



Celebrating the new HSBC BWF World Tour with a toast are (from left) BWF Secretary General Thomas Lund; BWF President Poul-Erik Hoyer; Deputy Secretary General of Guangzhou City Government, Zhang Jianhua; Chief Executive Greater China of HSBC, Helen Wong; Deputy Director – General of Guangzhou Sports Administration, Lin Yan Fen; Vice Secretary General of the Chinese Badminton Association, Feng Pingshan; and Deputy Director – General of Guangzhou Sports Administration, Wu Min Chun.

HIGHLIGHTS

HONOUR FOR 'MINIONS', CHEN QINGCHEN (PAGE 5)

SHUTTLING THROUGH 2017 (PAGES 11 & 12)

KEY DATES

09-14 January	Princess Sirivannavari Thailand Masters (Super 300), Bangkok
16-21 January	Perodua Malaysia Masters (Super 500), Kuala Lumpur
23-28 January	Daihatsu Indonesia Masters (Super 500), Jakarta
30 Jan-04 Feb	Yonex-Sunrise Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta India Open (Super 500), New Delhi
06-07 February	Victor Oceania Men's & Women's Team Championships, Hamilton
06-11 February	Badminton Asia Team Championships, Alor Setar
08-11 February	Victor Oceania Championships (Individual), Hamilton
12-15 February	All Africa Men's & Women's Team Championships, Algiers
13-18 February	European Men's & Women's Team Championships, Kazan
15-18 February	Pan Am Male & Female Continental Team Championships, Tacarigua
16-18 February	All Africa Individual Championships, Algiers
20-25 February	Yonex Swiss Open (Super 300), Basel
27 Feb-04 March	Spain Open (Super 300), Bilbao
06-11 March	Yonex German Open (Super 300), Mulheim-An-Der-Ruhr
14-18 March	Yonex All England (Super 1000), Birmingham
27 Mar-01 Apr	Orleans Masters (Super 100), Orleans

BIGGER BUCKS

Badminton players are set to cash in big time from the Badminton World Federation's remodelled tournament circuit, now boasting almost US\$13 million in prize money.

As the new HSBC BWF World Tour revs up with its first four events in January, players are eyeing larger pay days this year. Collectively, the five-tier HSBC BWF World Tour boasts US\$12 million in prize money while the 11 events in the sixth tour level – the BWF Tour Super 100 – are offering nearly another million dollars altogether.

The jewel in the crown – the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals in Guangzhou, China – boasts badminton's biggest bonanza – a US\$1.5 million jackpot. Winners' cheques will increase by 50 per cent from US\$80,000 (singles) and US\$84,000 (doubles) in

Dubai to \$120,000 and US\$126,000 respectively. Runners-up in both singles and doubles will pocket US\$60,000.

The three HSBC BWF World Tour Super 1000 events – YONEX All England Championships, China Open and Indonesia Open – are each offering at least US\$1 million in prize money. The Indonesia Open is the most lucrative, giving away US\$1.25 million, with singles winners receiving US\$87,500 each and doubles winners US\$92,500 (per pair). This is a jump from last season when singles champions in Jakarta took home US\$75,000 and doubles winners US\$79,000. The All England and China Open have seen a cash spike too, with singles winners assured of US\$70,000 and doubles winners US\$74,000.

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Poul-Erik Høyer
BWF President

Dear Colleagues and Friends

May I begin by wishing you all a Happy New Year!

It is hard to believe how quickly 2017 flew by and that we have started another season – indeed a new tournament cycle and format – with exciting prospects beckoning badminton into the future.

In January, we at the Badminton World Federation launched our remodelled world tour and presented HSBC as our Principal Global Partner in an extensive sponsorship agreement that will catapult badminton to unprecedented heights. HSBC will have a corporate presence across BWF's entire suite of events – title-sponsoring the new HSBC BWF World Tour and the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals in Guangzhou, China, for the next four years as well as becoming a sponsor for the BWF Major Events (World Championships, Sudirman Cup and Thomas & Uber Cup Finals). The banking group has also been named BWF Global Development Partner, working with our Development team to grow badminton globally.

I am pleased to welcome HSBC to the badminton family. This is a significant milestone in our federation's history. We are stepping boldly into the future with a partnership that will define badminton for the ages. HSBC enjoys a cachet that is the envy of the banking world. It has distinguished itself across the panorama of sport as a brand of excellence – a brand with which BWF is proud to partner.

We also look forward to partnering with the city of Guangzhou and the Chinese Badminton Association for the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals. China is a crucial badminton market and we are pleased to entrust one of our flagship tournaments to Guangzhou for the next four years. I would like to thank our colleagues in Guangzhou for working with BWF to host a wonderful launch event on Monday 8 January. See you in December for the tour finals.

In addition, 2018 has seen us enter fully into our agreement with Wanda – through its subsidiary Infront Sports & Media – for the centralised media and sponsorship rights of all BWF tournaments. It is a busy time for all involved, including our corporate partners, hosts and staff, and we appreciate the diligence and hard work which everyone has been doing.

Amid ushering in this ground-breaking era, we bade farewell to the Dubai World Superseries Finals – the glamorous season finale which our top performers have enjoyed for the just-concluded, four-year tournament cycle. It was an amazing showpiece which set new benchmarks in organisation and presentation. Additionally, it was a platform for launching our development initiatives in the United Arab Emirates, including the grassroots programme, Shuttle Time; coach education; and training for para-badminton players and officials. I wish to thank the Dubai Sports Council as well as Falcon and Associates for partnering with us on this remarkable and successful journey. The BWF will always have fond memories of Dubai.

I would like to thank MetLife also – title sponsor of the BWF World Superseries since January 2014. There is no doubt badminton flourished in this union which elevated our sport in the realm of global sports-entertainment commodities. MetLife brand has an impressive global reputation with which BWF was proud to be associated and we appreciate MetLife's contribution.

Meanwhile, there has been much to salute on the courts, with some outstanding successes in three signature tournaments: the BWF World Junior Championships 2017, the BWF Para-Badminton World Championships 2017 and the Dubai World Superseries Finals 2017. Congratulations to all medallists and winners at these events and to the hosts in Yogyakarta (Indonesia), Ulsan (Korea) and Dubai for superb hospitality and organisation.

As I draw to a close, I wish to touch on BWF's testing of an Experimental Service Law (Fixed Height) from 1 March, 2018. A change to the Laws of Badminton, stemming from a proposal by the Badminton Association of Malaysia, will mandate that "the whole of the shuttle shall be below 1.15 metres from the surface of the court at the instant of being hit by the server's racket". The first event of the new BWF tournament series at which this experimental law will be introduced is the YONEX All England Open Badminton Championships 2018.

The serve is an integral part of badminton and BWF has been seeking ways to improve how the service laws are applied. We hope this experiment will yield positive feedback from our membership, especially players.

In closing, please allow me to extend condolences to the family and friends of the late Erik Meijs – a Dutch player who passed away in November – and to the family and colleagues of late Danish administrator, John Hansen, who died in mid-January.

May they rest in peace.

Poul-Erik Høyer

HISTORIC 'PARA'-LLEL CHAMPIONSHIPS IN BASEL



BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer (left) congratulates Swiss Badminton President Robbert de Kock after Basel was chosen to host two BWF World Championships simultaneously.

The Swiss city of Basel will create history next year – hosting the badminton and para-badminton World Championships simultaneously in August.

In a landmark decision, the BWF Council has accepted Swiss Badminton's enterprising bid to hold the BWF Para-Badminton World Championships 2019 jointly with the TOTAL BWF World Championships 2019. The first-ever dual staging of these BWF Major Events will take place at St. Jakobshalle, a venue with 9,000 seats.

BWF's announcement underlined the federation's commitment to its goal of developing para-badminton in tandem with badminton.

"This is a momentous occasion for BWF and Swiss Badminton – and for the development of our sport and athletes; bringing able-bodied athletes and athletes with impairments together to showcase their talents under the same roof with their World Championships being held at the same time," declared BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer.

He noted that, since assuming responsibility for para-badminton in June 2011, BWF's avowed mission has been to develop that branch of the sport along the same lines as badminton – with the motto One Sport - One Team.

"The spectacle of two World Championships, being jointly staged, will propel this philosophy to a unique level. It will be amazing to see and we must congratulate Swiss Badminton on their innovative and ambitious thinking. They have convinced us – the BWF Council – that they can deliver these tournaments, to world-class standards together, and we look forward to this historic occasion," added Høyer.

"It will surely raise the bar for hosting premier sporting events."

Having first mooted the idea of joint World Championships last March when they bid successfully for the TOTAL BWF World Championships 2019, Swiss Badminton pursued their objective with a follow-up bid for the para-badminton showpiece.

"We are extremely proud Basel has been awarded both World Championships," said Swiss Badminton President Robbert de Kock.

"It will be the first time in the history of sport that two World Championships will be organised at the same time and at the same venue. This new mega-event will send a clear message to the world. Swiss Badminton, the organising committee and Basel are ready!"

NEW PARA-BADMINTON ATHLETES' COMMISSION

Wheelchair athlete, Richard Perot, has been chosen to serve a second successive term as Chair of the BWF Para-Badminton Athletes' Commission.

The Frenchman has Raúl Anguiano of Guatemala as his Deputy Chair while Daniel Chan (Hong Kong), Anand Kumar (India) and Bello Rafiu Oyebanji (Nigeria) are the other three players on the new five-member panel. The Commission's four-year term came into effect on Saturday 25 November on the sidelines of the BWF Para-Badminton World Championships 2017 in Ulsan, Korea.

There was no need for voting as there were only five nominations and therefore all nominees automatically became Commission members. They selected Perot to remain as Chair at their first meeting.

The Commission's role is to:

- Liaise with players, organise players meetings at tournaments and canvas their views and opinions on rules and regulations, development and direction of para-badminton;
- Represent the views of para-badminton athletes at BWF Para-Badminton Commission meetings
- Report back to the players on outcomes of meetings and representations made at the BWF Para-Badminton Commission meetings.

Two representatives from the BWF Para-Badminton Athletes' Commission will sit on the BWF Para-Badminton Commission. The latter is distinct from the BWF Para-Badminton Athletes' Commission.

The BWF Para-Badminton Commission provides expert advice to the BWF on the training, development and competition needs of those participating and competing in para-badminton.



Standing (from left) are Daniel Chan (Hong Kong), Anand Kumar (India) and Raúl Anguiano (Guatemala) while Richard Perot (France) is seated.

Bottom is Bello Rafiu Oyebanji (Nigeria).



NEW BWF EVENT LOGOS



BANKING ON BADMINTON

In January, the Badminton World Federation announced global banking group, HSBC, as its Principal Global Partner in an extensive agreement that includes title-sponsoring the top five tiers of BWF's remodelled tournament circuit. Those five levels are the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals and four tiers with a related numbering convention. Collectively, they are the HSBC BWF World Tour. There is a sixth level – the BWF Tour Super 100.

Top left is the new composite series logo along with logos for four of the five tiers of the HSBC BWF World Tour and the BWF Tour Super 100 logo.

The logo for the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals is yet to be unveiled.

Meanwhile, the five HSBC BWF World Tour Super 750 tournaments will each have a jackpot of US\$700,000 while the seven HSBC BWF World Tour Super 500 events carry US\$350,000 each in prize money and the 11 HSBC BWF World Tour Super 300 tournaments have US\$150,000 prize pools.

"Badminton has entered a new era with our cohesive tour structure and the partnership with HSBC which has certainly boosted our profile in the sporting world. One of our key goals in restructuring our tournament series was to ensure greater financial benefit for our players and we have achieved that.

"Last year, four players earned more than US\$200,000 in prize money and some others made well over US\$100,000. The Indonesian Men's Doubles pair – Kevin and Marcus – shared US\$373,250 from a very successful year. So our players are making good money and can earn a comfortable living as professional athletes," noted BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer.

"They stand to earn even more now and we can already see their motivation is high to perform well, with greater prize money being one of the obvious reasons. When you can see winners at the Super 500 level making almost US\$30,000 – that is quite good."

Highlighting increased prize money as one of the benefits of the HSBC partnership, Høyer welcomed the global banking group to the BWF family, stating: "This is

a significant milestone in our federation's history. We are stepping boldly into the future with a partnership that will define badminton for the ages.

"HSBC enjoys a cachet that is the envy of the banking world. It has distinguished itself across the panorama of sport as a brand of excellence – a brand with which BWF is proud to partner."

HSBC was unveiled as BWF's Principal Global Partner at a launch event in Guangzhou in January in an extensive sponsorship agreement which will see HSBC having a corporate presence across BWF's entire suite of events – title-sponsoring the new HSBC BWF World Tour and the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals for the next four years as well as becoming a sponsor for the BWF Major Events (TOTAL World Championships, TOTAL Sudirman Cup and TOTAL Thomas & Uber Cup Finals). HSBC will also be the BWF Global Development Partner, working with the world-governing body to grow badminton globally.

BWF revealed Guangzhou as home of the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals from 2018 to 2021; a fitting location given badminton's prominence in China and HSBC's focus on the Pearl River Delta region.

Helen Wong, Chief Executive Greater China of HSBC, said: "HSBC is excited to help grow this popular sport across Asia and beyond, through this global partnership

with the BWF. Supporting the new HSBC BWF World Tour, we hope to develop deeper relationships with athletes, fans, customers and employees on every stop, including here in Guangzhou.

"The Pearl River Delta is an important market for HSBC and it's great to see Guangzhou being celebrated as the new home for the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals."

The BWF also presented the Chinese Badminton Association and the city of Guangzhou – represented by the Guangzhou Sports Bureau – as key partners of the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals – the signature, year-end finale for the season's top achievers.

"China is a crucial badminton market and we are pleased to entrust one of our flagship tournaments to Guangzhou for the next four years," said Høyer.

Deputy Secretary General of Guangzhou City Government, Zhang Jianhua, said "it's Guangzhou's honour to host the Finals" while Secretary General of the Chinese Badminton Association (CBA), Lei Jun, stated the Chinese badminton community is very proud to be entrusted with the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals and pledged to uphold the high standards which are associated with the season finale.

"We look forward to working with the city of Guangzhou, BWF and HSBC to ensure a spectacular event for our top players."



HONOUR FOR 'MINIONS', CHEN QINGCHEN

Indonesia's Marcus Fernaldi Gideon/Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo's (5) brilliant 2017 season was rewarded with the Male Player of the Year award at the Players' Reception and Gala Dinner on the eve of the Dubai World Superseries Finals.

The Indonesians, winners of six World Superseries titles in 2017, won the vote of the Awards Commission ahead of three other nominees – Denmark's Viktor Axelsen, India's Kidambi Srikanth and China's Zheng Siwei.

"It's not often that doubles players get recognition ahead of singles, so it was unexpected," said Sukamuljo. "We've had a good year, and we will take this as motivation to get better."

The contest for the Female Player of the Year was expected to be close, with six nominees – Chen Qingchen (China), Huang Yaqiong (China), Tai Tzu Ying (Chinese Taipei), Pusarla V Sindhu (India), Akane Yamaguchi (Japan) and Lee So Hee (Korea). It was Chen Qingchen (2) who won the nod of the Commission; the double World Championships medallist having excelled in both her doubles categories during the year.

"It was a big surprise – I thought Tai Tzu Ying would get it," said Chen. "It is a big honour and I'm delighted. It's an award all players want to win. At the beginning of 2017 I never thought I would do so well; I will try to maintain the momentum."

China also celebrated another honour as Chen Yufei (6) won the Eddy Choong Award for Most Promising Player of the Year. Chen, bronze medallist at the TOTAL BWF World Championships, held off competition from Indonesia's Apriyani Rahayu and Gregoria Mariska Tunjung; India's Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Malaysia's Lee Zii Jia.

"I'm very happy; it's a recognition of my efforts," said Chen. "I transitioned well from the junior level to the senior as I focussed on taking one step at a time. I'm trying very hard to get better. There is the pressure of following in the footsteps of my accomplished seniors, but I'm trying my best."

Japan's Women's Doubles pair Yuki Fukushima and Sayaka Hirota (3) were named the Most Improved Player of the Year, which is a special direct award from the Awards Commission.

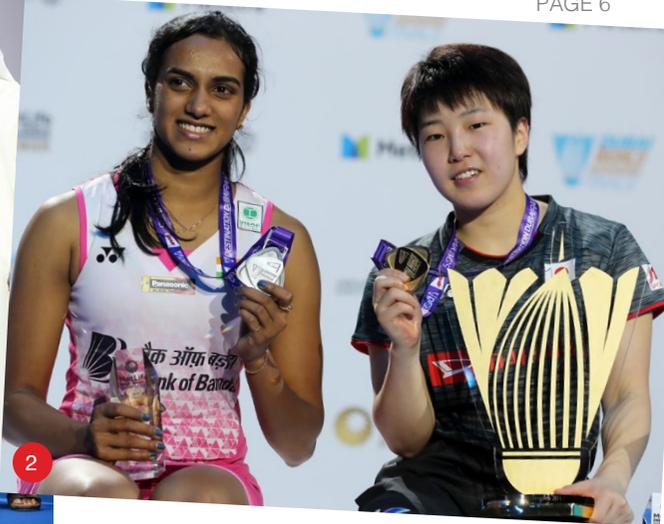
The two young Japanese were startled when their names were announced and took a while to come to terms with it.

"We're quite surprised to get it!" said Hirota. "It's a big honour and we are thankful. We've had a good year, but we want to remain consistent and we want to keep evolving our game as we should not become predictable."

Korea's Kim Jungjun (7) won the Male Para-Badminton Player of the Year award, while Female Para-Badminton Player of the Year award went to Thailand's Amnouy Wetwithan (1).

"This is a great recognition of my efforts," said Wetwithan. "This award will be a boost not only for para-badminton but for all para-sport in Thailand. Last year, I was a contender for the award but could not get it. This year my achievements were better, so I'm very proud."

The evening's final bragging rights – for Mr and Ms Best Dressed – went to India's Kidambi Srikanth and Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu Ying (4) for their classy attire.



YAMAGUCHI'S GREATEST TRIUMPH



Badminton's stary four-year enchantment with Dubai ended in grand style – with a compelling generational clash between Denmark's Viktor Axelsen (5) and Malaysia's Lee Chong Wei fittingly concluding the final edition of the Dubai World Superseries Finals in December.

World champion Axelsen was in imperious form through the tournament, but for a loss to China's Shi Yuqi in a group match. The Dane shrugged off that result, avenged that defeat in the semi-finals against Shi, and held off a slightly erratic Lee in the title bout. The Malaysian had his opportunity to take the final in straight games, but blew his chances at the end of a tight second game. Axelsen stormed back and was unstoppable in the decider. It was the second straight Dubai title for Axelsen in his third final.

Finals day began with China's Zheng Siwei/Chen Qingchen (3) defending their Mixed Doubles honour against the pair that beat them

in Denmark – Hong Kong's Tang Chun Man/Tse Ying Suet. The Chinese were on a roll from the outset and, despite valiant efforts by their Hong Kong rivals, were always in command.

The Women's Singles battle that followed – between India's Pusarla V Sindhu and Japan's Akane Yamaguchi (2) – was the match of the tournament, evoking comparisons between the epic final at the World Championships between Pusarla and Yamaguchi's compatriot Nozomi Okuhara. Once again, it was Pusarla's attack and reach against Japanese tenacity; the match stretched 94 thrilling minutes before Yamaguchi smiled shyly – but triumphantly – at her coaches. Having fallen short yet again in a major final, Pusarla struggled for words but was all praise for her doughty opponent.

Men's Doubles saw the standout pair of 2017 – Indonesia's Marcus Fernaldi Gideon/

Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo (1) – against World champions Liu Cheng/Zhang Nan (China).

It was a day when the Indonesians could do no wrong. Backed by a small but noisy cluster of fans, Fernaldi and Sukamuljo hit stratospheric heights, flying around the court, making impossible interceptions and firing crisp winners to leave the Chinese in a daze. Thirty-nine minutes was all it took for the 'Minions' to wrap up the final – giving them their seventh World Superseries crown of the season.

Japan has dominated Women's Doubles in recent years so it was little surprise that two Japanese pairs duelled for the championship – Shiho Tanaka/Koharu Yonemoto and Yuki Fukushima/Sayaka Hirota. If spectators expected a long drawn-out battle, typical of all-Japan matches, it was not to be as Tanaka/Yonemoto (4) outplayed their team-mates in straight games.



DUBAI WORLD SUPERSERIES FINALS 2017

MS: Viktor Axelsen (DEN) bt Lee Chong Wei (MAS) 19-21 21-19 21-15

WS: Akane Yamaguchi (JPN) bt Pusarla V Sindhu (IND) 15-21 21-12 21-19

MD: Marcus Fernaldi Gideon/Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo (INA) bt Liu Cheng/Zhang Nan (CHN) 21-16 21-15

WD: Shiho Tanaka/Koharu Yonemoto (JPN) bt Yuki Fukushima/Sayaka Hirota (JPN) 21-16 21-15

XD: Zheng Siwei/Chen Qingchen (CHN) bt Tang Chun Man/Tse Ying Suet (HK) 21-15 22-20

TESTING TIMES AHEAD!

The Badminton World Federation will start testing an Experimental Service Law (Fixed Height) from 1 March, this year, including at the TOTAL BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2018 in Bangkok and at the TOTAL BWF World Championships 2018 in Nanjing.

Following a decision at last year's BWF Annual General Meeting – based on a proposal from the Badminton Association of Malaysia – a prospective change to the Laws of Badminton will be brought before the BWF Annual General Meeting in May to give effect to this testing.

It will mandate that **“the whole of the shuttle shall be below 1.15 metres from the surface of the court at the instant of being hit by the server's racket”**. The first event at which

this experimental law will be introduced is the YONEX German Open 2018 (6-11 March) which is a week later on the events calendar this year, thus preceding the All England Open Badminton Championships 2018 in testing.

All Grade 1 events – except the BWF World Junior Championships – will undergo testing as will Grade 2 events (the HSBC BWF World Tour and BWF Tour Super 100 events) and continental championships in April. As of now, testing is expected to run until year-end.

“The serve is an integral part of badminton. Over the years, we have been looking for ways to improve how the service laws are applied,” said BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer.

“Therefore, after various investigations and deliberations, the Council has determined to implement this Experimental Service Law in an effort to improve the application of the service laws at BWF tournaments. We hope this will yield positive feedback from our membership.”

Ahead of the testing, the BWF will host a training workshop for BWF Umpire Assessors in Kuala Lumpur in January and thereafter those BWF Umpire Assessors will hold training courses at the continental team championships in February. Training will include how to use the measuring devices that will determine service height.



TOKYO 2020 BADMINTON VENUE OPENS

The Musashino Forest Sport Plaza (above), a new permanent venue for the Olympic and Paralympic Games Tokyo 2020, officially opened on Saturday 25 November – with 972 days and 1,004 days to go respectively until the opening of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Constructed by the Tokyo Metropolitan Government, the Musashino venue will host badminton and fencing in modern pentathlon at the Olympic Games, and wheelchair basketball during the Paralympic Games.

The main arena boasts a seating capacity of more than 10,000 and includes a swimming pool, a gym, a multi-use sports area and two fitness studios all of which will be available for use by the public. Solar panels on the roof and other state-of-the-art technology help reduce the facility's carbon footprint. Additionally, the layout is based on the Tokyo 2020 Accessibility Guidelines, with the facility designed to be accessible to all, including the elderly, people with impairments, parents with infant strollers and those with guide dogs.

This venue represents the first tangible legacy of the Tokyo 2020 Games. The opening ceremony was attended by Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike, along with Olympians, Paralympians and people from the local community.

Tokyo 2020 CEO Toshiro Muto said, “I am delighted this first new permanent venue has been delivered and inaugurated in such an early phase of the Games lifecycle. The Organising Committee's activities have switched from the planning phase to the delivery phase and our eyes are now firmly on the opening date of the Games.”

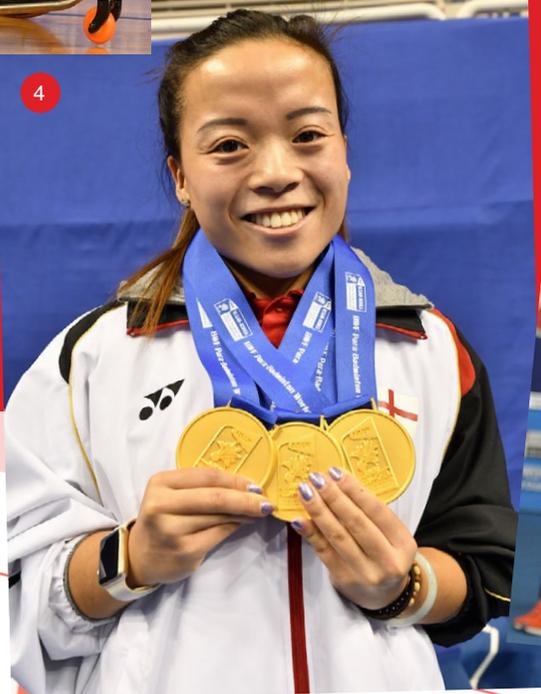


PAN AM HONOURS

On the sidelines of the BWF Council meeting in Montego Bay in November, Badminton Pan Am Confederation recognised the longstanding contributions of its Chief Operating Officer, Pilar Carrillo, and its Development Director, German Valdez.

Both stalwarts recently celebrated a decade of service to the organisation and were presented with commemorative plaques by BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer who congratulated Carrillo and Valdez and thanked both for their efforts to grow and promote badminton in the Pan American region.

Witnessing the presentation were BWF Vice-President – Pan Am, Vishu Tolan (left), who is from Jamaica and BWF Council Member, Wayne Somers (right), who is Canadian.



LIU STARS IN FIRST WORLDS

Liu Yutong (1) wasn't a familiar name before the BWF Para-Badminton World Championships 2017 in Ulsan, Korea.

By the end of the 22-26 November event last year, the 13-year-old had captured the hearts of all present. Liu – the youngest player – was also one of the most determined competitors. The wheelchair athlete – who lost her legs in an accident when she was four – showed intense focus and untiring athleticism in winning the WH 2 Women's Singles title, emulating to an extent her idol – Kim Jungjun of Korea (2) who maintained his unbeaten international streak.

Kim claimed his third straight WH 2 Men's Singles title and, for good measure, added the WH 1 – WH 2 Men's Doubles crown to his 11 gold medals this season. Kim and his compatriot Lee Sam Seop helped Korea dominate the men's wheelchair events while Liu Yutong, Li Hongyan and Yang Fan ensured China swept the women's wheelchair categories. Apart from Kim and Li, Indonesia's Ukun Rukaendi and Hary Susanto and India's Parul Parmar also won two golds each.

Meanwhile, England's Rachel Choong (4) was the most successful player, repeating her three-gold medal feat from two years ago.

"I'm ecstatic, I can't believe it," said the short-stature queen. "Back in Stoke Mandeville (2015) I was surprised to create history by winning three World Championship titles and being the first English player to do so at a single World Championships; so to repeat that, I'm over the moon; just super happy."

The Chinese team, comprising young prospects, won four gold and seven silver medals, indicating their will be the country to watch as Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games draw near. China fielded 22 athletes this year, compared to just two in 2015. England and Indonesia also took home four golds each.

The SS 6 Men's Singles finale proved a thriller between England team-mates, Krysten Coombs and Jack Shephard (3). The latter fought back after a poor and, despite facing desperate situations in the remaining two games, stayed in the hunt as Coombs faltered under pressure.

Coombs led 17-14 in the second game, after winning the first easily, but failed to close it out. That pattern prevailed in the decider as he led 20-17 only to watch his friend and rival seize gold: 10-21 21-19 23-21.

Malaysia's Cheah Liek Hou defended his title versus a combative Suryo Nugroho of Indonesia (5) in the SU 5 Men's Singles final (19-21 21-15 21-18) and there was similar excitement in SU 5 Women's Singles, with top seed Ayako Suzuki (Japan) fended off China's Yang Qiuxia (18-21 21-18 21-18). France's Lucas Mazur and China's Cheng Hefang emerged victorious in SL 4 Men's Singles and Women's Singles respectively.

The 11th BWF Para-Badminton World Championships – the largest ever – impressed with its standards on and off court. The welcome gala, hosted by Ulsan's mayor, rolled out the red carpet, treating 268 para-athletes from 41 countries to an entertaining show and dinner. Japan boasted the biggest contingent (28 players), followed by India (24), and China and Korea (18 each).

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BWF PARA-BADMINTON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017 – WINNERS

MS SL 3: Ukun Rukaendi (Indonesia)

MS SL 4: Lucas Mazur (France)

MS SS 6: Jack Shephard (England)

MS SU 5: Cheah Liek Hou (Malaysia)

MS WH 1: Lee Sam Seop (Korea)

MS WH 2: Kim Jung Jun (Korea)

MD SL 3 - SL 4: Ukun Rukaendi/Hary Susanto (Indonesia)

MD SS 6: Chu Man Kai/Wong Chun Yim (Hong Kong)

MD SU 5: Suryo Nugroho (Indonesia)/Tay Wei Ming (Singapore)

MD WH 1 - WH 2: Kim Jung Jun/Lee Sam Seop (Korea)

WS SL 3: Parul Dalsukhbhai Parmar (India)

WS SL 4: Cheng Hefang (China)

WS SS 6: Rachel Choong (England)

WS SU 5: Ayako Suzuki (Japan)

WS WH 1: Li Hongyan (China)

WS WH 2: Liu Yutong (China)

WD SL 3 - SU 5: Parul Dalsukhbhai Parmar (India)/Akiko Sugino (Japan)

WD SS 6: Rebecca Bedford/Rachel Choong (England)

WD WH 1 - WH 2: Li Hongyan/Yang Fan (China)

XD SL 3 - SU 5: Hary Susanto/Leani Ratri Oktita (Indonesia)

XD SS 6: Andrew Martin/Rachel Choong (England)

XD WH 1 - WH 2: Jakarin Homhau/Amnoury Wetwithan (Thailand)



BWF COPS TOP AWARDS

Badminton's growing global stature and the Badminton World Federation's sterling work were recognised by two leading organisations in late 2017.

In November, the Malaysia-based world-governing body won the Gold Award from SPIA Asia for the Best Global Sports Organization Operating in Asia. This announcement was made at the 3rd SPIA Asia – Asia's Sports Industry Awards & Conference in Bangkok. BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer accepted the prize from Eric M Gottschalk (pictured above), CEO of MMC Sportz Marketing LLC, organiser of SPIA Asia, in Dubai a month later.

BWF eclipsed nine other nominees: International Tennis Federation (UK); International Cricket Council (UAE); Spartan Race (USA); ONE Championship (Singapore); FC Bayern Munich (China); United Arab Emirates Ju Jitsu Federation (UAE); Ultimate Fighting Championship (USA); Global Professional Tennis Coach Association (Switzerland), and Peter Burwash International (USA). Spartan Race won silver, while UFC won bronze.

"This award recognises achievement at all levels, including grassroots development, quality of events, and development of a global fan base. I'm happy to note that, in collaboration with various partners, we have achieved substantial progress on all these fronts. This award will inspire us to strive for greater achievements," said BWF Secretary General Thomas Lund.

In early December, BWF was again in the spotlight, being crowned Federation of the Year at the prestigious Peace and Sport Awards in Monaco. BWF won for its Shuttle Time Connect programme. The other nominees were FIVB (Federation Internationale de Volleyball) and WAKO (World Association of Kickboxing Organizations).

Shuttle Time Connect – part of BWF's schools programme Shuttle Time – is a sporting, educational and cultural exchange between Nepal and Australia using badminton to promote lasting connections between students, teachers and schools. Shuttle Time Connect engaged seven schools each in Nepal and Australia through their respective national associations. Seven students and two teachers from Kathmandu joined the Shuttle Time Connect exchange visit to Gold

Coast during the TOTAL BWF Sudirman Cup 2017 last May. Overall, more than 1200 students and 20 primary-school teachers in Nepal and Australia are engaged in the programme.

BWF was represented at the Peace and Sport International Forum Gala by BWF Council Member and BWF Athletes' Commission Chair Koen Ridder. Receiving the award from IOC member Ivo Ferriani, President of the International Bobsleigh and Skeleton Federation, Ridder thanked BWF's partners in this venture – the Australian Government, Badminton Australia, Badminton Asia, and Nepal Badminton Association.

"BWF is proud to partner the global effort to connect sport and youth in different communities," said Ridder.

Instituted in 2008 by Peace and Sport – an organisation using sports initiatives to promote peace – these awards salute individuals and organisations that make an outstanding contribution to peace, dialogue and social stability through sport.



Athletes took part in a fashion show on Cultural Day at the BWF World Junior Championships, wearing outfits from different regions of Indonesia.



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BLIBLI.COM BWF WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017



CHINA'S MIXED FORTUNES

It was a contrasting fortnight for China at the Blibli.com Yonex-Sunrise BWF World Junior Championships 2017 – celebrating a 12th team title the first week only to suffer a drought in the individual tournament that followed.

The Chinese retained the BWF World Junior Mixed Team Championship (2) – and the gleaming Suhandinata Cup – at GOR Among Rogo Arena in October, with a 3-1 finals victory versus Malaysia. Across the net from the same rivals whom they beat 3-0 in Spain in 2016, China's players had to dig a little deeper, with Malaysia striking an early blow in the opening Mixed Doubles encounter in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

However, the 'Great Wall' withstood that initial dent impressively as their players seized the next three matches, including both singles on which Malaysia were desperately depending. In between those solo acts, Fan Qiuyue/Wang Chang overwhelmed their Men's Doubles rivals.

The honours were left to blossoming Women's Singles player, Han Yue, to seal China's triumph and, though she faltered, she then 17-year-old did not disappoint, defeating Goh Jin Wei in three games (21-16 20-22 21-8).

"I was slightly concerned after losing Mixed Doubles but we have great teamwork and the other players did well," said China's head coach Wang Wei as his team rejoiced.

There were few smiles in China's camp the following weekend though as they reached only two individual finals, both of which they lost. By contrast, hosts Indonesia featured in three finals, winning two golds.

Pride of place went to Gregoria Mariska Tunjung (1) who bade farewell to junior competition as the Women's Singles World Junior champion; ousting China's Han in a dramatic showdown: 21-13 13-21 24-22.

"It was very tough but the crowd motivated me. I really wanted this. It was my last chance and I told myself 'Your chance is in front of you. Don't waste it'. I am so proud to win in my country," said an emotional Tunjung, Indonesia's first World Junior winner since 1992.

There was also a sterling showing by Kunlavut Vitidsarn (6); becoming Thailand's first-ever Men's Singles World Junior champion. He beat Malaysia's Leong Jun Hao, 17-21 21-15 21-9.

"I am so happy to make history for Thailand. I was confident I could do it," said the talented 16-year-old.

Japan also entered the record books, capturing the Men's Doubles World Junior title for the first time, thanks to Mahiro Kaneko and Yunosuke Kubota (5). A rampant comeback saw Korea's Baek Ha Na and Lee Yu Rim (3) triumph in Women's Doubles while Rinov Rivaldy and Pitha Haningtyas Mentari (4) prevailed in an all-Indonesia battle for Mixed Doubles supremacy.



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BLIBLI.COM YONEX-SUNRISE BWF WORLD JUNIOR CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017 (EYE LEVEL CUPS)

MS: Kunlavut Vitidsarn (THA) bt Leong Jun Hao (MAS) 17-21 21-15 21-9

WS: Gregoria Mariska Tunjung (INA) bt Han Yue (CHN) 21-13 13-21 24-22

MD: Mahiro Kaneko/Yunosuke Kubota (JPN) bt Di Zijian/Wang Chang (CHN) 21-14 15-21 21-13

WD: Baek Ha Na/Lee Yu Rim (KOR) bt Jauza Fadhila Sugiarto/Ribka Sugiarto (INA) 18-21 21-11 21-3

XD: Rinov Rivaldy/Pitha Haningtyas Mentari (INA) bt Rehan Naufal Kusharjanto/Siti Fadia Silva Ramadhanti (INA) 21-23 21-15 21-18

BWF WORLD JUNIOR MIXED TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS 2017 (SUHANDINATA CUP)

Final: China bt Malaysia 3-1 (China won Men's Singles, Men's Doubles and Women's Singles; Malaysia won Mixed Doubles)

SHUTTLING THROUGH 2017

BWF's new tournament structure, with million-dollar prize money in its top four events, was the talk of the circuit throughout 2017.

Featuring six levels, the series started in January 2018 and runs until 2021. The top five tiers are collectively branded the HSBC BWF World Tour (1), with the signature season finale – the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals – at the pinnacle boasting US\$1.5 million in prize money.

The BWF-HSBC partnership was announced at a launch event in January 2018 in Guangzhou, China – home of the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals for the next four years.

There are three million-dollar events in the second level (HSBC BWF World Tour Super 1000). These will be held in China, England and Indonesia.

Five events carry the HSBC BWF World Tour Super 750 branding (US\$700,000 prize money); seven are HSBC BWF World Tour Super 500 (US\$350,000); and 11 are HSBC BWF World Tour Super 300 (US\$150,000). Prize money will increase across the board for the last two years of the new cycle.

While not included in the BWF-HSBC partnership, the sixth level is part of the overall tournament series and is branded the BWF Tour Super 100, with 11 events.

Korea's (4) stunning 3-2 defeat of title-holders, China, in the final of the TOTAL BWF Sudirman Cup 2017 and two epic singles showdowns at the TOTAL BWF World Championships 2017 were among the season's tournament highlights.

Trailing 1-2 in the Gold Coast finale, Korea fought back to win Women's Doubles and then a dramatic Mixed Doubles clash, with Choi Solgyu and Chae Yoo Jung being the unlikely heroes, toppling then world No.2 pair, Lu Kai/Huang Yaqiong, in the decisive match.

High drama engulfed Glasgow's World Championships finals also with Nozomi Okuhara (Japan) outlasting Pusarla V Sindhu (India) (2) in a Women's Singles classic, lasting 110 minutes while Denmark's star son, Viktor Axelsen (6), asserted himself as the new Men's Singles king. He beat Chinese icons, Chen Long and Lin Dan, in the semi-finals and final respectively to become the first European Men's Singles World champion in 20 years.



Veteran players, Zhang Nan (China; Men's Doubles) and Liliyana Natsir (Indonesia; Mixed Doubles), both celebrated their fourth World titles.

Bangkok, Basel, Nanjing and Nanning were the big winners as they were named to host the upcoming Major Events for the next two years. Bangkok will host the TOTAL BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2018. Basel will host the TOTAL BWF World Championships 2019. The Chinese city of Nanjing won hosting rights for the TOTAL BWF World Championships 2018 while another Chinese city – Nanning – was selected to hold the TOTAL BWF Sudirman Cup 2019.

Basel will make history in 2019 as it will host the BWF Para-Badminton World Championships alongside the TOTAL BWF World Championships, making it the first city to jointly host the two prestigious events.





Yonex (8) was named as Official Equipment Partner for BWF Major Events for five years until 2021.

Covering the TOTAL BWF World Championships, TOTAL BWF Sudirman Cup and TOTAL BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals, the five-year agreement started in May 2017 with the TOTAL BWF Sudirman Cup in Gold Coast, Australia.

Contemporary greats Chen Long and Hendra Setiawan (5) became BWF Integrity Ambassadors in March to promote clean, fair and honourable sport.

Chen and Setiawan join five other star athletes as BWF Integrity Ambassadors, with Denmark's Christinna Pedersen and Viktor Axelsen, Saina Nehwal of India and Japan's Women's Doubles pair, Misaki Matsutomo and Ayaka Takahashi, previously being accorded this honour.

The BWF Council at its meeting in Jamaica in November decided to implement an Experimental Service Law (Fixed Height) from 1 March 2018.

A proposed change to the Laws of Badminton will be brought before the BWF Annual General Meeting in May to give effect to this testing. It will mandate that "the whole of the shuttle shall be below 1.15 metres from the surface of the court at the instant of being hit by the server's racket" and the first event of the new BWF tournament series at which this experimental law will be introduced is the YONEX All England Open. All Grade 1 events – except the BWF World Junior Championships – will undergo testing as will Grade 2 events and continental championships in April.

Badminton World Federation celebrated the opening of its new headquarters in Kuala Lumpur (3) with a reception attended by several high-profile guests, including Malaysian government officials.

Timed to coincide with the draw ceremony for the TOTAL BWF World Championships 2017, the function took place on Wednesday 9 August at Naza Tower in KLCC into which BWF moved in late June. Welcoming dignitaries and guests, BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer noted the move "was mainly to extend our office space and facilities to accommodate new staff who will help us to meet the increasing demands of our sport".

The Badminton World Federation welcomed seven new members to its Council (10).

The seven new members joined 11 incumbent Council members who were re-elected at the BWF Annual General Meeting in Gold Coast, Australia, in May.

The newcomers are: Tang Jiu Hong (China); Moosa Nashid (Maldives); Battushig Batbold (Mongolia); Danlami Zama Sanchi (Nigeria); Emma Mason (Scotland); Robbert de Kock (Switzerland); and Khunying Patama Leeswadtrakul (Thailand).

Those re-elected to serve another four years are: Wayne Somers (Canada); Nora Perry (England); Etienne Thobois (France); Jassem Kansa (Lebanon); Lim Teong Kiat (Malaysia); Nigel Skelt (New Zealand); Sergey Shakhrai (Russia); Ng Yoke Weng (Singapore); Peter Tarcala (Slovakia); David Cabello (Spain); and Chipo Zumburani (Zimbabwe). These 18 members joined BWF President Poul-Erik Høyer (Denmark) and BWF Vice-President Para-Badminton, Paul Kurzo (Switzerland). The remaining places on the BWF Council were taken by five continental Vice-Presidents and the Chair of the BWF Athletes' Commission.

Dutch international Koen Ridder was elected the new Chair of the BWF Athletes' Commission. Ridder replaced Belgium's Yuhan Tan. Germany's Marc Zwiebler is the new Vice-Chair. Both were chosen by fellow Commission members after the Athletes' Commission election in May.

BWF mourned the passings of Honorary Life Vice-President Tom Bacher (Denmark) and Council member Dr. Akhilesh Das Gupta (India) (7).

Bacher, who died on 4 October in his native Denmark at age 75, served badminton nationally, continentally and internationally as an administrator following a distinguished career as a player, coach, selector, team manager and umpire. Gupta, a BWF Council member since 2013, was President of Badminton Association of India and Vice-President of Badminton Association of India and Vice-President of Badminton Asia at the time of his sudden passing on 12 April.

TOTAL (9) will continue to energise BWF Major Events for an additional three years from 2019 to 2021.

The BWF and the energy giant agreed to a partnership extension, confirming TOTAL's title sponsorship of BWF's flagship tournaments beyond the initial three-year deal which concludes this year. TOTAL will therefore remain the Official Energy Partner for all BWF Major Events: TOTAL BWF Sudirman Cup, TOTAL BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals and TOTAL BWF World Championships.

Badminton has been awarded 14 medal events for its debut in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.

In addition, the International Paralympic Committee has disclosed that 90 para-badminton athletes will have the distinction of representing their respective countries in the para-sports spectacle which will mark another significant milestone in badminton's history. The Badminton Programme for Tokyo 2020 features singles, doubles and Mixed Doubles with an emphasis on singles (ten medal events).

The Badminton World Federation established an External Judicial Experts Group to hear all doping and ethics-related cases from 1 June 2017.

The decision was a major step forward in bringing external expertise into its judicial procedures for handling ethics-related cases.

Among other initiatives to further secure the integrity of the sport are a stronger Code of Conduct; more intelligent testing and the implementation of an electronic whistle-blower system.

The BWF Council also approved amendments to the Code of Conduct in Relation to Betting, Wagering and Irregular Match Results, upgrading sections pertaining to Inside Information and to the actions of any badminton personnel who is subject to an investigation by BWF.