



# **Squash Racquets Association of Malaysia (SRAM)**

History Updated as of September 2021

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## **Brief Introduction**

The Squash Racquets Association of Malaysia (SRAM) is the governing body for squash in the country and was founded in 1972. It was officially registered as an association on 22 October 1974. However, the first organised squash competition was held in 1939 at the Malay College in the royal town of Kuala Kangsar, Perak. Two future great leaders of this country were featured in the finals of that event: YAM Tunku Ja'afar ibni Tuanku Abdul Rahman (who later became the King of Malaysia from 1994-1999) beat En Abdul Razak bin Hussein (later Tun, who served as Prime Minister of Malaysia from 1970 to 1976).

## **The Presidents**

### **Dato' Hisham AlBakri (1972–1979)**

In its 49-year history, SRAM has been led by ten different presidents, starting with Dato' Hisham AlBakri who was the founding president in 1972. YAM Tunku Imran ibni Tuanku Ja'afar was the founding secretary of the Squash Racquets Association of Malaysia (SRAM), formed on 25 June 1972 at the Royal Lake Club, purely through the collective efforts of a handful of Malaysian alumni of British Universities. Their primary goal was to popularise squash in the country. The founder President Dato' Hisham AlBakri served with distinction for six years (1972-1979).

### **Tunku Tan Sri Dato' Seri Imran ibni Almahrum Tuanku Ja'afar al-Haj (1979–1989)**

Tunku Tan Sri Imran, who became the first National Champion in 1973 when he beat Dato' Dr Hood Salleh in the finals, succeeded Dato' Hisham AlBakri as President of SRAM. Tunku Imran was instrumental in strengthening the foundations of SRAM through the very successful "Catch Em' Young" Programme which was initiated in 1982. As its President for 12 fruitful years (1978-1989), he ensured that we got the foundation right. Many of the achievements we see today are the results of the vision of Tunku. Certainly, the "Father of Malaysian Squash" is an apt description of Tunku, whose contributions in one form or another continues until today.

### **Tan Sri Alex Lee (1989–1999)**

The successor to Tunku Imran in 1989 was the late Tan Sri Alex Lee, under whose astute guidance we achieved the incredible double world junior titles: the World Squash Federation (WSF) World Junior Men's title won by Ong Beng Hee in Princeton, USA in 1998; and the WSF World Junior Women's title won by Nicol David in Antwerp, Belgium in 1999. Tan Sri Alex was instrumental in finding funds for the many programmes he envisioned and implemented. YTL Bhd (a public listed company in Malaysia) was the leading sponsor then - January 1996 – December 2003. Tan Sri Alex Lee unfortunately passed away in a tragic scuba diving accident in Papua New Guinea on 31 October 1999.

### **Dato Nik Din (1999–2003)**

Dato' Nik Mohamed Din, who was then the deputy President took over as the Acting President on 1 November 1999 upon the untimely demise of Tan Sri Alex. He was unanimously elected on 19 November 2000 as the fourth President.

The year 2000 was a memorable one for us. We beat Pakistan for the first time to win both the Asian Squash Federation (ASF) Asian Men's Team and Individual titles. In 2001 Nicol David successfully defended her WSF World Junior Women's Individual title held in Penang. This made her the first junior to have won the coveted World Junior title twice.

Ong Beng Hee and Nicol David successfully defended their Asian Men's and Women's titles in the ASF Asian Squash Championships 2002, held in Kuala Lumpur.

### **Tan Sri Mokhzani Mahathir (2003-2004)**

On 12 January 2003, Tan Sri Mokhzani Mahathir was unanimously elected as the fifth President of SRAM. Several major contributions were made by Tan Sri Mokhzani. SRAM's website was introduced in March 2003. The gala dinner for the 30th year celebration was held in conjunction with the Malaysian Open 2003, and a philanthropist donated RM1 million to SRAM during the gala dinner. It was the second time SRAM received such a huge donation, the first being after the WSF World Men's Open 1997. Both mega donations were orchestrated by Tan Sri Mokhzani Mahathir.

In 2004, Ong Beng Hee and Nicol David successfully defended their ASF Asian titles at home. Our Women's Team also retained the team title with our Men's Team coming in second behind Pakistan. Ong Beng Hee achieved a creditable ranking of No. 7 in the world. On 8

November 2004, squash was chosen as one of the eight sports under the National 'Core Sports' Programme.

### **Datuk Abdullah Sani Karim (2004–2010)**

On 28 November 2004, Tan Sri Mokhzani Mahathir named Datuk A. Sani Karim as his successor and the sixth President of SRAM. The nomination was unanimously endorsed by all the state delegates present. During his 6-year tenure, he achieved numerous milestones. In July 2005, he secured CIMB Foundation as the 'rakan sukan' who sponsored major opens and eventually supported the National Junior Development Programmes. This is ongoing until today. In 2008, through the efforts of Datuk Sani Karim, QSR (Pizza Hut) sponsored the purchase of the state-of-the-art ASB (WSF sanctioned court manufacturer) all-glass portable squash court.

Another notable achievement was the realisation of SRAM's vision and mission which was initiated in 2005. We earned a bronze in the 2006 WSF World Junior Men's and WSF World Women's team, a silver at the WSF World Junior women's team, and 5th place at the World Men's teams. We also had 5 players in the top 20 with Nicol David as World No.1. Nicol David became the first Asian to win the coveted British Open title on 17 October 2005 and the WSF Women's World Open title in Hong Kong on 4 December 2005. 2006 saw Nicol David assume the World No. 1 ranking position; well ahead of our targeted date of end 2006.

At the 2006 ASF Asian Squash Championship in Chinese Taipei, we created history by bagging all the four titles at stake.

At the Doha Asian Games 2006, Ong Beng Hee took Gold by beating compatriot Mohd Azlan Iskandar, and Nicol David also collected Gold beating Rebecca Chiu of Hong Kong. At these Games, Datuk Sani was the Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM) appointed Chef de Mission. He was also VP of OCM for 4 years and DP for 2 years.

At the 2010 XIX Commonwealth Games (CWG), Nicol David won Malaysia's first-ever Gold for Squash. Mohd Azlan Iskandar became the 1st Malaysian and Asian to reach the semi-finals of the Men's Individual event. We also claimed a Bronze medal from the Mixed Doubles event (Nicol David/Ong Beng Hee). At the 2010 Asian Games, we earned 3 Golds out of 4 events. In 2010, after an absence of 13 years, we welcomed back the National Closed Championships.

SRAM became the only NSA out of 55 to be awarded the 5-star rating for governance by OCM in 2008. Thereafter we continued receiving 5 stars every year. A Golden era indeed.

### **Dato` Syed Mustaffa (2010–2014)**

After an extremely successful six-year tenure, Datuk Sani handed the mantle over to Dato Syed Mustaffa in 2010. A former national-level squash player, Dato` Syed carried on the momentum of excellence with distinction. Dato` Nicol won a record-breaking 7th World Open title (and 5th consecutive) in the Cayman Islands while maintaining her unassailable lead as the No. 1 WISPA ranked player for 77 straight months (Dec).

At the WSF AGM Dinner on 5 Nov 2011, Dato` Nicol David was inducted into the WSF Hall of Fame. Mohd. Azlan Iskandar achieved his personal target of breaking into the PSA (Professional Squash Association) Top 10 in March 2011. Low Wee Wern had a good year achieving her highest ranking at No 6 in Dec 2013. 14-year-old Ng Eain Yow, put up a stellar performance to clinch the 2014 British Junior Open (BJO) Under-15 title, his second at the prestigious tournament after winning the Under-13 title in 2011. Sivasangari Subramaniam reached the finals in the girls' Under-15 event. Malaysia took 3 of the 4 titles at stake at the 2013 Asian Youth Games, in Nanjing, China.

Dato Syed successfully penetrated the higher education strata by introducing a squash circuit/league in the universities. At the SEA Games in Palembang where we won all the gold medals at stake, Dato` Syed was the OCM appointed Chef de Mission.

### **Huang Ying How (2014–2018)**

After three and a half years as President, Dato` Syed Mustaffa Syed Ali passed the baton to Huang Ying How, on 22 Jun 2014. After over 9 years (108 months consecutively) as the World No. 1, Malaysia's Dato` Nicol David relinquished her pole position to Egypt's Raneem El Weleily in July 2015. Delia Arnold had a great year which saw her climb to her highest ever PSA rankings at No. 12 in September 2015. At the 2015 British Junior Open, Malaysia came home with two winners, Ng Eain Yow winning the BU17 title (his third title) and Jessica Keng winning the GU13 title. Our Malaysian juniors created history by winning 6 of the 8 titles at stake at the 2015 Asian Junior Individual Championships (AJIC). All 14 participants sent by Malaysia brought home a medal (6 Gold, 4 Silver and 4 Bronze). At the 2016 World Women's Team Championship, we bettered our previous record of third when we lost narrowly to England in

the finals after having beaten favourites Egypt in the semis. The same year we won 2 gold medals at the World University Squash Championships.

Huang was elected as the Vice President of WSF in November 2016 and on 10 January 2017, was appointed by OCM as Chef de Mission for CWG 2018. In 2016, Ng Eain Yow won the individual Gold in the WSF World Junior Championships in Poland. Sivasangari Subramanian came close, finishing third in New Zealand in 2017. Under the 10th Malaysia Plan, the government built squash courts in 8 schools around the country. Working closely with the Ministry of Education (MOE), SRAM successfully organised the first inter-PLD (Pusat Latihan Daerah) tournament in October 2017.

At the 2018 BJO, we won 4 golds and 2 bronze. For the first time in the history of the BJO, we equalled the medal tally with the mighty Egyptians. He was awarded the Anugerah Kepimpinan Sukan 2021.

### **Nik Razeen Daud (2018–2020)**

Huang passed on the presidency to Nik Razeen Ahmad Daud in May 2018. Nik Razeen was responsible for getting an increased grant of RM1.6 million for our Junior Development Programmes for 2018 from CIMB Foundation. An increment of RM700k. The Foundation became the title sponsor for the first time of our National Junior Championships.

SRAM successfully hosted the WSF World Junior Championships in July. We earned a silver in the women's team event and a bronze through Aifa Azman in the individual event. In 2018 at the CWG we earned a bronze through Nafiiizwan and at the Asian Games, we collected 2 Golds, 1 Silver, and 2 Bronzes. In 2019, we collected two titles at the BJO (5 finalists), two titles at the AJIC, the girls' team title at the Asian Junior Team Championships (AJTC), and the women's individual and mixed team titles at the South East Asia (SEA) Cup. It was a successful period indeed.

### **Gerard Monteiro (2020–Current)**

Former national junior champion Gerard Monteiro took over the reins in Sep 2020. Former National players Mohd Azlan Iskandar, Sharon Wee, and Randy Chitty joined the team. Unfortunately, due to Covid 19, not many tournaments were held in Malaysia or abroad. Thanks to the indulgence of the President, the National championships and several PSA tournaments were organized. The committee is aggressively pursuing the goal of making SRAM a more visible and dynamic entity. Meanwhile, the players are slowly coming back to

full-on training and the next major goal is the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and the Asian Games in Hangzhou in 2021.

## **Administration of SRAM**

SRAM first started operating on a 'voluntary basis'. Some of the key administrators who have selflessly contributed to the growth of SRAM in the early years include Prasad Pillai, Chris Foo, K.Sivanesen, Leslie Ponnampalam, Lt.Kol (R) Wong Ah Jit, and Peter Chee.

Eventually, as SRAM grew to become one of the most prominent associations in the country, the need for full-time paid administrators became evident. Today, SRAM has six full-time staff on its payroll.

## **State Affiliates**

13 states and 2 Federal Territories, Kuala Lumpur & Putrajaya, are affiliated branches of SRAM. State affiliates play a huge role in the development of squash in the country, especially at the grassroots levels, and serve as a launching pad for players to move up to the National Squash Centre at Bukit Jalil.

## **National Junior Development Programme**

In 1982 the 'catch em' young' programme was launched. The National Junior Development Programme was launched in 1985, and talents such as Nicol David, Ong Beng Hee, and Mohd Azlan Iskandar emerged. SRAM's National Junior Development had an added impetus in 1996, through support from National Sports Council (MSN). We appointed a National Development Officer – Peter Chee and several State Development Officers. The programme was further enhanced in 2006 when CIMB Foundation came on board as a partner. Besides sponsoring the top players at the time such as Nicol David, Mohd Azlan Iskandar, and Ong Beng Hee, the Foundation also played a key role in the junior programmes. With the Foundation firmly behind, SRAM was able to step up in expanding the programmes, especially to the state affiliates. A key component of the junior development was the introduction of more competitions for budding juniors, with the CIMB Rising Star National Junior Circuits (RSNJC) and the CIMB National Junior Circuits (NJC) becoming crucial platforms for juniors to showcase their talents. The support of the Foundation also allowed SRAM to provide incentives to juniors who excelled, such as earning a chance to compete at the prestigious British Junior Open or the Asian Junior Championships.



Some of the players who have benefitted from the CIMB Junior Development Programme include:

- Ng Eain Yow -WSF World Junior Champion in 2016, Three-time British Junior Open champion, and 2018 ASF Asian Games gold medalist (team).
- Sivasangari Subramaniam – WSF World Junior Team Championships silver medalist (2017), Two-time British Junior Open champion, and 2018 Asian Games silver medalist (individual).
- Aifa Azman – WSF World Junior Individual Championships bronze medalist (2019), WSF World Junior Team Championships silver medalist (2017), Three-time British Junior Open champion, and Youngest Malaysian winner on the Professional Squash Association (PSA) Tour.

CIMB Foundation has also provided scholarships to Ng Eain Yow and Sivasangari Subramaniam to further their studies abroad.

## **PLD (Pusat Latihan Daerah) Schools Programme**

This is one of the most important initiatives by SRAM. It is an opportunity to coordinate the promotion of squash in selected schools with the Ministry of Education (MoE) through the Pusat Latihan Daerah (PLD). National Elite coach Shahril Shahidan was initially appointed to oversee the development programme in the eight schools – Sekolah Kebangsaan (SK) Seri Indera (Perlis), Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan (SMK) Seri Pagi (Negeri Sembilan), SMK Dato' Haji Ahmad Badawi (Penang), SMK TPP Tengku Muhammad (Pahang), SK Jalan Bintang (Sarawak), SMK Bukit Nenas (Terengganu), SMK Tunku Ismail (Kedah) and SMK Jelapang Jaya (Perak). The first inter-PLD tournament was held on Oct 21, 2017, at SMK Seri Pagi, involving 200 school children. As a result of this programme, squash has since been elevated to a Sukan Prestasi Tinggi Sekolah (SPTS) status under the MoE, thus enhancing SRAM's commitment to development at grassroots levels.

## Coaching

Malaysia's coaching structure started from scratch with volunteers, and it wasn't until 1980 that SRAM first employed a full-time coach – Abdul Rehman, from Pakistan. In 1983 Australian Chris Clarke took over the reins. He initiated the coach education programme through several Level 1 coaching courses nationwide and started a structured coaching/training programme for the senior and junior squads. When Clarke left for Hong Kong in 1987, Major (R) S. Maniam took over as the head coach and Director of Coaching (DOC). Maniam held the post of DoC until 2002 before leaving to take up a similar role in India. Penangite Allan Soyza took over as the DOC in 2012, after a lapse of 10 years. Allan held the role for four years before leaving early in 2015 for Singapore as Maniam eventually returned to assume the role as SRAM director in May 2016.

Mention must be made of Malaysians Raymond Arnold, Sandra Wu, Sharon Wee, and Kenneth Low, who all served SRAM, first as National players, then as National Coaches. Raymond moved on to coach the Federal Territory team, Sandra moved to pursue coaching in Singapore, Sharon went into the media industry, and Aaron continued to coach in Penang. Foreign coaches who have contributed include Abdul Rehman (Pakistan), Jamie Hickox (Canada) Jamshed Gul (Pakistan), Ahmad Malik (Pakistan), Richard Glanfield (England), Robin Cooper (Australia), Allan McCulloch (Australia), Ken Flynn (Ireland), Mika Monto (Finland), Mobin Ahmad (Pakistan), Abdul Rashid (Pakistan), Sajjad Ahmad (Pakistan), Mubashir Gul (Pakistan), Mohd. Sattar (Pakistan) and a host of others at the state level.

## Refereeing

Chris Foo was a WSF international referee and as the director of referees, spent an immeasurable amount of time setting up SRAM's referee structure. Taking over from Maniam who at that time was the only other international referee. Leslie Ponnampalam succeeded Chris Foo and until today, despite health issues, continues to contribute selflessly to the promotion of refereeing in the country. Presently we have a healthy pool of referees.

## **Tournaments and Achievements**

As one of the leading squash nations in the world, Malaysia has been involved in hosting several major tournaments over the years. To date, Malaysia has hosted the WSF Men's World Championship twice - in 1989 and 1997; and the WSF Women's World Championship four times - 1996, 2004, 2013, and 2015. Besides that, Malaysia has also played host to several ASF Asian Individual Championships and ASF Asian Team Championships over the years. The ASF Asian Individual meet has been held in the country six times, with the 2011 edition being the last while the team meet has been hosted five times, dating back to 1986. At the junior level, Malaysia has also hosted the boys' and girls' WSF World Junior Championships as well as the ASF Asian Junior Championships two times each.

In terms of achievements, squash has always done the nation proud by never failing to return with a medal at major multi-sport events such as the Commonwealth and Asian Games since 1998. Arguably Malaysia can be considered the most successful nation in squash in Asia. We won the Men's team and individual titles at the 10th Asian Squash Championship in Hong Kong. Since its inception in 1981, besides Pakistan, Malaysia has been the only nation to achieve this besides Pakistan. We had the best finish of 2nd place at the WSF Women's World Team Championships 2014, and we managed to bag several other titles at the regional level.

Sports icon Nicol David is the most decorated squash player in history with superlative achievements. The men's team also performed beyond expectations when they bagged their first-ever team gold medal at the 2018 Asian Games.

### **Additional significant achievements**

Sandra Wu	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1st Female to achieve a hat-trick of titles at the Asian Junior Championships – 1991, 1992, 1993</li></ul>
Leong Siu Lynn	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1st Malaysian and the youngest at 15 to win the Asian Women's title – 1996</li></ul>
Ong Beng Hee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1st Malaysian to win the World Junior Title – 1998</li><li>• 1st Malaysian male to win the Asian Title – 2000</li></ul>
Mohd Azlan Iskandar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 1st Malaysian male to win the Asian Junior title – 2001</li></ul>

Nafiizwan Adnan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1st Malaysian male to earn an individual medal (bronze) at the 2018 Commonwealth Games</li> </ul>
Nicol David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• World number one for a record 108 consecutive months</li> <li>• 8 World Open and 5 British Open titles</li> <li>• Has a record of five individual gold medals from six editions at the Asian Games</li> <li>• Was the only woman to bag the individual gold medal at the Commonwealth Games twice, achieving the feat in 2010 and 2014</li> <li>• Nominated as WSF player of the year on seven occasions and voted by fans in 2018 as the greatest squash player of all time in the women's category</li> <li>• Voted the greatest athlete of all time (G.O.A.T) at the World Games in 2020</li> </ul>

## **Accolades**

SRAM was awarded the highest rating of five stars for governance by the Sports Commissioner's Office (SCO) in 2017, 2018 and 2019. Besides being a top association in the country, SRAM is also widely recognised as a respected member of the World Squash Federation (WSF), Asian Squash Federation (ASF), and the Southeast Asian Squash Federation (SEASF).

Many of our officials have gone on to serve squash at the International level. These are some of their achievements:

### International Appointments

Tunku Tan Sri Imran ibni Tuanku Ja'afar	1989-1996	President of ISRF/WSF
	1996-2002	President of Emeritus
	2000-2001	President of SEAGF
	Since 2002	Patron of WSF
	2011-2014	President of CGF
Tan Sri Mokhzani Mahathir	1997-2001	President of ASF
Datuk Abdullah Sani Karim	2002-2006	Vice President of WSF
	2009-2013	President of ASF
	2013-Current	Emeritus President of ASF
Huang Ying How	2016-2020	Vice President of WSF
Prasad Pillai	1989-1992	Sec General of WSF
	1997-2001	Sec General of ASF
K.Sivanesen	2009-2013	Sec General of ASF
	2014-2020	Sec General of SEASF
Leslie Ponnampalam	2009-2013	Hon. Treasurer of ASF
	2014-2019	Hon. Treasurer of SEASF

Major (R) S. Maniam	1990-2013	Director of Coaching ASF
	2009-2019	Director of Coaching WSF
	Since 2013	ASF Coaching Consultant
	Since 2019	WSF Coaching Panel
Robert Lau	2014-2019	President of SEASF
Mohd Azlan Iskandar	2014-2019	Vice President of SEASF
	2019- Current	President of SEASF
Gabriel Teo	2019-Current	Sec General of SEASF

### Asian Squash Federation Hall of Fame

Major(R)S.Maniam	Inducted 2009
Tunku Tan Sri Imran	Inducted 2012
Dato` Nicol David	Inducted 2012
Datuk Abdullah Sani Karim	Inducted 2016

### SRAM Awards

Initiated in 2016. The winners are as follows:

#### Tunku Tan Sri Imran Award - Outstanding Junior Player of the Year

2017	Aifa Azman Siow Yee Xian
2018	Aifa Azman Siow Yee Xian

2019	Aifa Azman Ameeshen Raj Chandran
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**Tan Sri Alex Lee Award - Outstanding Player of the Year**

2017	Sivasangari Ng Eain Yow
2018	Sivasangari Nafiizwan Adnan
2019	Sivasangari Ng Eain Yow

**SRAM Coaches Award - Coach of the Year**

2017	Jrar Aslam
2018	Shahril Shahidan
2019	Kenny Foo

**Distinguished Services**

2018	Leslie Ponnampalam
2019	Prasad Pillai Chris Clarke Lt.Kol (R) A.J.Wong

## **Summary**

SRAM has evidently grown to become one of the leading national sports associations in Malaysia. An efficient administration, well-structured training programmes, production of competent coaches and world-class squash players at all age groups, and outstanding results in international team events. SRAM has achieved the distinction of being able to organise international squash events with flair.

SRAM has also been instrumental in the promotion and development of squash throughout the country through a highly successful junior development programme. To ensure that indeed it is "Squash for Life".

## **Special Thanks**

SRAM takes this opportunity to express sincere gratitude and appreciation to our sponsors, past and present; Ministry of Sports Malaysia (KBS), National Sports Council (MSN), National Sports Institute (ISN), Olympic Council of Malaysia (OCM), YTL Bhd, CIMB Foundation, Yayasan Rakyat Satu Malaysia (YRIM), SportExcel, Nestle (Milo), QSR (Pizza Hut), Mulpha Bhd, GBH Bhd, Dunlop Malaysia, Head, Nusmetro, G.S.Gill, Astro Arena, Ohana, Maxx Bolt, members of the media and numerous other donors and sponsors for their magnanimous support to both the National and State Associations. Our heartfelt thanks also go to all individuals who have given their invaluable time and effort to the success of Malaysian squash – players, coaches, parents, officials, administrators, fans, etc. Our appreciation to all the past Management Committee members for their immeasurable contributions.