

The Transformation and Development of Badminton as a Global Sport Dominated by Asian Players, Teams, Sponsors and Brands, 1893-2012: Multidisciplinary Perspectives

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Abstract

The game of badminton has grown to be a global sport dominated by Asian players, sponsors and Asian brands of badminton equipment. A series of longitudinal data collected over a fifty-year period suggests that Asian players and teams dominated almost all aspects of the game by consistently winning major team and individual events, including Olympic medals for badminton from 1992 to 2012. Furthermore, sponsors for teams, players and tournaments were also dominated by Asian manufacturers of badminton equipment, Asian corporations and brands. Asian countries recorded exceptionally high ratings for TV badminton programming. Recommendations are made for the different stakeholders to further transform the game from multidisciplinary perspectives to catch up and compete with the American and European dominated tennis industry and culture.

Keywords: badminton, International Badminton Federation, Badminton World Federation, Thomas Cup, Uber Cup, television ratings

INTRODUCTION

Modern badminton was likely to have originated in India towards the end of the nineteenth century during British colonial rule. The game was played at military bases in Madras, Bombay, Peshawar, Calcutta and Poona (Guillain 2004, pp. 47-48). It became a source of amusement to officers in the Army who played the game during their leisure time (Scheele 1954, p. 1). The game was called “Poona” in India (Seth 1971, p. 2). The Army officers brought the game back to after their retirement. The earliest clubs sprang out at seaside resorts of Folkestone, Teignmouth, Southsea, Bognor, Bath and Southampton (Scheele 1954, p. 1). The game was also widely played in English country houses. The game of battledore and shuttlecock took its name from Badminton House, the Duke of Beaufort’s residence in Gloucestershire (now Avon) (Adams 1980, 16-18).

First phase of development, 1893-1941

The Badminton Association of England (BAE) was founded in September 1893 with 14 clubs as original members. This was followed by the establishment of the Badminton Association of Ireland (1899), France (1908) and Scotland (1911) (Ganner 1985). Outside the

British Isles, Canada was the first to form a national association in 1921 (Scheele 1954, 140). The Malayan Badminton Association (MBA) was formed in 1934 consisting of representatives from the states of Perak, Selangor, Singapore and Penang (Anon 1934a, p. 16). By 1939 there were a total of 17 badminton associations as shown in Table 1 below. Nine were from Europe, three each in Asia and Americas and one each in Africa and Australia.

Table 1: Founding of 17 Badminton Associations from 1893 to 1941

Year	Europe (Nine countries) ¹	Year	Asia (Three countries)
1893	Badminton Association of England	1934	Malayan Badminton Association ²
1899	Badminton Association of Ireland	1934	Hong Kong Badminton Association ¹
1908	French Badminton Association	1934	Badminton Association of India ¹
1911	Scottish Badminton Association		
1927	Welsh Badminton Association		Australasia (One country) ¹
1930	Netherlands Badminton Association	1927	New Zealand
1931	Danish Badminton Association		
1931	Sweden Badminton Association		Americas (Three countries) ¹
1931	Norwegian Badminton Association	1921	Canadian Badminton Association
	Africa (One country) ¹	1936	American Badminton Association
1938	South Africa	1939	Mexico Badminton Association

Sources: Ganner 1985 (selected pages); Anon 1934b, p. 15.

The All-England Badminton Championships (1899-present)

The oldest and most prestigious of all international competition was the annual All-England Championships which started back in 1899. The winner of this event has generally been considered the world champion (Breen and Paup 1983, p. 3). Up to 1939 all the All-England championship titles had always been won by English or Irish players. However, that year the ladies' singles was won by a Canadian, and the men's singles and ladies doubles by Danish players. England's era of dominance had ended, though the fact was not then realised (Scheele 1954, p. 9).

The International Badminton Federation (1934-2006)

The International Badminton Federation (IBF) was founded in 1934 with nine founding members. They were Canada, Denmark, England, France, Netherlands, Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland and Wales. Sir George Thomas was elected as the first President of IBF (Anon 1935, p.

19). In 1939 IBF had 19 member associations (Breen and Paup 1983, p. 3). The IBF's plan to organise the first men's world team championships was aborted with the outbreak of the war (Ong 1984, p. 1).

Second phase of development, 1946-1980

The first contest for the men's Thomas Cup team tournament began in 1948 with ten participating countries. Malay won the Cup consecutively in 1949, 1952 and 1955. In 1955, 21 countries competed for the Cup (International Badminton Federation 1995, p. 239). From the years 1950 to 1956 Malayan men players won the All-England men's singles event – Wong Peng Soon on four occasions and Eddy Choong three times. Malayan men players also won the doubles event in 1949, 1951 to 1954 and 1959 (Connect Sports Ltd 1992, p. 54).

The Persatuan Bulutangkis Seluruh Indonesia (PBSI) or Indonesian Badminton Association was founded in 1951 (Ganner 1985, 241). In 1958 newcomer Indonesia won the Thomas Cup to the newly independent Malaya. Indonesia successfully defended the Cup in 1961 and 1964 (International Badminton Federation 1995, 239). In 1964 the MBA was replaced by the Badminton Association of Malaysia (BAM) (Siebel 1964, p. 19). However, Indonesia regained the Cup four times consecutively in 1970, 1973, 1976 and 1979 (International Badminton Federation 1995, p. 239) as shown in Table 2. Therefore since the first Thomas Cup tournament in 1948 until 1979 only two Asian countries, Malaysia and Indonesia have won the Thomas Cup as shown in Table 2. Moreover, Indonesian Rudy Hartono won the All-England men's singles title from 1968 to 1974. Their men's doubles players won the men's doubles titles from 1968 to 1981, except for 1976 (Connect Sports Ltd 1992, p. 54). By the mid 1980s the Indonesian Badminton Association had 224 branches representing two million players (Ganner 1985, p. 241).

Table 2: Winners and runners-up of the Thomas Cup, 1948-1979

Year	Winner (Score)	Runner-Up	Participating Countries
1948-49	Malaya (8-1)	Denmark	10
1951-52	Malaya (7-2)	United States	12
1954-55	Malaya (8-1)	Denmark	21
1957-58	Indonesia (6-3)	Malaya	19
1960-61	Indonesia (6-3)	Thailand	19
1963-64	Indonesia (5-4)	Denmark	26
1966-67	Malaysia (6-3)	Indonesia	23
1969-70	Indonesia (7-2)	Malaysia	25
1972-73	Indonesia (8-1)	Denmark	23
1975-76	Indonesia (9-0)	Malaysia	26
1978-79	Indonesia (9-0)	Denmark	21

International Badminton Federation 1995, pp. 239-253.

Brands of badminton rackets and sponsorship

During the 1950s to the 1970s the major racket distributors were British brands like Dunlop, Grays and Slazenger (Wright 1972, p. 17). Grays of Cambridge began making badminton rackets in 1908 by employing two men making about two dozen racket per week, entirely by hand (Gurney 1984, p. 10). It is likely that elite players were given badminton rackets as sponsorship in kind only. There was no display of advertisement signs at the All-England championships during the early 1970s (Davis 1973, pp. 72-81).

The Yoneyama company in Japan was founded in 1947 making wooden floats for fishing nets. The company introduce Yoneyama badminton rackets in 1961 (Badminton Association of England 1994, p. 44). In 1973 the Yonex company entered a contract with Rudy Hartono to use and endorse Yoneyama rackets. The company change its name to Yonex in 1974 (Yonex 1987, p. 9). In 1978 the company produced a light 90-gramme racket consisting of an aluminium frame and a T-joint attached to a full carbon shaft. Carbonex 8 was the world's first ultra light racket . It was used by Indonesian player Liem Swie King when he won the All-England men's singles title the same year (Badminton Association of England 1994, p. 44). The British brand, Charlton, followed the product innovation by producing a racket with the fibre-carbon shaft. It was endorsed by Dane men's singles player, Morten Frost (Charlton 1983).

The ladies' Uber Cup tournament

The Nippon Badminton Association or Japanese Badminton Association was founded in 1946. The Association was affiliated to the IBF in 1951 (Ganner 1951, p. 264). The ladies' biannual world team badminton championships began in 1956 with 11 countries competing for the Uber Cup. The United States won the Cup consecutively in 1957, 1960 and 1963. Japan won the fourth to sixth tournaments in 1966, 1969 and 1972. Indonesia won the Uber Cup for the first time in 1975. When Japan took back the Cup again in 1978 and 1981 only a total of 16 and 15 countries respectively competed (International Badminton Federation, 1995, p. 267). Therefore since 1965 to 1981 only two Asian countries, Japan and Indonesia, have won the Uber Cup as shown in Table 3.

Japanese Miss H. Yuki was the most successful ladies Japanese singles player by winning the All-England title in 1969, 1974, 1975 and 1977. Japanese women doubles players also won the All-England title from 1971 to 1973, 1975 and from 1977 to 1978 (Connect Sports Ltd 1992, p. 55).

Table 3: Winners and runners-up of the Uber Cup, 1956-1981

Year	Winner (Score)	Runner-Up	Participating Countries
1956-57	USA (6-1)	Denmark	11
1959-60	USA (5-2)	Denmark	14
1962-63	USA (4-3)	England	11
1965-66	Japan (5-2)	USA	17
1968-69	Japan (6-1)	Indonesia	19
1971-72	Japan (6-1)	Indonesia	17
1974-75	Indonesia (5-2)	Japan	14
1977-78	Japan (5-2)	Indonesia	16
1980-81	Japan (6-3)	Indonesia	15

International Badminton Federation 1995, pp. 267-276.

Formation of the four regional groupings

In 1959 six delegates from Malaya, India, Formosa (now Taiwan), Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), Nepal and Indonesia met in Kuala Lumpur to form the Asian Badminton Confederation (ABC) (Nayagam 1959, p. 14). The European Badminton Union (EBU) was founded at

Frankfurt in September 1967 with 11 countries. They were Austria, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, England, Finland, Federal Republic of Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland (European Badminton Union 2009, p. 138). The Badminton Pan American Confederation (BPAC) was founded in Mexico City in 1976 by Badminton Canada, the Jamaica Badminton Association, Federacion Mexicana de Badminton, Comision Nacional de Badminton Peru and the United States Badminton Association (Badminton Pan American Confederation 2009, p. 142). In 1977 representatives of the badminton association of Ghana, Kenya, Mauritius, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania and Zambia gathered to form the Badminton Confederation of Africa (Editorial Board 1979, p. 37). By 1978 the IBF had a total of 61 member countries, 21 from Europe, 10 from Pan America, 20 from Asia and 10 from Africa (International Badminton Federation, 1988, 23-24).

Third phase of development, 1981-1991

The China Badminton Association (CBA) was established in 1954 (Ganner, 1985, p. 79). In the same year several overseas Chinese coaches from Indonesia returned to China and promoted the game in terms of tactics and training techniques. When China's Cultural Revolution began (1966-1976), badminton teams were disbanded in each city and province. It was not until 1971 that the national team was reorganised by the central government (Hong, Mackay and Christensen, 2008, p. 33). In 1975 360 players were selected from 24 provinces to compete in the national tournament (China Badminton Association, 1978, p. 62).

China started to emerge into the world sporting community in the 1974 Asian Games and gradually began to argue for its place in the world of international sport. While China had some of the best badminton players in the world there were very few competitions they could participate (Reedie 2009, p. 36). The World Badminton Federation (WBF) was formed in 1978 in Hong Kong with 6 members from Africa and 13 members from Asia, including China (Teh 1977, p. vi). On 26 May 1981 the WBF and IBF met in Tokyo to ask Taiwan to assume the name of Chinese Taipei and allow China be a member of IBF. The conditions were agreed by all and enabled the IBF to regain full control of badminton one more time (Periera 1981, p. 27). In 1984 China re-emerged on the Olympic stage after an absence of 32 years (Hong, Wu and Xiong 2005, p. 511).

China's entry into the IBF was significant because the men's team won the Thomas Cup in 1982, 1986, 1988 and 1990. In 1990 53 countries competed for the Cup (International Badminton Federation, 1995, p. 239). Their ladies' team won the Uber Cup five times from 1984 to 1992. In 1992 42 countries competed for the Cup (International Badminton Federation, 1995, p. 267). Therefore since 1948 only Asian countries, Malaysia, Indonesia and China have won the

Thomas Cup. Since 1965 only Asian teams from Japan, Indonesia and China has won the Uber Cup.

Moreover, Chinese men's players won the All-England singles titles in 1983, 1985 and 1989 to 1990. Li Yongbo and Tian Bingyi also won the All-England doubles titles in 1987, 1988 and 1991. Chinese ladies players won the All-England ladies titles from 1982 to 1985 and from 1987 to 1988. They also won the All-England ladies' doubles titles from 1982 to 1985 (Connect Sports Ltd 1992, p. 54-55).

The development of badminton sponsorship

In 1979 the IBF approved for the first time in the history of the sport open professional badminton. Badminton players were allowed to negotiate professional contracts (Breen and Paup 1983, p. 5). In 1982 the IBF Council felt that the nine-match format of the Thomas and Uber Cup played over a two-day period "did not necessarily reflect accurately the strength of the competing teams than would a five-match tie." Thus subsequent Thomas and Uber Cup were played simultaneously at selected venues every second year (Willis 1982, p. 24).

IBF appointed the International Management Group (IMG) as their marketing agents to source for sponsorship in 1979 (McCormack 1993, p. 7). Sponsors were allowed to position advertisement boards around the badminton court (Reedie, Bennett and Kemp 1983, p. 2). In 1984 the IBF decided combined both the Thomas and Uber Cup finals to be played in Kuala Lumpur in 1984, to make it a spectacular tournament to attract sponsors and the Southeast Asian audience (Ward 1994, p. 2). One possible reason for the new match format was to cater to the television audience which can watch the full five matches played within one day telecast instead of the previous two-day coverage.

Yonex sponsorship strategy using top players and tournaments

By the mid 1980s, the Yonex company entered a team contract with the Chinese and Korean badminton association. The Indonesian Badminton Association signed the Yonex team contract in 1987. The Yonex sponsored teams and players had to use exclusively Yonex rackets, shoes, sportswear, bags and accessories. This is to ensure that the Yonex logo on these product lines are conspicuously seen in the print and broadcasting media.

Yonex was also the official equipment supplier to the Thomas Cup and Uber Cup tournaments from 1984 and also the Olympic Games from 1992 (Connect Sports 1993, p. 52). The Company have the rights to display the shuttlecock box and an advertisement

broad around the perimeter of the badminton court in all Thomas Cup matches. Since 1984 Yonex was the exclusive sponsor the All England Championship. In 1988 the Company paid £ 1 million for another five years to sponsor the event (Jones 1988, p. 5). The English made R. S. L. Shuttlecocks that were traditionally used at the All England Championships (Davis 1972, p. 16), were replaced by Yonex shuttlecocks when Yonex became the exclusive sponsor of the tournament (Badminton Association of England 1994, p. 45). Most importantly, as the exclusive sponsor, Yonex has naming rights to the tournament and exclusive rights to at least 80 per cent of the advertisement boards placed around the perimeter of the badminton court. These rights would ensure brand exposure by television coverage and sports photographers taking pictures around the badminton court. By 1992 Yonex was also the exclusive sponsor of the Yonex Japan Open, Yonex Korea Open, Yonex German Open, Yonex U.S. Open and the Yonex Canadian Open (Yonex 1993, p. 2).

The Dunlop, Grays and Slazenger and other British branded rackets were no longer used by the world's top players, except Malaysian Rashid Sidek during the early 1990s. He was using the carbon-fibre shaft and light aluminium head racket (Charlton 1983).

The development of badminton television programming

During the early 1980s up to 1994, television programming of the major badminton events was relatively new and the major events like the Yonex All-England, Malaysia Open and the Indonesian Open were broadcasted on a free-to-air basis. Television viewers had the opportunity to watch the Malaysian Open and Indonesia Open finals and the Malaysian and Indonesia TV stations would telecast the All England tournament finals live if any of the Malaysian or Indonesian players qualifies to play in the finals. China Central TV (CCTV) was then the only dominate broadcaster to televise the finals in China.

During the years 1984 to 1994 the exclusive sponsors of the Thomas and Uber Cup sponsors were the cigarette companies for three possible reasons:

1. The cigarette companies were aware of the high percentage TV exposure of branding as a percentage of broadcasting time for badminton when compared to other sports like football or cycling.
2. The cigarette companies had the large turnover and sponsorship budget to be the exclusive sponsor of the Thomas Cup and Uber Cup finals. There are no published data on the sponsorship fees. However, unconfirmed reports revealed that the minimum sponsorship fee is US \$ 1 million and the fee has increased over the years. Furthermore cigarette advertisement or sponsorship during the years 1984 to 1992, were allowed to be conducted in Malaysia and Indonesia.
3. It was likely that IMG has the experience and contacts to secure sponsorship for the IBF owned event.

From 1984 to 1994 the Thomas Cup finals were televised live from about 5 to 6 hours in the host countries and countries playing in the finals. It provided extensive brand exposure for the exclusive event sponsor as well as the sponsor of the Chinese, Indonesian and Malaysia players using the sponsors' logo in their shirts and shorts. The 1992 finals held in Kuala Lumpur was "the highest rated programme in the history of Malaysian television (not just sports television, but all television) (McCormack 1993, p. 6). When Rashid Sidek played his singles game the TV rating peaked at 56 per cent, much higher than the ratings recorded at the American Super Bowl final match. See Table 4 below.

Table 4: Location, sponsors and extent of TV coverage of the Thomas Cup finals, 1984-1994

Year	Location ¹	Main Sponsor ²	Finals ¹	TV coverage
1984	Kuala Lumpur	Marlboro	Indonesia beat China (3-2)	5 hours *
1986	Jakarta	Marlboro	China beat Indonesia (3-2)	5 hours *
1988	Kuala Lumpur	Marlboro	China beat Malaysia (4-1)	6 hours ³
1990	Tokyo	NTT	China beat Malaysia (4-1)	5 hours *
1992	Kuala Lumpur	Rothmans	Malaysia beat Indonesia (3-2)	5 ½ hours ^a
1994	Jakarta	Pepsodent/Fuji	Indonesia beat Malaysia	5 hours *

Note: * estimate.

Sources: ¹ Brahms 2010, p. 173; ² Official tournament programmes (various issues); ³ Palmer, Rowen and Woollen 1988, p. 4; ^a Ward, 1992a, p. 14).

Since 1972 the Super Bowl American football has generated ratings in excess of 40 per cent of US households, with the exception of 1990 when the telecast generated a 39 rating. During the period from 1994 to 2002, the annual Super Bowl telecast was the highest rated programme each year. In 1996 the telecast had the highest rating of 46 per cent (Linnet & Friedman, 2001). In 2006 the asking price for a 30 seconds advertisement was US\$ 2.6 million (Wilner, 2007, p. 20).

If we were to include the pre-event and post-event television coverage of the Thomas and Uber Cup finals, they exceeded more than 10 hours. In addition there was also the extensive newspaper coverage in Malaysia and Indonesia. The Thomas Cup finals have created a distinct television footprint in Malaysia and Indonesia because badminton is the most popular racket sport in these countries although there were no country-wide surveys on sports participation in these countries.

By and large only two main sponsors had excellent media coverage the event sponsors and the sponsor of the top team and players. Almost all the top team and players were

sponsored by Yonex. According to Phil Night, CEO of Nike, if anyone watched basketball games on national television, they will see the players' shoes 10 per cent of the time, but the uniform logo about 75 per cent of the time (Lieber 1997, p. 32).

The emergence of Korea's men and women doubles players

The Korean Badminton Association (KBA) was established in 1957. The Association was affiliated to the IBF in 1962. The Koreans have participated in many tournaments with not much success (Ganner, 1985, p. 267). The Korean Sports Science Institute (KSSI) was established in 1980 to do research in the areas of sports physiology, biomechanics, sports psychology, sports sociology and sports engineering (Korean Sports Science Institute, n.d.). In 1981 Seoul was selected by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) to host the Olympic Games in 1988. The Korean Ministry of Sport was established the following year to prepare for the Asian Games in 1986 and the Olympic Games in 1988 (Mulling, 1889, pp. 90-92). From the mid-1980s onwards Korean men doubles players began winning the All England men's doubles titles in 1984, 1985, 1889 and 1990. In particular the Koreans won the ladies doubles titles consecutively from 1986 to 1991 (Connect Sports Ltd 1992, pp. 54-55).

Formation for the fifth regional grouping

The fifth regional organization, Oceania, was proposed and accepted by the IBF in 1988 (Palmer 1988, p. 8). Oceania is a vast region of water with thousands of islands, the continents of Australia, Antarctica and the large islands of New Zealand (Barnard 2009, p. 140).

Fourth phase of development, 1992-2012

When badminton was included as an Olympic game in 1992, all the medal winners, for the men's and ladies singles event and the men's and ladies' doubles event, except for one player, used Yonex racket, shoes and accessories (Eaton 1992a, pp. 6-7; Ward 1992a, pp. 9-10; Ward 1992b, pp. 14-16). Twenty-two of the 24 quarter-finalists used Yonex badminton rackets and equipment exclusively (Yonex 1993, p. 1). An estimated 150 million TV viewers watched the women doubles game played between Indonesia and England. The badminton viewership log rose to about a billion after four days of TV coverage, making badminton the most watch sports at the Games (Eaton 1992b, p. 22). From 1992 to 2012 Asian players won 81 or 90 per cent of the total 90 badminton Olympic medals while the other 9 or 10 per cent of the medals were won by European players as shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Olympic medal tally for men's and ladies' badminton events, 1992-2012

Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Asia				
China	16	8	15	39 (43%)
Indonesia	6	6	6	20 (22%)
Korea	6	6	5	17 (19%)
Malaysia	-	3	2	5 (6%)
Japan	-	1	-	1
India	-	-	-	1
				81 (90%)
Europe				
Denmark	1	2	3	6 (7%)
England	-	1	1	2
Netherlands	-	1	-	1
				9 (10%)
				90

Sources: Badminton World Federation, 2012; London 2012.

From 1948 to 2012 only three Asian countries, China, Indonesia and Malaysia have won the Thomas Cup as compiled in Table 6.

Table 6: Winners and Runner-up of the Thomas Cup, 1981 - 2012

Country	Winners	Runners-Up
China	9 times (1981/82, 1986, 1988, 1990, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2010, 2012)	3 times (1984, 1992 and 2000)
Indonesia	6 times (1984, 1992, 1994, 1998, 2000 and 2002)	2 times (1981/82 and 1986)
Malaysia	1 time (1992)	6 times (1988, 1990, 1994, 1998, 1998, 2002, and 2010)
Denmark		3 times (1996, 2006 and 2008)
Korea		1 time (2012)

Sources: International Badminton Federation 1994; International Badminton Federation, 2002, pp. 4-5; internet (various sources).

From 1984 to 2012 only three Asian countries, China, Indonesia and Korea have won the Uber Cup as compiled in Table 7.

Table 7: Winners and Runner-up of the Uber Cup, 1984 - 2012

Country	Winners	Runners-Up
China	12 times (1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1998, 2002, 2002, 2004, 2006, 2008 and 2012)	3 times (1994, 1996 and 2010)
Indonesia	2 times (1994 and 1996)	3 times (1986, 1998 and 2008)
Korea	1 time (2010)	6 times (1988, 1990, 1992, 2002, 2004 and 2012)
England		1 time (1984)
Netherlands		1 time (2006)

Sources: International Badminton Federation, 1994; International Badminton Federation 2002, pp. 4-5; internet (various sources)

The development badminton television programming, 1994-2006

In 1993 Satellite Television Asian Region or Star TV, an Asian broadcaster with footprints covering more than 220 million people in 53 countries across Asia and the Middle East, obtained rights to cover the Asian badminton circuit for ten years (Climo 1994, p. 38). The US \$ 20 million contract was signed in 1994 with IMG and the IBF was to promote the development of international badminton. The Star TV/IMG/IBF partnership concentrated on bringing out players' personalities and beamed live events in three different languages, English, Mandarin and Bahasa (Malay language known to Malaysians and Indonesians) (Barnes 1995, p. 29). In 1994 the IBF had 116 member countries (International Badminton Federation 1994, p. 37).

In 2001 IBF appointed Octagon CSI as its international television rights partner to try reaching the 200 million badminton players around the world (International Badminton Federation 2001, p. 3). During the Thomas/Uber Cup Finals in 2002 held in Guangzhou from 9 to 19 May, China, 90 countries and territories worldwide took the TV signal of the event. China Central Television (CCTV) station alone broadcasted 42 hours 30 minutes of live matches of the Thomas and Uber Cup games from 9 and 19 May. The main terrestrial channel CCTV2 reported the finals on Saturday 18 May Uber Cup match between China and Korea held from 1930 – 2330 hours had a TV audience of 31.5 million in China. Analysis of the TV audience not only revealed the popularity of badminton in Asia and particularly in China but also for any individual match between two teams or players. It is the two countries represented who would attract significant TV and live spectators (International Badminton Federation 2002, p. 6). The other important TV broadcast footprints are Indonesia, Malaysia, Japan, Hong Kong, Korea, Thailand, Vietnam and the Philippines as shown in Table 8.

Table 8: Key territories and non-key territories for badminton TV programming

Key Territories		Non-Key Territories	
Asia		Africa	
1.	People's Republic of China	4.	South Africa
2.	Hong Kong SAR	5.	Sub-Sahara
3.	Macau SAR	Asia	
4.	India	6.	Chinese Taipei (Taiwan)
5.	Indonesia (including East Timor)	7.	Central Asia
6.	Malaysia (including Brunei)	8.	South Asia (excluding India)
7.	Singapore	9.	West Asia (Middle East)
8.	Japan	10.	Others
9.	South Korea	Europe	
10.	Thailand	11.	Western Europe
11.	Vietnam	12.	Central Europe
12.	Philippines	13.	Eastern Europe
		14.	Scandinavia (excluding Denmark)
	Europe	15.	Others
13.	United Kingdom	North America	
14.	Denmark	16.	Canada
15.	France	17.	USA
16.	Germany	18.	Mexico
17.	Russian Federation	19.	Latin America
		South America	
Non Key Territories		20.	Brazil
Oceania		21.	Argentina
1.	Australia	22.	Others
2.	New Zealand		
3.	Pacific Islands		

Source: Badminton World Federation 2010, pp. 12-13.

Domination of badminton market and sponsorship by Asian brands, 2007-2012

Asia has become the major exporter of rackets and China is the dominant player in the global sports good trade (Andreff & Andreff 2009). In 2009 the Chinese owned Lin Ning Company officially sponsored both the men's and ladies' the Chinese badminton team and began to promote the popularity of the game through its powerful integrated advertising and promotional activities (Li Ning Company Limited, 2011). They know that in order to penetrate the badminton market they have to sponsor the top team and players as well as the title sponsorship of badminton tournaments.

In 2009 Yonex paid the Indonesian Badminton Association an annual sponsorship fee of US \$ 1.5 million for the Indonesian team and players to use exclusively Yonex rackets, shoes, sportswear and accessories (Antara 2009, p. 1). However is not known how Li Ning Company paid to the Chinese Badminton Associations for each respective team and players to use its rackets, shoes, sportswear and accessories. Den Li Chen started the Victor Industrial Racket Corporation in Taipei, Taiwan, in 1958 to manufacture shuttlecocks and rackets. Another factory was opened in Nanjing, Central China, producing 70,000 dozen shuttlecocks per month primarily for the European and Asian markets (Victor, 2011). Like, Li Ning, Victor sponsored the Korean men's and women's team. The sponsorship of players and tournaments will ensure effective television coverage as well as the print and the new media. Table 9 shows the history of sponsorship of the Chinese, Indonesian and Korean badminton teams with Asian badminton equipment brands. The Badminton Association of Malaysia do not have any team sponsor. Their top players have individual contracts with brands like Yonex.

Table 9: Asian badminton brands' sponsorship of top Asian teams and players

	China	Indonesia	Korea	Malaysia
Yonex brand	1984 - 2007	1984 – 2011	1984 - 2009	Selected players
Other brands	Li Ning 2007 – present	Yonex	Victor 2009 - present	Yonex (Selected players)

From IBF to Badminton World Federation (BWF)

In 2005 IBF implemented a new scoring system of 3 games of 21 points in each game instead of the usual 3 games and 15 points. This will make the average duration of a match end about 32 minutes instead of 52 to 55 minutes (Solano, 2006, p. 17). In the following year IBF signed a multi-year exclusive representation agreement for all media rights in the Asia-Pacific and Middle East with Total Sports Asia. All major IBF events starting from 2006, including the Thomas and Uber Cup tournament (Fry 2007, p. 228). In the same year IBF changed its name to Badminton World Federation (BWF) (BWF 2009, p. 130).

Development of Asia cities and countries as the preferred choice for sponsors

In 2007 the most watched racket sports in China in 2007 were table-tennis with 40 per cent of the population. Badminton was second with 24 per cent and tennis third, with 20 per cent. However, badminton was the most played sports with 18 per cent of the population (SportsBusiness 2008, p. 53). The most watched badminton event in 2009 was the finals of the mixed world team Sudirman Cup when South Korea played against China. There was an average 19 million TV audience out of a potential 56 million audience (SportBusiness 2010, 14). The most watched tennis event in 2007 was the Wimbledon men's finals played between Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal recording a TV audience of 21 million out of the potential 52 million viewers (SportsBusiness 2008, p. 34).

From 1984 to 2012 Malaysia hosted the Thomas and Uber Cup finals five times, Indonesia, four times, Japan, Hong Kong and China two times each (Brahms 2010, 173). The main sponsors were attracted to the Asian cities and countries because of the extensive media coverage, particularly TV coverage of more than five hours for the semi-finals and finals matches as well as the high ratings in key Asian markets as shown in Table 9. After 1996 the non-cigarette brands and corporations have participated as main sponsors since they know they can achieve maximum brand exposure.

Table 9: Location and sponsors of the Thomas Cup finals, 1996-2012

Year	Location	Main Sponsor	Finals
1996	Hong Kong	Sampoerna	Indonesia beat Denmark
1998	Hong Kong	Frozz	Indonesia beat Malaysia
2000	Kuala Lumpur	Proton-Eon	Indonesia beat China
2002	Guangzhou	China Telecom	Indonesia beat Malaysia
2004	Jakarta	Bank Mandiri	China beat Denmark
2006	Tokyo	Yonex/Unisys	China beat Denmark
2008	Jakarta	Bank BRI	China beat Korea
2010	Kuala Lumpur	Proton	China beat Malaysia
2012	Wuhan	Citreon	China beat Korea

Sources: Brahms 2010, 173; internet (various sources).

In 1996 there were 59 IBF sanctioned tournaments (Ward 1996a, p.2; Ward 1996b, p. 2). By 2012 there were 102 BWF sanctioned tournaments. Twelve of these are known as the Superseries offering the highest total prize money of between US\$ 200,000 to US\$ 350,000. Nine out of twelve of the Superseries were held in Asian. Nine out of twelve of the Superseries are sponsored by the racket companies as shown in Table 10 as they valued the brand and media exposure of due to TV programming. Yonex has five, Li Ning 3 and Victor, one (Badminton World Federation 2012).

Table 10: Superseries badminton tournaments and main title sponsors in 2012

Month	Tournament	Location
January	Victor Korean Open	Seoul
January	Maybank Malaysian Open	Kuala Lumpur
March	Yonex All-England Badminton	Birmingham
April	Yonex-Sunrise India Open	New Delhi
June	Djarum Indonesia Open	Jakarta
June	Li Ning Singapore Open	Singapore
September	Li Ning China Masters	Changzhou
September	Yonex Open Japan	Tokyo
October	Denmark Open	Odense
October	Yonex French Open	Paris
November	Li Ning China Open	Shanghai
November	Yonex-Sunrise Hong Kong Open	Kowloon

Note: The total prize money for each Superseries tournament varies from US\$200,000 to US\$350,000.

Source: Badminton World Federation 2012.

Conclusion and recommendations: multi-disciplinary perspectives

By 2009 the BWF consisted of five regional groupings and a total of 166 member countries (Berg 2009, p. 105). The Badminton Asian Confederation (BAC) (formerly Asian Badminton Confederation) had 39 member countries (BWF 2009, pp. 151-153).

However, throughout the history of the men's team tournament from 1948 to 2012, only three Asian countries, Malaysia, Indonesia and China, have won the Thomas Cup. From 1965 to 2012 only four Asian countries, Japan, Indonesia, China and Korea have won the ladies' team Uber Cup tournament. From 1992 to 2012 Asian players own 81 or 90 per cent of the total Olympic Game medals for the badminton events. All the gold Olympic medals for men's singles, ladies singles, men's doubles, ladies' doubles and mixed doubles, except for one men's singles gold medal, were won by Asian players (Table 5). The BAC can be a very prominent and influential organization by taking a more active leadership role to collaborate and partner stakeholders like the badminton brands, potential sponsors and government organizations (Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, School of Physical Education and Sports

Science in the institutes of higher education) in the promotion and marketing of badminton in Asia and globally.

From Pay TV to free-to-air

In spite of the global domination of Asian badminton players and teams, they still lag behind the world-class tennis players in terms of popularity and earnings. The total prize money of the Superseries tournaments varies from US\$200,000 to US\$350,000. In 2012 the total prize money of the US Open tennis tournament was US\$25.5 million! (Dickson 2012). In order to make Asian badminton tournaments, players and teams more popular, each of the Asian badminton associations and their sponsors should distribute the television rights of the Superseries organised in Asia from Pay TV syndication to free-to-air to promote badminton to a wider TV audience in East Asia, Southeast Asia, West Asia, Central Asia and South Asia where Cable TV infrastructure is lacking or do not exist at all. In East Asia the free-to-air badminton can reach more than 40 per cent potential audience than Pay TV potential audience of 255 million as compiled in Table 11.

Table 11: Population, per capita income and media reach of the East Asian countries affiliated to BWF

	Population ¹	Per capita income (US\$)	Cable TV (2010) ²	TV Sets (2010) ²	Internet users (2010) ²
Japan	127.1 mill. ³	42,875 ^a	32.8 mill.	50.6 mill.	100.5 mill.
China	1.34 bill. ¹	4,270 ¹	201.3 mill.	379.9 mill.	418.9 mill.
Taiwan	23.1 mill. ³	18,607 ^a	5.2 mill.	7.7 mill.	16.8 mill.
Hong Kong	7.0 mill. ¹	32,780 ¹	2.2 mill.	2.4 mill.	5,2 mill.
Macau	0.5 mill. ³	NA	NA	NA	0.3 mill
South Korea	48.8 mill. ¹	19,890 ¹	14,1	17.2 mill.	40.5 mill.
Total	1.54 bill.		255.6 mill.	457.8 mill.	582.2 mill.

Sources: ¹ Asian Development Bank 2012; ² Euromonitor 2011; ³ International Telecommunication Union, 2011; ^a Euromonitor 2012a, p. 10.

In Southeast Asia free-to-air TV has the potential to research 10 times more audience than pay TV as shown in Table 12. Free-to-air badminton TV programming is the only means to reach the potential audience in West Asia, Central Asia and South Asia when per capita income of most of these countries was US\$6,000 or less as shown in Tables 13, 14 and 15 respectively.

Table 12: Population, per capita income and media reach of the Southeast Asian countries affiliated to BWF

	Population (2011) ¹	Per capita income (US \$) ¹	Cable TV (2012)	TV Sets (2010)	Internet users (2010) ²
Indonesia	241.4 mill.	2,500	700,000 ²	60.8 mill. ²	28.4 mill.
Malaysia	28.9 mill.	7,760	784,700 ²	6.1 mill. ²	16.5 mill.
Singapore	5.2 mill.	40,070	789,100 ²	1.4 mill. ²	3.5 mill.
Brunei	0.4 mill.	31,800	20,000 ³	0.02 mill. ³	0.3 mill.
Thailand	67.6 mill.	4,150	1,587,400 ²	18.0 mill. ²	19.8 mill.
Vietnam	87.8 mill.	1,160	141,000 ²	18.5 mill. ²	25.5 mill.
Philippines	94.1 mill.	2,060	7,276,100 ²	17.9. mill. ²	9.5 mill.
Total	525.4 mill.		11,298,300	122.7 mill.	103.5 mill.

Sources: ¹ Asian Development Bank 2012; ² Euromonitor 2011; ³ International Telecommunication Union, 2011.

Table 13: Population, per capita income and media reach of the West Asian countries affiliated to BWF

	Population ¹	Per Capita Income (US\$) ¹	Cable TV ²	TV Sets ²	Internet ¹
Kuwait	2.5 mill.	52,545	NA	0.6 mill.	1.2 mill.
Bahrain	1.2 mill.	18,595	NA	0.1 mill.	0.5 mill.
Iran	75.1 mill.	5,122	NA	13.1 mill.	9.2 mill.
Iraq	31.7 mill	3,919	NA	NA	0.4 mill.
Jordan	6.5 mill.	4,249	1.4 mill.	1.1 mill.	1.8 mill.
Lebanon	4.2 mill.	9,284	0.7 mill. (2005)	NA	1.1 mill.
Syria	20.4 mill	2,827	NA	NA	5.6 mill.
Palestine	NA	NA	NA	0.5 mill	NA
	141.6 mill.		2.1 mill.	15.4 mill.	19.8 mill.

Sources: ¹ Euromonitor, 2012b; ² International Telecommunication Union, 2011 (selected pages).

Table 14: Population, per capita income and media reach of the Central Asian countries affiliated to BWF

	Population (2011) ¹	Per Capita Income (US\$) ¹	Cable TV ³ (2009)	TV Sets (2010)	Internet users (2010) ²
Kazakhstan	16.6 mill.	7,580	0.7 mill.	NA	6.4 mill.
Turkmenistan	5.3 mill.	3,790	NA	0.6 ²	0.1 mill.
Uzbekistan	29.4 mill.	1,280	NA	NA	5.2 mill.
Kyrgyzstan	5.6 mill.	830	0.02 mill.	4.8 ²	3.2 mill.
Tajikistan	7.7 mill.	800	NA	NA	0.9 mill.
Total	64.6 mill.		0.72 mill.	5.4 mill.	15.8 mill.

Sources: ¹ Asian Development Bank 2012; ² Euromonitor 2011; ³ International Telecommunication Union, 2011

Table 15: Population, per capita income and media reach of the South Asian countries affiliated to BWF

	Population (2011) ¹	Per Capita (US\$) ¹	Cable TV ³	TV Sets ²	Internet users (2010) ²
India	1.2 bill.	1,270	61,000 (2005)	81.3 ²	74.9 mill.
Pakistan	177.10 mill.	1,050	NA	9.7 ²	22.9 mill.
Sri Lanka	20.9 mill.	2,240	NA	3.9 ³	2.0. mill
Nepal	26.6 mill.	490	NA	1.7 ³	0.8 mill.
Maldives	0.3 mill.	5,750	NA	0.03 ³	0.1 mill.
Bangladesh	142.3 mill.	700	12,000 (2006)	11.0 ³	0.7 mill.
Afghanistan	26.6 mill.	410	NA	NA	1.2 mill.
Bhutan	0.7 mill.	1,870	17,853 (2004)	0.05 ³	0.06 mill.
Total	1.6 bill.		90,853	107.7 mill.	102.7 mill.

Sources: ¹ Asian Development Bank 2012; ² Euromonitor 2011; ³ International Telecommunication Union, 2011.

Developing new media

The BAC present official website should be further improved to have more comprehensive information about tournaments, rankings, associations, players, officers, sponsors and an integrated information infrastructure for easy navigation. Many of the suggested features can be seen in the BWF's and International Tennis Federation's (ITF) website. The BAC can potentially attract larger internet population audience since badminton is a popular racket game in China, Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia. See Tables 12 to 15 for the population of internet users in each of the BAC's member countries. The popularity of the game in India and Japan is likely to increase further each of these country won their first Olympic silver medal in the ladies' singles and ladies' doubles events respectively. The ITF's website is available in English, French and Spanish. The BAC website should be made available in English, Chinese (covering China, Taiwan and Hong Kong) and Bahasa Indonesia. The BAC, like the ITF, should set up an online merchandising store to market T-shirts and other accessories.

Merchandizing and branding in the Asian retail landscape

The three major Asian and global badminton brands, Yonex, Li Ning and Victor should seek the support of the BAC and the badminton associations of China, Indonesia and Korea to produce and distribute licensed merchandise of their sponsored players' and teams' sportswear and accessories like caps and bags to sports retailers and badminton clubs to generate more awareness of Asian brands and revenue for each respective stakeholders.

Five of the major European football leagues listed in Table 16 will smaller population base than China and Indonesia were able to earn about US\$66 to US\$ 190 million dollars from royalties of licensing of football merchandise during the 2009/2010 season. The probability of success of very popular Chinese and Indonesian badminton players' and teams' merchandise to be sold to their fans and supporters is promising. For example, using very conservative estimates, for every 30 million people in Indonesia, it may be possible to generate US\$1 million. Therefore with the total population of 241.4 million, the probability of achieving US\$ 8 million can be realised. The computation for China and Korea as shown in Table 16 are different because of the different per capita income in each of these countries.

Table 16: Licensing revenue of the European leagues for the 2009/2010 season (US\$)

European leagues ¹	Population (million)	2009/2010 season (US\$ million)
La Liga (Spain)	46	190.1
English Premier League (England)	62	167.5
German Bundesliga (Germany)	83	129.7
Italian Serie A (Italy)	61	76.9
French Ligue 1 (France)	63	66.6
Badminton teams *		
China (Li Ning brand sponsor)	1.34 billion	67 million (divide by 20 million)
Indonesia (Yonex brand sponsor)	241.4 million	8 million (divide by 30 million)
Korea (Victor brand sponsor)	48.8 million	4.9 million (divide by 10 million)

Note: * Estimate revenue.

Sources: ¹ Ullmann 2011, p. 4.

Playing exhibition games in less development markets or countries

The outstanding players and teams should play exhibition games to promote the game in countries where badminton is not popular. For example, the Indonesian and Malaysian players should play exhibition games in the West Asian Muslim countries, as shown in Table 13, to encourage Muslim girls to play the game. There would be many small halls that can accommodate the badminton court which about 40 per cent smaller than the tennis court. Muslim women can play the game indoors without be seen in the public as required of their religion or custom.

Sports tourism

In 2012 nine of the top 12 Superseries tournaments are held in Asian cities (Table 10). It is important that the BAC and respective associations partner with their respective tourist association, country's airlines and sponsors organised packaged tours for tourists to visit each of these tournaments to promote sports tourism and intra-Asian travel. This long-term marketing plan can develop the Japan Open, Malaysian Open or Malaysian Open, to be like a grand tournament like the Yonex All-England Open Championship, Wimbledon Tennis Championship

or the US Tennis Open. The U. S. Tennis Open 2003 in Flushing Meadows, New York, attracted an audience of 615,000 compared to Wimbledon's nearly 500,000 (Karp 2004, p. 1).

The total prize money for the 12 Superseries and grand final in 2010 was US\$7.35 million (Staff writer, 2010, p. 1). The total prize money for the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) tour was US\$85 million (Fillion 2010, p. 14). The badminton tournaments have a long way to grow when compared to the great tennis tournaments.

Institutionalization of technical expertise and accreditation of coaches

Since 1984 until 2012 all the Thomas and Uber finals were held in Asian cities. The BAC, host associations and their technical staff should develop published standards in the organization of badminton events to contribute towards event management of the game. Furthermore, the BAC and each country's association, Ministry of Sports and Ministry of Education should development a system of badminton training in the primary schools, secondary schools and elite levels of training. A thorough and formal process of education, training and accreditation of the coaches should be development to further institutionalize the game.

The transformation and development badminton in Asia can be seen in many forms and multidisciplinary perspectives. However, although Asian players, teams, sponsors and brands dominate the game in Asia and the world, the game has a long way to go to catch up with the million dollar prize money of major tennis tournaments and attracting half a million tourists who specifically travel to Wimbledon or the US Tennis Open to watch the games.

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