At our academy, we have a goal to make India a Badminton Powerhouse by the year 2018” he says.

“Whether it's a game or life, your focus should remain the same!”

- *as shared with Surya Adavi*