

Gold In Basel: P V Sindhu is World Champion

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Sindhu wrapped up the final against familiar foe Japan's Nozomi Okuhara 21-7, 21-7. (AP)

IN SWITZERLAND, a country obsessed with time, P V Sindhu raced to render the past redundant. In 38 minutes of savage hitting, unseen in women's badminton, the Hyderabad-based player erased memories of all prior losses and became India's first ever badminton World Champion.

It was 2.37 pm Swiss local time Sunday, 6.07 pm IST, when Sindhu wrapped up the final against familiar foe Japan's Nozomi Okuhara 21-7, 21-7.

The national anthem rang out and the Tricolour went up – but not before a little impromptu – "Happy Birthday" – rendition went around St Jakobshalle in Basel, with Sindhu dedicating her title to her mother P Vijaya, herself an accomplished volleyball player.

Minutes earlier, Sindhu's smashes had struck and chimed like the precise rumbling of the big clocks, leaving no doubts about the power she exuded while stomping to her first gold medal after two bronzes and two silvers.

Pusarla V. Sindhu returns a shuttlecock to Japan's Nozomi Okuhara during their women's singles final match at the BWF Badminton World Championships in Basel, Switzerland. (AP)

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Finally, it needed the gold at the World Championships in her third attempt to underline the steel of those precious silvers, and place Sindhu in the pantheon of badminton's all-time greats.

This medal puts her level with Chinese Zhang Ning for most number of podiums by a women's singles player (5), highlighting her remarkable consistency since 2013 when she first began her run. The 24-year-old is yet to lose to a Chinese at the Worlds – she has played 7, won 7.

Pusarla V. Sindhu after winning her women's singles final match against Japan's Nozomi Okuhara at the BWF Badminton World Championships in Basel, Switzerland, Sunday, Aug. 25, 2019. (AP)

In an era when the game has become physically exacting, Sindhu had bided her time on the circuit, not pouncing on prize fights of week-in week-out, and instead ensuring India medalled at every single big event that globally mattered. At Basel over the last two days of semis and finals, she unveiled another sight â€” that of an Indian athlete in such dominant touch that opponents winced.

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