

## Brief History of Badminton In Sri Lanka

Like many other games, Badminton was also introduced to “Ceylon” by the advent of British well over 100 years ago. It's on record that the first Badminton Club was formed in 1909 in “Dimbulla “by the British plantation Community in the general area of the hill country. Dimbulla Club has been conducting Badminton tournaments regularly at Inter Club and Individual basis, during the early part of the 20th century.

However it was in 1950 that “Badminton Association of Ceylon” was formed and first Senior National Men & Women Championships were conducted in the year 1952 and continues regularly without any interruptions. Mr.N.M.De Silva, who pioneered the formation of the Association, was elected the Founder President of the “Badminton Association of Ceylon”,

Sri Lanka Badminton Association obtained Membership with both World & Asian controlling bodies, ‘Badminton World Federation and Badminton Asia Confederation and regularly take part at almost all their team events and many individual players take part at World Ranked events conducted under its banner.

From 1950 up to about 1970, however, the game at competition level was confined to a few clubs and a handful of Schools mainly in Colombo barring one or two outstation schools.

An important milestone was achieved in the latter part of 1970, when the “Schools Badminton Association of Ceylon’ was formed by the legendary “Ariyadasa Silva” of Ambalangoda. With this move, and Schools Association taking over the responsibility of conducting “Junior Nationals’ in June 1971 saw a huge participation amongst the school children from all parts of the Island. Today, the Badminton Association could boast over 6000 children taking part at the Junior Nationals (2008), from over 170 Schools, which is arguably the singular largest tournament in Sri Lanka, vis-à-vis participation. It has 18 active District Associations and arrangements are being made to popularize the game in an organized manner in the other Districts as well.

Badminton today has become so popular island wide, it could boast to be second only to ‘Cricket’. With professional approach, there is no reason why it could not produce an All England Champion in time to come!

Badminton today is played by all age groups and is a Family Recreation sport.

Local calendar is kept busy with the main Association conducting its regular Open events at Provincial Level and Nationals whilst the Affiliates such as Schools , Mercantile etc, apart from the Provincial Associations having busy schedules throughout the year!

The National Olympic Committee & the Ministry of Sports provide reasonable support, particularly when it comes to ‘Multi Sport Events such as ‘South Asian, Asian, Commonwealth & Olympics level Championships.

## Significant Milestones In The History Of Badminton In Sri Lanka

- 1909- First Badminton club recorded in Dimbulla in Ceylon
- 1911- Two tournaments were conducted by Dimbulla Badminton Club of which one continued to take place annually until 1926
- 1923- First mixed doubles event introduced
- 1926- Dimbulla Badminton club consisted of 70 members and played the annual tournament which had a participation of more than 50 players
- 1/1/1932- First “ All Ceylon Badminton Championship” was held
- 1946- First “Inter Club Championship” was held for the Collins Shield and won by the University of Ceylon
- 1950- Formation of the Badminton Association of Ceylon
- 1952/53- First national badminton championship was held in Colombo
- 20/3/1953- Badminton Association of Ceylon was affiliated to the International Badminton Federation
- 1956- First participation in the “Thomas Cup” by the Ceylon team
- July 1959- Formation of the “Asian Badminton Confederation”, Ceylon being a founder member
- 1959/60- The first national ranking list of Ceylon was published
- 1960- 38 clubs and 425 players were registered in the “ International Badminton Federation”
- 1962- Ceylon team took part in the inaugural “ Asian Badminton Championship”
- The first win of a match (Men Doubles) in a “Thomas Cup” tie, against Pakistan
- 1967- “ International School Boys Badminton Championship” was held in Ceylon, at which Rudy Hartano participated
- 1971- Break-up of the “Badminton Association of Ceylon”.
- Formation of “Badminton Association” and “Badminton Foundation”
- Formation of the “Schools Badminton Association”
- 1972- Introduction of the sports Law
- 1973/74- “Badminton Association of Ceylon” renamed as “Sri Lanka Badminton Association”
- 1978- Lost the membership of “International Badminton Federation” and joined the “ World Badminton Federation”
- “Sri Lanka Badminton Association” readmitted to the “International Badminton Federation” after unification of the IBF and WBF.
- 1982- SLBA got its own Stadium and Head Quarters
- 1985- First “ John Player International Badminton Championship” was held in Colombo
- 16/02/1988- “Sri Lanka Badminton Foundation” was found (Trust Fund )