

The History of ASU Badminton

Dr. Merle Packer played the primary role in establishing the ASU Badminton dynasty.

Responsible for moving the program from club status to a nationally recognized athletic team in the late 1960s, Packer began first with women's scholarships under the national collegiate AIAW organization for women's sports. Collegiate badminton began to thrive in the 1970s among East Coast, Midwest and West Coast schools, and ASU began to firmly establish itself as a badminton power.

In the mid-1970s Packer was able to add men's scholarships to the roster. In '75, David Levin became the first male recipient of a badminton scholarship. By the time Packer retired in 1984, she had led ASU to 12 national women's and men's titles.

In 1978, Packer took a one-year sabbatical and Levin stepped in as interim coach. He brought home the first ASU men's team title, which culminated with an exciting final match upset over San Diego State, and also the women's national title, which revenged the previous year's second-place finish.

In the early 1980s collegiate badminton suffered a severe blow when the AIAW was absorbed by the NCAA. The NCAA did not carry on the recognition and support of badminton, leading many universities to cut their programs. However, Packer and the ASU athletic administration recognized the tremendous success of the ASU program and maintained the sport.

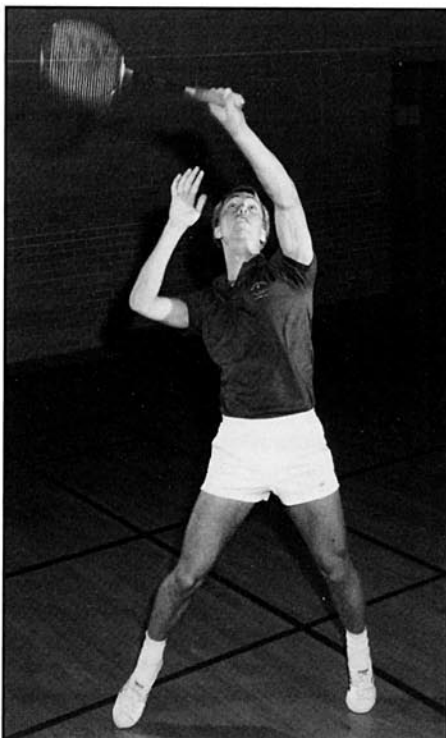
Collegiate badminton then assumed the authority of its own national tournament committee in conjunction with the United States Badminton Association. The 1980s saw ASU expand its national domination and increase its trophy collection with the introduction of the mixed team event in 1983.

Carol Fisher, Packer's former graduate assistant coach, was asked to take over the head coaching role after Packer's retirement in 1984. Fisher continued where Packer left off in leading ASU to four years of national team titles in men's, women's, and mixed.

Fisher then passed the baton to Guy Chadwick, an experienced adult national team player and former Sun Devil (1978-1980) to begin the 1988-89 school year.

Chadwick inherited an established dynasty that received an additional boost when badminton was declared a full medal sport beginning at the 1992 Olympics. Suddenly, the USBA as a national organization, and the ASU Badminton program in particular, was catapulted into greater importance and visibility.

That was evident immediately, as the first



Chris Jogis, who won eight individual collegiate national titles during his ASU career, was one of five Sun Devils on the 1992 U.S. Olympic team.

U.S. Olympic team consisted of five former or current ASU stars on the six-member roster.

The call of greater national prominence in the shadow of Olympic dreams intensified the training and the competitive environment – a perfect match for Chadwick's higher ambitions for the team. Chadwick expects to earn more collegiate team titles and continue ASU's amazing streak. He also works and hopes for greater national and international success for his players in the renowned Olympic arena.

OTHER HISTORICAL NOTES:

- Dr. Merle Packer, ASU's coach from 1968-84, was awarded membership in the ASU Hall of Distinction for her outstanding contributions to Sun Devil athletics.
- Should current coach Guy Chadwick capture a team title at the Collegiate National championships in March of 1993, he will surpass Packer and Fisher in all-time national team titles earned. The three coaches currently stand tied at 12 national team titles each.
- ASU players have swept each of the five individual collegiate titles since 1986.
- The Sun Devils have produced six individual triple crown collegiate champions on 10 occasions: Liz Aronsohn (1988-89) and Jenny Chan (1991) for the women; and Rodney Barton (1983), Chris Jogis (1986-87), Ben Lee (1988), and Tom Reidy (1990-present) for the men.
- ASU standout Rodney Barton, while taking the collegiate triple crown, also took the U.S. adult national singles titles in 1983 and 1984 – the first Afro-American badminton champion in U.S. history.
- Carrie Morrison (1976-79), a 1978 Broderick Award winner, and Sue Annis Kellogg (1970-72) are the two badminton inductees in the ASU Sports Hall of Fame. U.S. Olympians Chris Jogis, Ben Lee and Linda French will be eligible for consideration this year.
- ASU badminton, like the international nature of the sport itself, has a history of multi-cultural, world-wide ethnic representation. Players have come from Canada, Mexico, Sweden, Ireland, Scotland, Denmark, England, Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Guyana, India, and from the East to West coast of the USA. In 1991 alone, ASU's 15 players and coaches represented 11 different nationalities!

FACTS ABOUT BADMINTON

Badminton is played with a shuttlecock, commonly referred to as a "bird," on a court with dimensions of 20 feet by 44 feet. The net stands at 5'1" at the posts and 5'0" in the center. Singles competition for women is played to 11 points while the men's singles, men's and women's doubles and mixed doubles all play to 15 points.

Each match consists of the best two of three games with a rest of five minutes between the second and third game, if needed. Otherwise play is to be continuous. Matches typically last between 20 to 90 minutes, with several thousand shots exchanged at the rate of one shot per second in singles, and even faster in the doubles events. Players may run between two and four miles in short lunges, sprints and jumps. It has been proven to be one of the most physically demanding sports of all.

Badminton, in its modern form, has a history dating to the 1870s. The U.S. began its first national championships in 1937. Badminton is a game that is played extensively worldwide with participation numbers placing it in the top five of all sports.

An international tournament circuit is now well established with over \$2 million in prize money. The Asian countries of China, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Korea, and the European countries of Denmark, Sweden, and England currently produce the best players in the world.

There are now several important international competitions that form the U.S. players' highest goals, including Thomas Cup (for men's teams) and Uber Cup (for women's teams), and the Olympic Games. The ASU badminton program has contributed the majority of players for the U.S. National team for all these events.