

## **Nitin Vikrant Chadha and Arati Ponnappa take the honours - 1994**

It was a tournament that got pushed away from 1994. In an attempt to maintain continuity, it was decided to hold the event in February 1995, prior to the national championship in Bangalore. In the event, the tournament served as a preparatory ground for most.

Vikrant Chadha, a trainee of the Britannia Amritraj Tennis (BAT) Centre in Chennai was able to assert himself ahead of the seasoned K. G. Ramesh, cousin of national champion Nirupama Vaidyanathan, who was the best Indian woman tennis player before Sania Mirza broke into the scene.

Wild card Vikrant kept his composure in a thriller of a final as he downed the third-seeded Ramesh 7-5 in the third set. It was in stark contrast to the manner in which Vikrant had outplayed R. Manoj Kumar 6-1, 6-2 in the semifinals to give a hint of his potential.

Ramesh has always been a tough customer, and a real taskmaster when it came to giving the lessons to the youngsters. The wily pro, with a never say die spirit, Ramesh had wriggled out of the clutches of Akshat Mishra who had held two matchpoints in the quarterfinals, before prevailing 3-6, 7-6 (10), 6-4.

The Kirtane cousins, Sandeep and Nitin, were able to show their class in the doubles field as they subdued the talented duo of Vishaal Uppal and Jaideep Shetty in the final after overpowering Manoj Kumar and M. Balachandran 6-1, 6-1 in the semifinals.

Vishaal and Jaideep were able to assert their class against Ramesh and Narendra Nath 6-4, 6-2 in the other semifinals.

It was an anti-climax in the women's final, as the top-seeded Janaki Krishnamoorthy had to rush back following the news of her grandfather's demise. The second-seeded Arati Ponnappa who had worked her way past the gutsy Archana Venkataraman 6-2, 3-6, 6-1 in the semifinals won the trophy without having to get on court for the final. Janaki had struggled past Archana's elder sister, Arthi, 4-6, 6-3, 7-5 in the other semifinals.

In doubles, Arati and Janaki gave a walk-over to the Delhi pair of Rohika Hardas and Shalini Thakur.

A clutch of talented boys, Amandeep Singh, Y. Sandeep and Manoj Mahadevan were able to showcase their talent as they won the under-18, 16 and 14 events in the boys section. The talented Rohan Saikia was seeded No.1 in the under-14 section, but had no answers to the second-seeded Manoj as he went down for the loss of four games.

In the girls section, third seeded Archana Venkataraman was able to quell the challenge from the second-seeded Aparna Ravi in three sets in the final. Archana had pulled off a memorable 7-5, 6-7 (4), 6-1 win over Shalini Thakur in the semifinals and thus was thrilled to take her challenge to the logical conclusion. In comparison, the left-handed Aparna, with an attacking game and a high degree of concentration, was however, able to win the under-16 final and assert her No.1 seeding.

Sheethal Goutham was able to show her strong composure and a steady game as she clinched the honour in the under-14 event in a field that had among others Radhika Tulpule, Sonia Shelar and P. Anujapathi.

The results (finals):

Men: Vikrant Chadha bt K. G. Ramesh 6-4, 4-6, 7-5; Doubles: Sandeep Kirtane and Nitin Kirtane bt Vishaal Uppal and Jaideep Shetty 7-6 (3), 6-2.

Women: Arati Ponnappa w.o. Janaki Krishnamoorthy; Doubles: Rohika Hardas and Shalini Thakur w.o. Arati Ponnappa and Janaki Krishnamoorthy.

Under-18 boys: Amandeep Singh bt Desh Gaurav Sekhri 6-2, 6-3; Doubles: Vijay Kannan and Mustafa Ghouse bt Kartik Raj and Farhan Ali 5-7, 6-1, 6-3.

Under-18 girls: Archana Venkataraman bt Aparna Ravi 6-2, 3-6, 6-2; Doubles: Sheethal Goutham and Aparna Suresh bt Pooja Deshmukh and Aparna Srinivasan 6-3, 6-1.

Under-16 boys: Y. Sandeep bt Ajay Ramaswami 6-2, 6-0.

Under-16 girls: Aparna Ravi bt Shubha Srinivasan 7-5, 6-0.

Under-14 boys: Manoj Mahadevan bt Rohan Saikia 6-2, 6-2.

Under-14 girls: Sheethal Goutham bt P. Anujapathi 6-4, 6-0.

