

Pullela Gopichand: The man who put Indian badminton on global radar

The legend behind the champions, Pullela Gopichand is widely known for his exploits as a coach. His world-class academy in Hyderabad has churned out multiple superstars who have kept India's flag flying high in major tournaments. Among the array of world beaters, none more than Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu have been successful, winning multiple major titles including Olympic medals. Gopichand is undoubtedly the main reason behind India's golden generation.

His humongous coaching achievements overshadowed his playing days. Not to forget that Gopichand was a talented player himself. Having won the National Badminton Championship title five times in a row, he won a silver in the team event and a bronze in men's singles of the 1998 Commonwealth Games. Among the other titles, his major feat was the prestigious All England Open Badminton Championships in 2001. He is the last Indian shuttler to bag that title and only the second from the country ever to claim it. Earlier, Prakash Padukone had won in 1980.

It took a while for the current chief national coach of Indian badminton team to set-up his academy. In 2008, the Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy (PGBA) was finally completed. Besides the several playing courts, the academy also has gym, swimming pool, cafeteria among others.

With wooden flooring of the courts made as per international standards, it also has physiotherapy. Besides, the academy also possesses quality Indian and international coaches. A focused physical and mental training is provided on the players to prepare for the pressure of playing in major tournaments.

Saina Nehwal was the first major player to come out of the academy. As a budding player, she showed a lot of promise with several trophies, including the World Junior Badminton Championships title in 2008.

Gopichand was by Saina's side to guide her at every step as she went on to win 11 Super Series titles. But her Olympic performances caught everyone's eyes.

After becoming the first Indian to qualify for the quarterfinals of the 2008 Beijing Olympics, she went a step further in 2012.

In the London Games, she bagged a Bronze to become India's first badminton player to get an Olympic medal. Gopichand's influence behind the scenes was finally getting noticed.



Next up was PV Sindhu! The youngster from Hyderabad slowly started to come out of the shadows of Saina.

The two Bronze medals she won in the 2013 and 2014 World Championships put the spotlight on her. But it was in the 2016 Rio Olympics, she had her major moment with a Silver medal. Sindhu then went on to win many other titles including a World Championships in 2019.

His academy produced many another world class players like Kidambi Srikanth, Parupalli Kashyap, HS Prannoy and Sai Praneeth. The rise of these stars from being a budding talent to a world beater has to be credited to Gopichand. His world class facility is a major reason behind India enjoying a generation of global superstars.

In his playing career from 1991 to 2004, Pullela Gopichand won numerous national and international championships.

Here's a list of championships he had won medals in –

1996 – 2004 – Held his trophy of National Champion
1998 – Won two gold and one silver at Indian National Games, at Imphal
1997 – Runner Up at India Open Tournament
1998 – Bronze at Commonwealth Games In Malaysia
1999 – Gold medal at Le Volant d'Or de Toulouse, Scottish Open, and India International Runner up at French Open and German Open
2000 – Bronze at Asian Championship in Indonesia
2001 – Gold medal at All England Open
2004 – Gold medal at India Asian Satellite

Indian badminton owes it's success to the great Pullela Gopichand. The Indian government also awarded Pullela Gopichand with numerous awards:

Arjuna Award, 1999
Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna, 2001
Padma Shri, 2005
Dronacharya Award, 2009
Padma Bhushan, 2014

Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar, 2013, under Category Establishment and Management of Sports Academies of Excellence- Pullela Gopichand Academy of Badminton, Hyderabad.

Kids Craft: Crocodile Craft with Popsicle Sticks



You'll need the following:

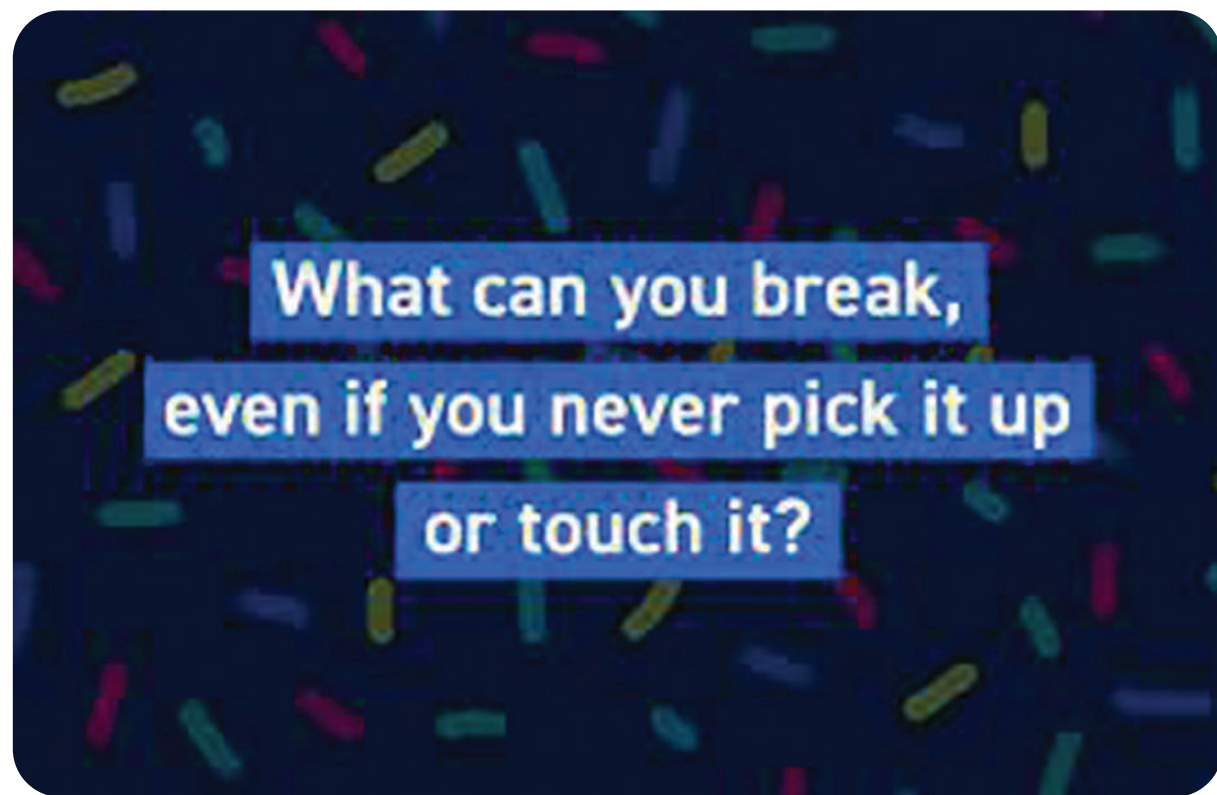
x5 Popsicle Sticks,
Green Paint
Green & Black Marker Pens
Googley Eyes,
Green Paper
Pencil,
Scissors

Steps to make:

Step 1: Paint 4 long popsicle sticks green.
Step 2: Cut a popsicle stick into two smaller pieces (the same width as the 4 popsicle sticks lined up together).
Step 3: Align the group of four into a row and secure with the two supporting pieces of popsicle sticks. This will complete the crocodile's body.
Step 4: Trace the crocodile elements onto green paper.
Step 5: Affix a pair of googley eyes and draw nostrils and eyebrows.
Step 6: Glue the crocodile's head onto one of the ends of the popsicle sticks.
Step 7: Affix the crocodiles legs and tail.
Step 8: Use a green marker pen to draw a row of random spots onto the crocodile's body. Ideally, the marker pen will be a different shade of green to the popsicle sticks.
Your crocodile is ready !



FUN RIDDLES



English Proverbs and Meanings

* **Let well alone.**
Do not interfere with some thing that is functioning properly or a calm situation.

* **Liars need good memories.**
People who do not tell the truth must be careful to remember what they say.

* **Loose lips sink ships.**
Disclosing important information (to the enemy or a competitor) could result in large losses.

* **Learn to walk before you run.**
Don't rush into doing some

thing until you know how to do it.

* **Beauty is only skin deep.**
A person's character is more important than their appearance.

* **Little strokes fell great oaks.**
If you divide a task into small parts, it becomes easier to do.

* **Least said soonest mended.**
The more discreet you are, the less damage you cause.

* **Let bygones be bygones.**
Let's forgive and forget past.

Choc rainbow squares



Ingredients:
1/2 cup butter (melted)
1/2 cup brown sugar (firmly packed)
1 egg
1 cup desiccated coconut
2 tbs Nestlé Baking Cocoa
3/4 cup self-raising flour
1 cup Milk Chocolate Melts
100 g Smarties

METHOD

Preheat oven to 180°C (160°C fan-forced). Line a 20cm square cake tin with baking paper.
Combine butter, sugar and egg. Stir in coconut and then sift in the Nestlé Baking Cocoa and flour.
Spoon into prepared tin and bake 15-17 minutes until just firm when touched.
Sprinkle Nestlé Milk Choc Bits over the cake, then sprinkle over the Nestlé Smarties. Press down lightly with the back of a wooden spoon.
Return to the oven for 5 minutes.
Allow to cool in the pan then cut into squares to serve.
Enjoy !

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Chocolate Appo



Ingredients:
3/4 Cup rice
3 tbsp coconut, grated
1 tsp baking powder
1 tsp vanilla extract
1/2 tsp cinnamon powder
1/4 cup brown sugar

1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
A pinch of salt
3 tbsp chocolate chips
2-3 tbsp butter

Method

Wash and soak the rice in water for 30 minutes to 1 hour. Drain the water of the rice completely and grind it. Keep the grated coconut ready and add water to form a medium thick batter. Make sure the consistency of the batter is similar to any dosa / pancake batter.
Transfer this to a bowl and add vanilla extract, cinnamon powder, sugar, cocoa powder, salt and mix it well. Keep this batter aside for 20 to 30 minutes.
Before using it, add baking powder to the batter and mix well. Heat appam pan and add little butter / ghee / oil into all the moulds.
Pour a teaspoon of appo batter in each mold, add 3 to 4 chocolate chips and top it with another teaspoon of batter. Cover the pan with a lid to allow it to cook on medium flame for 2 minutes. When the edges are cooked, flip the appos, add some butter and cook on the other side for another 2 minutes. Repeat the process for remaining batter.
Chocolate Appo is ready to serve.