

Nitin Kirtane and Rushmi Chakravarthi crowned as the champions - 2000

It was double delight for the seasoned professionals Nitin Kirtane and Rushmi Chakravarthi as both won a double crown each in asserting their domination.

The 26-year-old Nitin was able to subdue the defending champion, the 17-year-old Chandigarh lad Sunil Kumar in four sets in the final. Except for winning the third set from being down 2-5, Sunil was unable to show any trick in a battle of two left-handers with contrasting styles.

Quite understandable, Sunil has been focusing on the international junior circuit to build a strong foundation for his career. He was thus not ready to handle the wiles and guiles of the professionals like Nitin.

Nitin was fresh from competing in the club league in Germany and was keen to prove himself all over again.

"I had to wipe out the bad memories of last year, when I conceded to Mustafa Ghouse in the quarterfinals", said Nitin, who had been part of the Indian Davis Cup team for the ties against the Czech Republic and Chile.

In the women's event, the 23-year-old Rushmi, who celebrated her birthday on the opening day of the tournament, made it a 'no contest' as she beat her doubles partner and defending champion Sai Jayalakshmy for the loss of three games in the new format, 4-1, 4-1, 4-1. While Rushmi was serving and stroking with ease, Sai struggled with her touch.

Rushmi handled the talented bunch of girls with competence, as she beat Radhika Tulpule, Megha Vakharia and Sania Mirza with her attacking brand of tennis.

"I have been serving and playing well the whole week. It is one of the best tournaments for me", Rushmi said.

The fact that Anna Nefedova of Russia, who had dominated the \$5000 ITF circuit in India, was beaten in the qualifying event by Samrita Sekar projected a healthy future for Indian women's tennis.

National junior champions Akshay Vishal Rao and Vijayendra Laad were unable to cross the quarterfinals in the men's events. However, hope sprang yet again as Rohan Gajjar won the junior title, beating a clutch of quality players, Vikrant Sane, top seed Shivang Mishra, fourth seed Kamala Kannan and the second seed Parantap Chaturvedi.

In the girls section, Radhika won three three-setters in a row in her last three matches against T. Yamini, Samrita Sekar and Sonal Phadke, in that order, to richly deserve the crown.

The results (finals):

Men: Nitin Kirtane bt Sunil Kumar 6-1, 6-4, 5-7, 6-2; **Doubles:** Saurav Panja and Nitin Kirtane bt Rohan Bopanna and Vishaal Uppal 7-6 (8), 6-1.

Women: Rushmi Chakravarthi bt Sai Jayalakshmy 4-1, 4-1, 4-1; **Doubles:** Sai Jayalakshmy and Rushmi Chakravarthi bt Archana Venkataraman and Arthi Venkataraman 5-3, 4-1, 4-1.

Under-18 boys: Rohan Gajjar bt Parantap Chaturvedi 6-4, 2-6, 7-5; **Doubles:** Abhishek Tamhane and Vivek Jhaveri bt Dheeraj Shetty and Tejeshwar Chigateri 6-2, 6-2.

Under-18 girls: Radhika Tulpule bt Sonal Phadke 6-4, 5-7, 6-4; **Doubles:** Samrita Sekar and Preeti Rao bt Liza Pereira and Megha Vakharia 6-3, 6-2.