



## **Shri Pullela Gopichand**

Shri Pullela Gopichand was born on November 16, 1973 to Pullela Subash Chandra Bose and Pullela Subbaravamma at [Nagandla, Prakasam district, Andhra Pradesh](#). He has two siblings, an elder brother and a younger sister. He completed his high school from St. Paul High School and graduated from AV College, Hyderabad.

Like most Indian kids, Gopichand was initially drawn towards cricket. It was Gopi's brother Pullela Rajshekhar, a good badminton player himself, who introduced him to badminton and the rest, as they say, is history.

By the age of 13 he started to make a mark in the sport, when he started winning inter-school tournaments. He won five national championships between 1996 and 2000 and was in imperious form. During this period he also won two gold medals at the National Games of 1998. His international career was kick started in 1991 when he was chosen to represent the Indian team against Malaysia.

He made big strides at the highest level after winning two gold medals at the SAARC Badminton Championship. He went on to win medals at the Commonwealth Games in 1998 and won a variety of other tournaments like Toulouse Open, Scottish Open and the Asian Satellite Open. The crowning glory came in 2001 when he became the second Indian after Prakash Padukone to win the prestigious All England Championships.

Many top honours followed as he was conferred the Arjuna Award in the year 2000, Rajeev Gandhi Khel Ratna Award in the year 2001, the Padma Shri in the year 2005, Dronacharya Award in the year 2009, and the Padma Bhushan in the year 2014

In the year 2002, Gopi married a fellow state player, former Olympian and the then national Singles and Doubles champion PVVLakshmi, whom he had known for some time. The Golden Couple are blessed with a Daughter Pullela Gayatri Gopichand and a son Pullela Sai Vishnu.

Gopichand took charge as the Chief National Coach for the Badminton Association of India in 2004. While Gopi inspired a generation of players to take up badminton during his playing days, as a coach, Gopi has nurtured that generation into top class players.

The famous All England Championships win came at a cost as Gopi was blighted by injuries. That is when he decided to take up coaching, open a world class training facility and impart his experience to young players.

Among the many awards he received after 2001, one was a piece of land the government awarded to him in a prime area in Hyderabad. Gopi decided to use this land for an academy and set about acquiring the required funding and sponsors for it. However, this was not an easy task. The project got delayed and finally Gopi had to mortgage his own house to complete the training academy. The academy was finally up and running in 2008.

Over the years, the academy has come up by leaps and bounds. It is now recognized by the Badminton World Federation as a centre of excellence. The academy is an all encompassing facility which covers all the facilities a player requires. The facilities include a gymnasium, swimming pool, yoga hall, ice bath and steam rooms and cafeteria and so on. There are also top class fitness trainers, masseurs and dieticians.

The creme de la creme of Indian badminton now regularly train at Gopi's academy under his tutelage. The list includes Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu, P. Kashyap, K Srikanth and RMV Guru Sai Dutt. Apart from the top players there are many young and upcoming players in the academy as well.

Gopi systematically divides his time among his players for their individual training. His day starts at 4:15 am and extends to 7:00 pm. He allots a certain time of the day to all the players, individually for the senior players and as batches for the younger ones and goes about it diligently. Like most of the top level coaches, he is a hard task master on the court and a good friend off it.

He has taught his players to always keep emotions away from the game. Every major tournament is surely followed by happiness and euphoria, but within no time Gopi and the players themselves are already planning and plotting for their next goals.

Under his guidance, Indian Badminton players have won many gold, silver and bronze medals at Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, Asian Games, Thomas and Uber Cup, Super Series, Gold Grand Prix and other national and international events.

For details, please visit:

<http://www.iitk.ac.in/doaa/convocation/data/Pullela-Gopichand-detailed-bio.pdf>

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