

A peep into life of 'other' sports stars

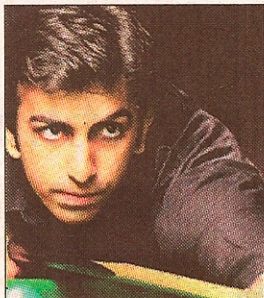
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MUMBAI: Pankaj Advani does not play to robust stadiums. His art is restricted to the bulb-lit green baize inside a sombre room, the celebration to a muted fist-pump. Not quite the stuff that makes exciting television.

But a new TV series, *Travelling with the Pros*, in one of its episodes, hopes to unveil the man and the champion behind that stone-faced veneer.

The seven-part series, the brainchild of former model and actor Bikramjeet Saluja, will feature life on the road of seven elite Indian athletes — Advani (cue sports), Abhinav Bindra (shooting), Mahesh Bhupathi (tennis), Saina Nehwal (badminton),



✱ **Pankaj Advani**

Narain Karthikeyan (motor-racing), Jeev Milkha Singh (golf) and Sushil Kumar (wrestling).

"I was a little apprehensive about it because snooker is not a physical sport, and as players we have to keep pretty much to our self," said Advani in Mumbai on Tuesday, at the launch of the series, which will be aired from June 2.

"I was not sure how they

were going to capture it on the camera. But I am really looking forward to see how it has come out."

As the name suggests, the series takes you behind the scenes, to the machine room where the athletes sweat to get in prime shape for their respective tournaments.

Saluja threw light on some of the lesser-known facets of these sports persons.

"For example, I didn't know that the week before the tournament wrestlers focus on losing weight to fit into the weight category. So they have to be match-fit but not eat food, not even drink water," Saluja said.

While tapping into some of the biggest names in Indian sports, the series will also hope to ride the sporting wave the upcoming London Olympics is creating.