



## The Starting Block (Dev Roy, Founder)

Dear Readers,

Looking back over the past year, I can't help but reminisce with pride, at what the LeapStart family and Indian sports at large have achieved. 2010 has been a year to cherish, and I am glad to have shared it with each and every one of you. To be associated with sports through a year that has witnessed the resurgence, if not a revolution in Indian sports, is thoroughly satisfying. Perhaps the past year will forever be remembered as the watershed moment in the history of Indian sports.

One of the most important themes of 2010 has been that - sport brings people together. Regardless of their background, people from all over India leapt and rejoiced with the Women's 4X400 relay team. Indian's and Pakistani's cheered each forehand and backhand together as Rohan Bopanna and Aisam-ul-haq-Qureshi made it all the way to the US Open Finals. Even Sachin Tendulkar's 50th test century was celebrated across the globe. Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, in her annual Christmas Speech, highlighted the role that sport and games play in bridging boundaries. She called sports a 'powerful tool' to build stronger and happier communities, something that will resonate with each and every one of you. She emphasized that through sports you build your fitness, learn vital social skills and more importantly get a different perspective to life, and at LeapStart we are guided by the same universal principles. A love for sport is all it takes to form lasting bonds was her message, and I am sure no one would challenge that thought!

As the year comes to a close, let's spend some time celebrating the heroes of 2010. While there have been innumerable special performances and achievements, some have surpassed the others. So do enjoy LeapStart's Top-10 Indian Sportspeople of 2010!

Seasons Greetings and Best Wishes for the New Year

Dev

## SAINA NEHWAL

If the 2008 Summer Olympics gave us a name, then the 2010 season has given us an Icon. Saina Nehwal will undoubtedly be credited with the 'non-cricket' sports revolution in the country. Her heroics on the court and humility off it, has paved the way for the rest of India's sports persons. Seemingly impervious to pressure, the 20 year old stated in January of 2009, that she wanted to be a top ranked player by the end of 2010. Here we are, and she is currently ranked World No.2. 3 Super Series Titles, a Grand Prix Title and a Commonwealth Gold are testimony to the startling ascent of this Hyderabad Superstar. The expectations are soaring and the London Olympics will be the final frontier for India's first daughter. Having quashed the myth of the unbeatable Chinese with aplomb, the greatest gift Saina Nehwal has given India is a 'true sports identity'.



## SACHIN TENDULKAR



Volumes have been written and adjectives have been exhausted talking about the genius that is Sachin Tendulkar. Perhaps it's best to simply state that the legacy of the man is - Indian Cricket. The officially anointed 'Record Setter' in cricket, he has set the bar and raised it each year. His stunning displays in 2010 have shattered the shackles of the impossible and his exemplary consistency has spawned India's rise to the top. 50 Test centuries in every possible condition are credit to his versatility. An astonishing ODI double century, smashing 14000 Test runs and surpassing the 16000 mark in ODI's, he still has the appetite of a 16 year-old debutant. Bet against Tendulkar at the 2011 Cricket World Cup at your own risk!

"Apart from developing physical fitness, sport and games can also teach vital social skills. In the parks of towns and cities, and on village greens up and down the country, countless thousands of people every week give up their time to participate in sport and exercise of all sorts, or simply encourage others to do so. These kinds of activity are common throughout the world and play a part in providing a different perspective on life"

HM, Queen Elizabeth II

## SOMDEV DEVVARMAN



Only 5 Indians have ever been ranked in the top 100 Singles Tennis Players in the World. In 2010, Somdev became the 6th and the first in over a decade to cross that barrier into the world's crème de la crème. Thanks to his dedicated efforts, India now has a hero on the Singles Tour. Athletic, agile, powerful and charismatic, these are just some of the qualities that have engrossed Indian audiences over the past year. A successful Davis cup outing coupled with an eye-catching Gold Medal at the Delhi Commonwealth Games made him a household name. However, it was the unprecedented Gold in the Asian Games that propelled him into folklore. Maybe a Grand Slam Title is a while away, but Somdev has ignited the hope that sooner rather than later India can boast of a Singles Grand Slam Champion.

President Barack Obama announces a "Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition." He urges youth and all Americans to realize that fitness and healthy living requires a holistic approach and is essential to a balanced lifestyle

### VISWANATHAN ANAND

A model of humility, a pillar of concentration, sometimes unsung but never under-estimated, Viswanathan Anand continued to do what he does best – Conquer. While the fan fare and red carpets were rolled out for the publicity mongers, the wizard went about his business in customary fashion – diligently, passionately and in silent determination. After volcanic ash delayed all flights, Anand took a 40 hour exhausting road journey to appear for the World Chess Championships in Sofia, Bulgaria to face the challenger Veselin Topalov. Composed and unfazed by the chaos around him, Anand defeated his opponent in a 12 game battle to retain his title as 'Best in the World'.



### SUSHIL KUMAR

With a Bronze medal at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, two Gold medals at the Commonwealth Championships, an Arjuna Award and a Khel Ratna Award under his belt, Sushil Kumar started the year in prime condition. Battling his way upwards through sheer grit, Sushil is an inspiration to the entire country, and a perfect example of the 'against all odds' tagline. In late May he secured Gold at the Asian Wrestling Championships. In September he bagged Gold at the World Wrestling Championships in Moscow and cemented his place along with the best in the world. The icing on the cake was the Gold at the Delhi Commonwealth Games, which gave Indian fans a chance to watch their superstar live in action.



### MARY KOM

One of the few Indian women sportspersons to have established themselves at the highest level, M C Mary Kom embodies the undying spirit of the Indian Woman. Aptly called 'Magnificent Mary', she has won the hearts of millions of fans across the country against all obstacles thrown at her. In September of 2010 she clinched her 5th successive World Boxing Championship Title, making her the undisputed queen of the ring. A Bronze medal at the Guangzhou Asian Games showed us that the already iconic fighter still has room for improvement and is yet to hit a purple patch.



### GAGAN NARANG

It's ironic that the man with the smallest target to aim for is often credited with having the biggest heart. Gagan Narang has been a consistent performer for the tricolor over the years but announced himself as the face of Indian Shooting in 2010. His pinpoint accuracy, elegant style and strong will have made him the ideal contender for the 2011 Khel Ratna Award – India's highest sports award. 4 Gold medals at the Delhi Commonwealth Games has cemented his place as one of the best athletes of the country and an ambassador for the sport itself.



### VIJENDER SINGH

The brawny and stylish Jat boxer has attained 'celebrity' status in the country thanks to his rugged good looks and incredible performances in the ring. Despite all the glitz, glamour and endorsements, Vijender has never lost focus and is still a thorough professional. A lion in the ring, the aggressive and explosive boxer continued to dominate in 2010. A Padma Shri Award at the beginning of the year, followed by a Gold medal at the Commonwealth Boxing Championships set the stage up for the remainder of the season. Capitalising on his impressive form, Vijender bagged a Bronze at the Delhi Games, and then summited the Wrestling peak with a Gold medal at the Asian Games.



"It is participation and sportsmanship, more than winning or losing, which will strengthen the cherished ties of goodwill and understanding that unite us as one family"

Prime Minister  
Dr. Manmohan Singh

### WOMEN'S 4X400 RELAY TEAM

Little was known of these 4 women before the Delhi Commonwealth Games. Completely unheralded and compellingly exciting, Manjeet Kaur, Sini Jose, Ashwini Akkunji and Mandeep Kaur now have their own Wikipedia pages! The delightfully passionate four-some have given India a new lease of life in track events, a formerly unknown territory. Back to back Gold medals at the Delhi Games and Guangzhou Games have made them icons in their own right and legends back in their home towns. These 4 women have now become path-breakers for women sports persons, and have resurrected the hope in Indian athletes. They are unequivocally the most inspiring story of the Delhi Commonwealth Games.



### ASHISH KUMAR

The poise and grace of Ashish Kumar came to the fore, when the shy teenager clinched a historic Bronze medal at the Delhi Commonwealth Games. The captivating performance led to India's first ever medal in Gymnastics and opened the door to a new avenue for Indian sport. The prodigy exceeded all expectations at the Asian Games as he bagged a Bronze Medal at his best category – the Men's floor event. Thanks to the efforts of this pioneer, Indian Gymnastics has seen a revolution, with more youngsters, sponsors and corporates getting involved with the sport.



### Contact Us

LeapStart is a Sports & Fitness program that ensures fitness is a critical element in the academic and social development of children.

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