

# Live my life

**Bikramjeet Singh Saluja** takes the viewers behind the scenes as he captures the life of sportstars in his television directorial, *Travelling With The Pros*

**What's in store for the audience with your first television documentary, *Travelling With The Pros*?**

Audiences and fans have always seen sportsmen performing on the field, but they never got to be with them and actually see how they live their life. This documentary features the behind-the-scene life of sportsmen, while they compete in some of the biggest sporting events around the world.

**How did this concept come to your mind?**

Coming from a sports background, I thought that I should show people the real life of tennis players, for which I thought of approaching my good friend Mahesh Bhupathi's life. Later, as I moved on I thought why restrict to just one sport and decided to shoot with different sport stars.

**So, which are the sportsmen that you have captured on camera?**

I captured the life of seven sportsmen. I shot tennis player Mahesh Bhupathi in Toronto, during the Rogers Cup ATP Masters 1000 Event; badminton player Saina Nehwal during the BWF China Masters Super Series Event in Changzhou, China; Narain Karthikeyan during NASCAR Talladega Superspeedway Series Race. Likewise, I also filmed shooting champion Abhinav Bindra, golfer Jeev Milkha Singh, wrestler Sushil Kumar and snooker player Pankaj Advani. The series thus, also works as a travelogue as we shot them performing at various destinations like



Bikramjeet Singh Saluja, Pankaj Advani and Mahesh Bhupathi

Canada, USA, Russia, Syria, China, Germany and Luxembourg.

**How easy or difficult was it to get them on board?**

It was not difficult, because they loved the concept and believed in the project. They did not have to do anything, just live their regular life, while a camera and a crew of seven people followed. Instead, it was a task getting permission from the sports governing bodies to shoot these iconic personalities perform at various international events. It was time consuming, but ultimately we were successful in getting unrestricted access.

**Any stumbling blocks while shooting at international locations?**

There were quite a few hurdles; one that I can think of happened at Damascus, Syria where we were shooting the World Snooker Championship with Pankaj Advani. While we were shooting, it suddenly started snowing. It was a wonderful sight and I thought of covering it on camera and went outside the stadium and rolled the camera. Unfortunately, opposite the stadium there was an intelligence bureau whose officers

came rushing and took us in! Also, when we were at Talladega, USA shooting NASCAR with Narain Karthikeyan, some people complained about us and soon there was a police enquiry. Since we had all the permissions and paper work in place, we were all safe.

**How was the overall experience?**

It was great as I got to learn so many new things about these games, specially wrestling and shooting. I got to know that before the wrestling matches,

the players are supposed to lose weight, for which they quit eating; in fact they don't even have water! I thought shooting was very difficult. Imagine standing at one spot, staring at a target with full concentration for a couple of hours...it's tough! Shooting Abhinav Bindra required a lot of creativity on the editing table, as the sport — rifle shooting has no variations, it has very less movements as one is just standing still with a gun in hand, staring and aiming at the target for hours altogether.

**Any wishes that left unfulfilled during the course of making of this documentary?**

I wasn't able to shoot Vijendra Singh. The World Boxing Federation canceled my access just two days before the event. I tried Viswanathan Anand too, but somehow it did not happen. I also didn't get permission to shoot the Commonwealth Games.

**You have not included any sportsperson from India's most popular game — cricket?**

I wanted to limit the documentary to individual sports. That apart, cricket is already so much spoken about, what more I could have done?

The show goes on air on June 2, every Sat and Sun 7 pm on ESPN