

RWAs fight it out in TOI badminton finale

Praveen Jose | TNN

New Delhi: As part of a TOI initiative to popularize healthy living and encourage sports across Delhi and NCR, 76 finalists from different housing societies battled it out for the last round of the RWA Badminton Tournament at Thyagaraj sports complex here on Sunday.

The event, hosted by TOI and PNB Metlife, is the culmination of a month-long effort put in by 106 RWAs. The first round of the tournament filtered out the best in each residential society, of which 76 finalists battled it out on Sunday in the Under-15 and the Adult category.

An inspiration to many badminton enthusiasts, Commonwealth champion Ashwini Ponnappa handed over the awards to the winners in each category. She told TOI that she was overwhelmed to be a part of the event as the chief guest.

"Promoting sports at the grassroots level is a brilliant initiative to engage citizens in sports and healthy living. Even I found my way into main-



Ace badminton player Ashwini Ponnappa was the chief guest

stream badminton through such initiatives and I'm sure many participants have a great potential," said Ponnappa.

International badminton referee John Muztar was part of the event and spoke to parents and children alike. He said engaging in sports at home is essential to keep lifestyle disorders like obesity at bay. "I am glad this initiative by TOI and others was well received and hope to see more 'Ashwinis' being churned out," he added.

The winners of the

tournament — Sanchit Kumar Pal (Under-15) from Vasundhara, Ghaziabad, and Pragun Jain (Adult) from Imperial Estate in Faridabad — will get an opportunity to meet and share the court with top-seeded world players at the India Open Super Series to be held from April 1 at Siri Fort Sports Complex here.

Ponnappa told TOI she was looking forward to the first round of the tournament and was confident of putting up a good show with partner Jwala Gutta.