

Most successful models worldwide are coach-driven: Gopichand

The National Badminton Coach spoke to newly appointed assistant directors of SAI on the importance of coaches in the ecosystem, funding models and more...

New Delhi, April 28:

National badminton coach Pullela Gopichand addressed a special online session organised by the Sports Authority of India for its newly appointed Assistant Directors and spoke about the immense importance of coaches in the sporting ecosystem.

Gopichand who has coached India to two Olympic medals in 2012 (Saina Nehwal) and 2016 (PV Sindhu) said, "You want people to be on-field, you want them to work as coaches ... (however) as time goes by, a lot of people want to become mentors and administrators and they don't want to continue coaching. As administrators I want you to be aware, of who are putting in the effort and who are remotely managing. Most successful models worldwide are coach-driven, sports science and athlete-driven. People working on the field should be the decision-makers."

Gopichand added that rather than having grassroot-level coaches, intermediate coaches and elite coaches as part of a hierarchy, they should all work parallel to each other. He also added that it is important coaches are constantly motivated so that they don't lose interest in their job.

The badminton ace who became a national hero with his All-England Championship win in 2001, said that the funding model of sports could be changed in order to throw up more champions. "All present models are athlete-centric, they don't benefit the sport as a whole. They benefit individual athletes. We should look at funding a group rather than individual athletes. The structure should throw up champions. The level of competition should be so high, that they become world-class without them even knowing. The number 2 and number 3 should be constantly pushing the number 1." Gopichand added that to create more winners, it is important to have a strong domestic competition structure, "The competition structure should be strong where everyone is striving to beat the other. We need to find small pockets where not only training is world-class but competition is also world-class. Internal competition is what will make people strive to get better."

He also emphasised on sports administrators taking up a more holistic approach towards player development, "Administrators should look at being innovative and ensuring the holistic development of the athlete, and we should see that development happening all through. The champion will last longer if there is a more holistic approach," said Gopichand.

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