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Sports documentary on Bhupathi, Bindra, Saina airs next month

A new documentary series on seven Indian sportspersons, including Olympic gold medal winning shooter Abhinav Bindra, is all set to give a glimpse of what transpires during a tournament preparation of these athletes.

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The documentary "Travelling with the Pros", to be broadcast on Sports channel ESPN from June 2 as a seven-part series, will showcase the behind-the-scenes action of top golfer Jeev Milkha Singh, tennis grand slam doubles winner Mahesh Bhupathi, Formula One driver Narain Karthikeyan, ace marksman Bindra, cue ace Pankaj Advani, star shuttler Saina Nehwal and wrestling champion Sushil Kumar.



Saina Nehwal. Photo: Pradeep Dhivar

"It is a very unique concept and I conceptualised it in April 2010. I wanted to show the behind-the-scenes life of a sportsman," former model Bikram Saluja told reporters here last night, adding that all the concerned sports' governing bodies supported the documentary.

Bhupathi, who was the first athlete Saluja approached for the series, said, "I am eagerly waiting for the series because they shot my part in August 2010. I thought it was intriguing. People normally associate with the glamour of sport and I wanted them to see what happens behind the scene."



Mahesh Bhupathi. Photo: Kishore Amruth

Concurring with Bhupathi, Advani said, "Initially I was a bit apprehensive about it as snooker is not a physical sport and we tend to keep pretty much to ourselves."

Advani also said that he found it difficult to adjust with the TV crew following him. "You are doing in a particular way and with seven people following around, you have to make allowance for that and put it in your routine," he said.

The IBSF world billiards and snooker champion, Advani also revealed that the documentary cost him a shot at a title in Syria, as one of the crew members came and spoke to him before the final round and he lost his focus.

Saluja lauded the efforts of the sportsmen and said working on the documentary helped him understand their sport better.

"I was a tennis player and knew about the sport. But for wrestling I didn't know that the players starve themselves and don't even drink water to lose weight. So on one hand they are focusing to be at the peak of the fitness and on the other hand, they are not eating or drinking," Saluja said.

Admitting that it was disappointing not to feature the Olympic bronze medal winning boxer Vijender Singh in the documentary, Saluja said "the international boxing federation (AIBA) did not permit them to shoot in Azerbaijan".

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