

Young turks ruled 2008

As we enter into 2009, TOI profiles young turks from the region who dominated cricket and other sports at the national and international stage

Yusuf Pathan

Ajitesh Argal

Known to be an explosive batsman who has the ability to destroy any batting line up in the world, Yusuf Pathan made the most of opportunities he got at the international level. The elder Pathan slammed bowlers all over the field during the Indian Premier League (IPL) and also scored the fastest 50 of the league. Yusuf showed his utility with the ball as well. The 22-year-old all-rounder scored 435 runs and took eight wickets in IPL. He bagged man of the match award in IPL finals. Impressed with his performance, national selectors gave him a berth in the Indian team for the Sri Lanka series. But he couldn't perform well. However, he was again picked up for the England ODI home series. Yusuf shined in the series as he scored half century of 29 balls and did some hard hitting lower down the order. He could well become a permanent member of the Indian team in One Day Internationals (ODIs).

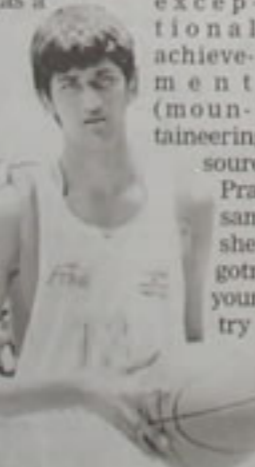
This 19-year-old bowler showed some rare maturity while bowling against South Africa in the Under-19 World Cup finals in March 2008. Ajitesh took two wickets and gave away just seven runs in the low scoring final match and helped his team win the world cup title. He bagged man of the match award for his performance in the final match for the feat and got a hero's welcome back in Vadodara.



The good run for this youngster continued as Baroda Cricket Association (BCA) gave him a break in the Ranji season 2007-08. Ajitesh made his Ranji debut against Karnataka and got a pat on his back from rival captain and formidable India batsman Rahul Dravid for his four wickets. Though Ajitesh couldn't get many wickets during the season, he did impress fellow cricketers and experts with his smooth action and stamina. Ajitesh is a promising right-arm pacer among the young lot and has a long way to go.

Dishant Shah

This 17-year-old basketball champion from the city created a history of sorts by becoming the only player from Gujarat to participate in three international championships within a span of six months. Perhaps, it would be tough to find



a player in the country today who would have achieved such success in such a short period of time. After playing championship matches in Republic of Sakha in Russia and Iran, Dishant recently visited Hong Kong with 12-member national team for seven-day Invitation Basketball Tournament held. He was then part of Indian junior men basketball team in the Asian Basketball Championships for Young Men held in Iran. "I am fortunate to get so many opportunities to represent my country and state in international tournaments," said this standard 11 student from Rosary School.

Prachi & Prarthana Vaidya

Prarthana, 19, and her younger sibling Prachi, 15, the mountaineering duo, was awarded State Mountaineering Award by Gujarat government in 2007 for their outstanding achievement as mountaineers. Prarthana was conferred with National Child Award for exceptional achievement (mountaineering) by Union Human Resources Minister Arjun Singh. Prachi set country record in the same year. She was only six when she scaled Mount Thelu in Gangotri region making her the youngest mountaineer in the country.



complishment as mountaineers drew attention of country's most loved former president APJ Abdul Kalam who met the



sisters on his tour to Gujarat in 2007. "Both us now want to scale the Mount Everest," said Prarthana. The daughters belong to a family that is into mountaineering in a big way. Their father Sandeep Vaidya and mother Hema are also mountaineering enthusiasts.

Lajja Gauswami

At a time when NSG commandos were taking on terrorists at Mumbai, this 19-year-old girl from Anand was shooting at different kinds of 'targets' in Islamabad in Pakistan. Gauswami — the only shooter from Gujarat — to be part of the 28 shooters team selected by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) bagged gold and a bronze medal in the week-long fourth South Asian Shooting Championship held in November. This former NCC cadet brought laurels by scooping gold in the women's 10 m air rifle event and bronze in the women's 10 m air rifle



Veer Patel

Country's youngest rider continued adding more trophies and medals in 2008. At 16, city lad Veer Patel not only raced against 40 international riders at the 2nd round of 2008 Federation Internationale de Motocyclisme (FIM) World Championship held at Kaveh Industrial



Park Zone in Tehran, he also finished second in the last round of the national Gulf Cup Dirt Track Racing Championship held at Nashik in December. Veer who had started with mountain biking on his cycle at the age of 11 before graduating to riding motorcycles is now looking forward for supercross and motocross events in 2009 for which he will be going to US for training.

ON THE ART BEAT: THEY MADE NEWS TOO

Foreshadow Pictures

'Johnny Sharma', a five-minute short film by rookie filmmakers under the banner of Foreshadow Pictures, is on its way to Cannes and Berlin film festivals. It won a contest organised by a satellite channel. On its way to winning the contest, the movie defeated entries from filmmakers from across the country. Some of those who ate humble pie are already working with Bollywood or the advertising industry. The group Foreshadow Pictures made six films for a state-level short film festival 'Hot Shorts' held in the city in July. 'Johnny Sharma' was declared the best movie in the event.



In 2009, we can expect another such festival and probably another short film making it big," said Niraj Joshi, one of the organisers for 'Hot Shorts'.

Sandip Pisalkar

This 28-year-old sculptor from the city is making waves in the art world with his refreshing creative concepts. Sandip Pisalkar, an alumni from MSU's fine arts, was awarded the International Danfoss Art Award at Denmark. One of his works won gold and another a bronze medal. Recently, he was given Emerging Artist Award by Foundation for Indian Contemporary Art (FICA) instituted by Vadehra Art Gallery (VAG) in Delhi. "I am going to attend an artist residency programme in United Kingdom and want to make a mark in international art scene," said Pisalkar.



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TELEVISION AND RADIO

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