Projects covering a range of topics, including psychology, physiology, match analysis and para-badminton, decision-making under stress, and strength ratios among elite para-badminton players have been selected for the BWF’s 2016-2017 Sports Science Research Grants.

Six successful applications were selected from 30 proposals from institutions and individuals across all five continental confederations. The proposals were reviewed by BWF’s eight-member Sports Science Commission headed by BWF Development Chair, Dr. David Cabello.

“We got a varied selection this time. What we got better at is getting the proposals to be more applicable to coaching situations, so it’s not just a theoretical study,” explained BWF Development Director Ian Wright.

“We always got a lot of physiology (proposals), but we’re starting to get a lot more on psychology. This time we got some interesting ones on performance analysis and how the Olympic Games have evolved over two Olympic cycles.”

Continues on Page 7
Dear Colleagues and Friends

We have come to the end of another absorbing and important year; one in which more significant strides were made both on and off the courts as we continue to propel badminton upwards and onwards.

On the courts, most recently, we enjoyed the finale of the MetLife BWF World Superseries with the third instalment of the Dubai World Superseries Finals in December at Hamdan Sports Complex. Congratulations to all winners and may I note the achievements of China’s Chen Qingchen, claiming both the Women’s Doubles and Mixed Doubles titles (with Jia Yifan and Zheng Siwei respectively), and Chinese Taipei’s Tai Tzu Ying who captured the Women’s Singles championship in Dubai for the second time in three seasons, having triumphed in 2014. The new world No.1 certainly deserved her success as did first-time Superseries winner, Viktor Axelsen of Denmark, who finally came good in a thrilling Men’s Singles showdown with China’s Tian Houwei. Malaysia’s Goh V Shem and Tan Wee Kiong sealed their status as the top Men’s Doubles pair with a polished victory over upcoming rivals, Takeshi Kamura and Keigo Sonoda of Japan.

On the eve of the tournament, we saluted our esteemed Players of the Year and I would also like to congratulate Lee Chong Wei (Male Player of the Year; Malaysia); Misaki Matsutomo/Ayaka Takahashi (jointly Female Player of the Year; Japan); Lucas Mazur (Para-Badminton Male Player of the Year; France); Karin Suter-Erath (Para-Badminton Female Player of the Year; Switzerland); Chen Qingchen (Most Promising Player of the Year; China); and Pusarla V Sindhu (Most Improved Player of the Year; India). There were also Golden Shuttle Awards for our Olympic champions and we were pleased to have gold medallists in three categories with us for the presentation ceremony.

Dubai was again a superb conclusion to an unforgettable 2016, with the Rio 2016 Olympic Games being the year’s undoubted highlight. The dramatic images of that epic showpiece are seared into memory and badminton’s stature in international sports is all the richer for the intriguing, hard-fought battles which we witnessed. That nine nations shared the 15 badminton medals – our best-ever Olympic medal spread – gives us a great platform on which to build and we look forward to badminton’s continued growth, with potential champions getting a chance to embrace the sport through our grassroots programme, Shuttle Time which marked its 100th implementation in Panama in February.

The TOTAL BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals in Kunshan was another great advertisement for badminton with our elite players rising to the occasion. It was particularly memorable for hosts China whose women won a record 14th Uber Cup and for Denmark who snatched a historic first Thomas Cup title in the Men’s World Team Championship. Kudos also to China’s youth for impressively retaining the Suhandinata Cup (the World Junior Mixed Team Championship) in Bilbao, Spain, as well as for winning four individual World Junior titles. Gritty Sayaka Hobara and Nami Matsuyama of Japan took the Women’s Doubles crown.

Other highlights of our year are detailed later in this newsletter but in closing I would like to highlight that all our progress is the result of a huge collective effort involving the BWF Council, our continental confederations, member associations, staff, corporate partners and countless volunteers and friends of badminton who contribute much behind the scenes.

Thank you to everyone who has worked to ensure that our organisation and sport continue to flourish.

As we look to the future and to new Olympic and Paralympic cycles, Tokyo 2020 beckons. This is a special time for the para-badminton members of our family as they build up to their Paralympic Games debut in Japan. More immediately, however, we have another instalment of the BWF Para-Badminton World Championships in Ulsan, Korea, as well as the TOTAL BWF Sudirman Cup in Gold Coast, Australia; and the TOTAL BWF World Championships in Glasgow, Scotland – all in 2017. Of course, the MetLife BWF World Superseries starts in March with the YONEX All England Championships.

Let’s all recommit ourselves to working diligently and energetically for the betterment of badminton and may I wish everyone a happy, healthy and successful new year.

Poul-Erik Høyer

BWF President
Players at the opposite ends of their careers won the 2016 BWF Para-Badminton Players of the Year awards in December.

Karin Suter-Erath has just about seen and achieved it all in para-badminton but the veteran wheelchair athlete revelled in the delight of a new experience – her first global Female Para-Badminton Player of the Year title.

The 46-year-old beat three other nominees for the top honour after another outstanding season in which she secured triple gold at the European Para-Badminton Championships in the Netherlands in addition to two golds in the Turkey International and retaining her WH 1 Women’s Singles crown at the Irish Para-Badminton International. She ended the year in fine style with another triple-gold haul at the 1st Colombia Para-Badminton International in early December.

Meanwhile, teen sensation Lucas Mazur took the Male Para-Badminton Player of the Year crown from more senior rivals, following an impressive season in which the Frenchman won triple gold at the Turkey and Ireland Internationals before reaping similar success at the European Para-Badminton Championships in the SL 4 sport class.

"It’s a very important achievement for me because it’s a celebration of my year," said 19-year-old Mazur, after receiving his award at the Gala Dinner for the Dubai World Superseries Finals.

"It has been a long year of training and travel, in Indonesia, Spain and Netherlands. I’m proud of my country and that I got this award. A year ago, I followed the player awards and when I didn’t win, I decided to work harder to win this title. I want to win it the next year also."

Suter-Erath, who was unable to be in Dubai and will receive her award later this year, was equally pleased to be recognised for her 2016 performance.

"It was a big surprise for me. I didn’t expect it. When I got the call, I was very happy and proud.

"It’s nice to win awards but I don’t think about that when I am competing. My goal is to play my best and to keep improving my badminton. If I win awards because of that, then that’s great."

Citing her continental success as the highlight of her season, the Swiss star was especially thrilled to capture the Women’s Singles title in a tough three-game final versus Germany’s Valeska Knoblauch.

"That was really close. She made me move a lot and we had some great rallies. I like those challenges," recalled the champion whose motivation to continue playing at elite level comes from her “enthusiasm and passion for badminton”.

Like Mazur, Suter-Erath also enjoys travelling to events globally, making friends from various countries and testing herself in different conditions such as Majorca where she will start her 2017 campaign and Ulsan, Korea, which hosts the BWF Para-Badminton World Championships in November.

Beyond that there is para-badminton’s landmark debut in the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games – a tournament in which both these Players of the Year hope to feature.

"I am happy para-badminton will be in the Paralympic Games. It’s a dream for all players to be at Tokyo 2020," said an excited Mazur who suffered a growth deformity in his right ankle after a stroke when he had chickenpox at age three.

"Winning this award is motivation for me to get ready for Tokyo 2020. It’s very important to be ready (from) now for the Olympic Games. To be a champion, you have to always be prepared."

While it would be his first outing at para-sport’s highest level, Suter-Erath has been there twice already in tennis, winning Women’s Doubles bronze at the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games. Now her sights are set on Paralympic badminton.

"Yes, it’s my goal to be there. I think to play in Tokyo where badminton is a big sport will be fantastic."

Should she realise that dream, on the cusp of her 50th birthday, this fierce competitor will certainly not be there to make up the numbers!
Malaysia’s Lee Chong Wei and Japan’s Misaki Matsutomo and Ayaka Takahashi’s spectacular performances in 2016 have earned them the BWF Players of the Year awards.

While Lee’s three World Superseries titles and the Olympic silver medal won him the Male Player of the Year, Matsutomo and Takahashi jointly claimed the Female Player of the Year award thanks to their Olympic gold medal and four Superseries titles.

Lee triumphed over Jan O Jorgensen (Denmark), Zhang Nan/Fu Haifeng (China), Chen Long (China) and his team-mates, Goh V Shem/Tan Wee Kiong. This is Lee’s fifth Player of the Year award – the most by a player in any category. He previously won in 2009, 2010, 2011 and 2013. Matsutomo/Takahashi were nominated along with Denmark’s Christinna Pedersen/Kamilla Rytter Juhl, Thailand’s Ratchanok Intanon and Japan’s Nozomi Okuhara. They became the first Japanese to win the award since it was instituted in 1998.

The awards were presented by BWF Deputy President Gustavo Salazar Delgado at the Players’ Reception and Gala Dinner for the BWF SALUTES 2016 BEST.
Dubai World Superseries Finals at Armari Hotel in the iconic Burj Khalifa.

“We are extremely pleased,” said Matsutomo. “This year has been great for us. There were two memorable victories – the All England and the Olympics. We had an amazing year, and finishing the year with this award is unforgettable.”

India’s Pusarla V Sindhu, who has enjoyed a blazing run of form over the last few months, received the inaugural Most Improved Player award from President of UAE Table Tennis and Badminton Association, HE Dawood Al Hajri. China’s rising star, Chen Qingchen, who has already savoured Superseries success in Women’s Doubles and Mixed Doubles, was voted the Most Promising Player of the Year (Eddy Choong Award). The other contenders were her Chinese compatriots He Bingjiao and Li Junhui/Liu Yuchen and Malaysia’s Goh Jin Wei.

“This is an award I’ve always wanted to win,” declared 19-year-old Chen.

Meanwhile, Lucas Mazur (France) and Karin Suter-Erath (Switzerland) copped the Male and Female Para-Badminton Players of the Year honours respectively.

Also honoured at the function were the Olympic gold medallists in all five categories. They each received a golden shuttle and a watch.

On an evening which saw players at their stylish best, Malaysia’s Women’s Doubles player, Woon Khe Wei, snatched Ms. Best Dressed while Danish singles ace, Viktor Axelsen, strode away with the Mr. Best Dressed title.
‘VIKTOR-IOUS’ – AT LAST!

In an equally sticky final against Tian Houwei of China, Axelsen lifted himself once more. The result was a first-ever World Superseries title for the big Dane who had been runner-up on six occasions. That he did it when not at his physical best – suffering with lower-back problems – added to his impressive result.

Tai Tzu Ying capped a successful year with the Women’s Singles title a few weeks after she was crowned world No.1. The Chinese Taipei star had an easy final against Korea’s Sung Ji Hyun, who had little left after an exhausting 76-minute semi-final against India’s Pusarla V Sindhu. In her semi-final, Tai got past China’s Sun Yu for the first time in six matches before becoming the first player to savour two titles in Dubai, having won in 2014.

Goh V Shem and Tan Wee Kiong took the Men’s Doubles crown with another unruffled outing. Japan’s Takeshi Kamura and Keigo Sonoda, bristling with energy and confidence after their maiden Superseries title in Hong Kong, were outfoxed by the composed Malaysians in 40 minutes. Another pair who impressed during the week were Denmark’s Mads Conrad-Petersen/Mads Pieler Kolding, who were unstoppable in the group stage before running aground against Kamura/Sonoda in the semi-finals.

The Women’s Doubles was the closest contest on finals day. Japan’s Misaki Matsutomo/Ayaka Takahashi worked their way back into the match against Chen Qingchen/Jia Yifan after being outplayed in the first game. The match, however, swung China’s way after Matsutomo’s serve was faulted a few times. Chen/Jia pounced on the opportunity and romped past the Olympic champions for their second Superseries of the year.

The first signs of Viktor Axelsen’s newfound resilience were seen in his last Men’s Singles group match of the Dubai World Superseries Finals against Lee Chong Wei.

In a tense end game and with pressure telling on the Dane, it looked like another semi-final for the world No.1 Malaysian. However, Axelsen tenaciously hung on to beat Lee for the first time in ten matches, finally showing that intangible quality which distinguishes winners from also-rans.

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The projects are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic: Metabolic and Hormonal Responses, and Fluid and Electrolyte Status Following Badminton Matches: Implications for Player Recovery</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Area:** Exercise Physiology  
**Institution:** Kannur University (India)  
Badminton being a high intensity intermittent activity would affect hormonal responses. Fluid and electrolyte imbalances following matches have implications for player recovery. The study seeks to understand patterns of metabolic and hormonal responses and fluid imbalance following repetitive matches. |

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<tr>
<th>Topic: Does Training Decision-Making Under Match-like Physiological Exertion Inoculate Players Against the Negative Effects of Physiological Stress?</th>
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</table>
| **Area:** Psychology and Physiology  
**Institution:** Leeds Beckett University  
At the pinnacle of the sport the ability to make correct decisions, particularly under severe psychological and physiological pressure, can be the difference between success and failure. The project aims to offer insights into the match-like physiological stress on decision-making, and a practically applicable training intervention to build players' resilience to the effects of physiological stress. |

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<tr>
<th>Topic: How Temporal and Notational Structure of Badminton has Evolved from 2008 to 2016 in the Men’s and Women’s Doubles Events at the Olympic Games.</th>
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</table>
| **Area:** Match Analysis/ High Performance  
**Institution:** Badminton Federation of Castilla-La Mancha  
Notational analysis using video recordings of the matches provides important conclusions and may be useful for coaches and players to plan more efficient training and competitions. This project aims to increase the knowledge about doubles badminton match analysis and will help to show the evolution that has happened from 2008 to 2016 with respect to the temporal and notational structure in doubles events. |

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<tr>
<th>Topic: Are There Differences Between Anthropometrics, Biomechanics and Brain Electrophysiology Through Recreational and Training-to-Performance Players?</th>
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</table>
| **Area:** Physiology and Sports Psychology  
**Institution:** Santa Catarina’s Middle West Badminton Association and University of West of Santa Catarina (Brazil)  
This study aims to evaluate the anthropometrics, biomechanics and brain activity during execution of badminton movements between a group of children which plays just recreational badminton and a group which trains for competition (with middle-advanced skills). |

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<tr>
<th>Topic: Acute Physiological, Perceptual Responses and Exercise-induced Muscle Damage of Consecutive Matches in High Performance Junior Badminton Players</th>
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</table>
| **Area:** Physiology  
**Institution:** University Miguel Hernandez of Elche & University Camilo Jose Cela (Spain)  
This project seeks to evaluate the acute responses and exercise-induced muscle damage of playing consecutive badminton matches in a day or accumulated matches during several days. It will seek a greater understanding of how physical performance is altered after playing consecutive matches during a high-level tournament, and about associated muscle damage. |

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<tr>
<th>Topic: The Trunk: Strength ratios / Strength in German Elite Para-Badminton Players (Standing Classes and Wheelchair Classes)</th>
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</table>
| **Area:** Biomechanics, para-badminton  
**Institution:** Olympic Training Centre Rhineland-Palatinate; University Kaiserslautern, Institute for Sport Science; University of Applied Sciences (Germany)  
Strength and trunk instability due to impairments, disabilities and handicaps can have adverse effects on posture, function and movement. This can influence the performance of badminton players in wheelchair classes as well as in standing classes. This study will investigate trunk muscle strength and trunk muscle strength ratios obtained from German elite para-badminton players. The findings can be used to support the prevention of injuries and optimise rehabilitation. |

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187 N’ COUNTING!

The Badminton World Federation now has 187 member associations.

In recent months, Badminton Papua New Guinea and the UAE Table Tennis & Badminton Association both became full members while Ligue de Guadaloupe de Badminton was admitted to associate membership.
The system has been referenced by sports governance experts as “an inspiring case of change” and as a “democratic governance system…(which) offers an interesting opportunity for sport leaders across the world to rethink sport democratisation, as they start modernising their governance standards to get fit for purpose in the 21st century.” It was developed by the BWF Council, under the leadership of Dr. Kang Yong Joong, and has been enhanced by the current Council during Høyer’s presidency.

The launch of the Integrity Ambassadors’ campaign is the latest step in the BWF’s integrity programme – i am badminton – which began in 2015. The ambassadors, more of whom will be named in 2017, will be the faces of the campaign. In a ceremony ahead of the Dubai World Superseries Finals, BWF Deputy President Gustavo Salazar Delgado introduced the elite players (above), saying “they will act as role models through their conduct – both on and off court” and represent the campaign’s values throughout the badminton world.

Denmark’s Christinna Pedersen and Viktor Axelsen, Saina Nehwal of India and Japan’s Women’s Doubles pair, Misaki Matsutomo and Ayaka Takahashi were unveiled in December as the first BWF Integrity Ambassadors to promote clean, fair and honourable sport.

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In a ceremony ahead of the Dubai World Superseries Finals, BWF Deputy President Gustavo Salazar Delgado introduced the elite players (above), saying “they will act as role models through their conduct – both on and off court” and represent the campaign’s values throughout the badminton world.
The two high-water marks of 2016 – the TOTAL BWF Thomas & Uber Cup Finals and the Rio Olympic Games – both produced vignettes that left indelible imprints on badminton’s history.

Denmark became the first European country to triumph in the Men’s World Team Championships for the Thomas Cup in Kunshan, China (7). Starting the campaign without their ace doubles star, Carsten Mogensen, and with key players – such as Jan Jorgensen – not fully fit, the Danes weren’t considered among the front-runners for the trophy. The gritty Danes however overcame their rivals with inspired performances; Hans-Kristian Vittinghus emerging the hero in his crucial role as third singles player against Indonesia in the final.

In the Uber Cup, the status quo remained, with China winning their 14th title (5) – the most by any country in a team event – without much trouble against Korea in the final.

There couldn’t have been better advertisement for badminton than the Rio Olympics, with nine nations capturing medals. China were the only nation to win two golds – courtesy Chen Long (Men’s Singles) and Zhang Nan/Fu Haifeng (Men’s Doubles) (3). Carolina Marin (Spain) (4) won Europe’s first gold in Women’s Singles, while Misaki Matsutomo/Ayaka Takahashi (Women’s Doubles) claimed Japan’s first-ever gold. Tontowi Ahmad and Lilyana Natsir shrugged off a disappointing early season with a resounding Mixed Doubles triumph to return Indonesia to Olympic glory on its Independence Day. It was also a great event for Malaysia, Denmark, India and Great Britain. The focus on local players, with the crowd cheering lustily for Ygor Coelho de Oliveira (2) and Lohaynny Vicente, showed Brazilians have embraced badminton.

The MetLife BWF World Superseries circuit saw two phases: the pre-Olympic and the post-Olympic. While the pre-Olympic phase saw the dominance of experienced players, the post-Olympic period saw the emergence of young stars who could feature prominently in coming years. A number of stalwarts called time on their careers following Rio 2016, including Korea’s Lee Yong Dae (1), Shin Baek Cheol and Kim Sa Rang, and China’s Wang Yihan, Wang Shixian, Tian Qing, Zhao Yunlei, Ma Jin, Yu Yang and Wang Zhengming. However, with a young generation already excelling at the elite level, there has been no dip in the quality of play.

Additionally, 2016 was the year when Women’s Doubles broke free of domination by one or two countries. China won only three of the 12 Superseries titles (compared to nine in 2015), with Indonesia (one), Denmark (two), Korea (two) and Japan (four) taking the rest. Korea’s Chang Ye Na/Lee So Hee’s (6) victory in China marked the first time in 25 years that the Women’s Doubles crown was won by a non-Chinese pair.

The circuit also offered several takeaways for history buffs: for the first time since its inception 30 years ago, there were no Chinese winners at the Thaihot China Open; Ng Ka Long became the first home-grown player to win a singles title at the Yonex-Sunrise Hong Kong Open; Korean veteran Lee Hyun Il, at age 36, made the final of the Yonex French Open, facing an opponent 16 years younger – China’s Shi Yuqi.
This year’s most inspiring story was the return of Denmark’s Carsten Mogensen (10). Having undergone surgery for a brain aneurysm in February, the Men’s Doubles star was back at the highest level within four months. Winning a title in France (with Mathias Boe) and reaching successive finals in China and Hong Kong, 33-year-old Mogensen showed the courage to overcome the biggest challenges off and on court.

Five top players – Denmark’s Christina Pedersen (8) and Viktor Axelsen, Saina Nehwal of India and Japan’s Women’s Doubles pair Misaki Matsutomo and Ayaka Takahashi – were selected as BWF’s first Integrity Ambassadors to promote clean, fair and honourable sport. The launch of the Integrity Ambassadors’ campaign was the latest step in the BWF’s integrity programme – i am badminton.

Women’s Singles star Saina Nehwal (12) was elected as a member of the IOC Athletes’ Commission in October, one of four athletes appointed personally by IOC President Thomas Bach. The 26-year-old is the first Indian on this body comprising 12 elected members plus a maximum of seven others appointed by the IOC President. The IOC Athletes’ Commission serves as a link between athletes and the IOC, supporting them both on and off the field of play.

In March, BWF upgraded its Code of Conduct in Relation to Betting, Wagering and Irregular Match Results to bring a wider range of badminton-related personnel under its jurisdiction. Players who have competed in at least three international badminton events are now prohibited from betting on all badminton matches as are BWF and continental confederation staff and BWF Referees. The new Code has also strengthened the world-governing body’s authority to investigate allegations of betting, match-fixing or other related corruption.

Seeking to go beyond badminton’s image as an exclusively indoor sport, BWF announced it is exploring innovative ways to transform badminton into an outdoor/beach sport (11) as well as an e-gaming hot property. These decisions were endorsed at BWF’s May Council meeting in Kunshan, China. Formats for outdoor badminton, particularly beach badminton, are being considered with appropriate courts, regulations and equipment.

Badminton was one of the select sports to be featured on Olympic Channel Services (OCS) when the digital-first, multi-platform media entity started programming. BWF was among 27 international sports federations to sign an agreement with OCS to collaborate on content for the Olympic Channel, which was launched on 21 August 2016.

BWF and corporate giant Wanda – through its subsidiary Infront Sports & Media – embarked on an eight-year partnership for the centralised media and sponsorship rights of BWF Major Events and for a revamped BWF Series to be re-launched in 2018. Details of the agreement, which includes all commercial rights on an exclusive basis (media, marketing, digital and betting) from 2018-2025, were revealed at a signing ceremony in Beijing in September. This is the first time BWF will work with one global partner for both media and sponsorship rights distribution.

BWF added to its website network. The Olympic Badminton website (http://olympics.bwfbadminton.com) gave fans a ringside seat at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games. The BWF Sudirman Cup and BWF World Championships websites (http://bwfsudirmancup.com and http://bwfworldchampionships.com) will do likewise for the respective events in Gold Coast and Glasgow in 2017. Meanwhile, the BWF Education portal (http://bwfeducation.com) offers coaches and players various courses.
This year’s TOTAL BWF Sudirman Cup 2017 will have a golden glow.

Amid the spectacular backdrop of Australia’s Gold Coast, more than 40 teams and an estimated 1500 players will compete for badminton’s prestigious World Mixed Team Championships at the new Carrara Sports and Leisure Centre. The 21-28 May event will mark the first time in the tournament’s 25-year history that the Sudirman Cup is held outside of Asia or Europe.

“We’re delighted the Sudirman Cup will be played in the Southern Hemisphere for the first time, right here on Queensland soil,” said Queensland Minister for Tourism and Major Events, Kate Jones, calling it “a major coup for the Gold Coast”.

She noted it will be “an exciting opportunity for the world’s best players to get a taste of Queensland” including incredible beaches, surfing, theme parks, shopping, nightlife and hinterland.

Gold Coast has already gotten the thumbs-up from recently-retired badminton icon, Zhao Yunlei, who enjoyed a promotional visit to the popular destination in November. The two-time Olympic champion and five-time World champion hailed it a beautiful location as she participated in activities to support the upcoming Sudirman Cup.

“I have fulfilled my dream of patting a dolphin,” declared the Chinese star, who also shared tips with young Australian players, Wendy Chen and Sawan Serasinghe, during a badminton session on Surfers Paradise Beach.

Both Chen and Serasinghe will represent the hosts in the Sudirman Cup and Chen, whose parents are Chinese and who speaks fluent Mandarin, is keen to show off the Gold Coast.

“On the courts, China will be seeking to add to their staggering record of having won ten of the 14 Sudirman Cup tournaments. They are the defending champions having lifted the trophy on home turf in Dongguan in 2015. South Korea (three victories) and inaugural champions, Indonesia (one), are the only other winners.

Named after former player and Badminton Association of Indonesia (PBSI) founder, Dick Sudirman, the event features all five matches in the round-robin stage - both singles and the three doubles categories. In the knockout phase, a tie ends when a team wins three matches.

NOTE: Gold Coast photos compliments Tourism and Events Queensland.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

that I would win even though she has beaten me before. I was really happy when we won," said 18-year-old Chen, who also enjoyed individual success in the Eye Level Cups tournament which followed.

The young talent won China’s first Women’s Singles title at the BWF World Junior Championships in nine years, dispatching Thailand’s Pornpawee Chochuwong, 21-14 21-17, in the final. Chen replaced Wang Lin (in 2007) as the most recent Chinese Women’s Singles World Junior champion.

“It’s been a long time that China has not won this title so I am very excited and happy. I really wanted to win this for my country,” declared Chen who, like all individual winners, received a chapea, a beret for sports champions in the Basque region of Spain.

Her Men’s Singles (Sun Feixiang) (6), Men’s Doubles (Han Chengkai and Zhou Haodong) (5) and Mixed Doubles (He Jiting and Du Yue) (3) team-mates claimed gold also, leaving only Women’s Doubles for a clean sweep. However, the rampant Chinese were denied by a gutsy performance from Sayaka Hobara and Nami Matsuyama (4). The Japanese wrestled the Women’s Doubles crown from top seeds, Du Yue and Xu Ya, in a gruelling 84-minute battle. Their 25-23 19-21 21-14 victory was Japan’s first World Juniors doubles title.

China efficiently retained their crown with victories in Mixed Doubles, Men’s Singles and finally Women’s Singles as Malaysia’s Goh Jin Wei sent the shuttle wide to concede the decisive match. Malaysia’s run through the tournament saw them crush Indonesia in the final eight and Thailand in the semi-finals. However, China were simply unstoppable and Women’s Singles player, Chen Yufei, eventually wore down a stubborn Goh, 22-20 14-21 21-8, in 70 minutes to ensure the Suphanidadta Cup returned to Beijing.

“I wasn’t worried. I believe in myself. We already had two points and I was confident...