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‘I would like to see this sport getting popular’

Pullela Gopichand presents *Love-All*, a film on Badminton

LIPIKA VARMA

 India's chief national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand and versatile actor KK Menon will star in the upcoming sports-themed film *Love All*. Gopichand answers a slew of questions in an exclusive meeting with DC.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOU TO BECOME THE PRESENTER OF *LOVE ALL*?

I was impressed by the concept, realistic approach and intriguing story-telling, and felt it was important to support this film. It deals with a subject that's common in many households, and as such I felt it needed to be told, as it will be useful to children. Also, as a badminton player, I would like to see this sport getting more popular. Therefore, I agreed to present the film.

WHY HAS BADMINTON NOT GOT THE POPULARITY THAT CRICKET, FOOTBALL, AND EVEN KABADDI HAS ACHIEVED GLOBALLY?

I think, as a sport, it has grown tremendously in the last ten years. If you go to a sports shop, you will notice that badminton equipment is the highest sold category, more than all the other sports put together. We have more world-level champions than any other sport. We are not as huge as cricket, but we definitely come second. We are happy with our popularity. It's very good that a movie on Badminton is coming out at this point of time.

YOU MUST BE PROUD OF THE MANY PLAYERS YOU NURTURED, WHO WON ACCOLADES FOR



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— PULLELA GOPICHAND

INDIA!

We are proud and happy that players like Saina, Sindhu, Srikant, Kashyap, Sai, and many others apart from these names, have excelled in Badminton. By winning Olympic medals Saina and Sindhu, as women players, made the country proud.

WOULD YOU PRESENT FILMS ON OTHER SPORTS, OR EVEN ONE THAT DOESN'T HAVE A SPORTS BACKGROUND?

I love sport and I do believe that it contributes a lot to one's overall growth. I'm very happy to be the presenter for this film. And in the near future you will see me present films on various other interesting subjects. But badminton will remain closest to my heart.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE FATHER-SON RELATIONSHIP SHOWCASED IN THE FILM?

It's very normal in sports, but could be unique for those outside the sporting fraternity, and a great experience for them to see the film. And the way it is portrayed is wonderful, with interesting insights. The storyline has depth and detail. I'm sure people will enjoy *Love All*, which, in the terminology of the game of badminton, means starting from zero.

HOW DO YOU THINK AUDIENCES WILL RESPOND TO THIS FILM?

I'm sure they'll appreciate it. Kay Kay Menon, who plays the pivotal role of the father, has his own fan base and audiences will love this film. Also, those who are playing the sport on screen are real badminton players. It is exciting to watch them.