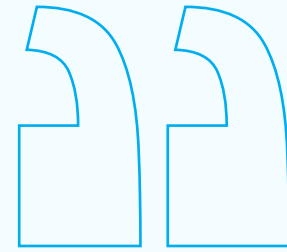


CHOLA'S GOT T★ALENT

THE
PRO
PADDLER
AT CHOLA

ADITYA NARASIMHAN





**THE MORE YOU
SWEAT IN
TRAINING, THE
LESS YOU BLEED
IN BATTLE**

Mr. Aditya Narasimhan is an Assistant General Manager in Chola. Beyond excelling in his profession, he's a pro table tennis player, a coach, and wears many other hats. Intrigued by his diverse pursuits, we sat down with him for a delightful conversation to get a glimpse into his life and know a bit more about him. So, brace yourself and join us on this captivating journey!

How did your love for the sport begin?

At the age of 7, I took up the sport under my father's advice. My father was a cricketer. Since he was part of a team sport, he convinced me to take up an individual sport. The moment I picked up a table tennis paddle, I knew it was my calling. From then till now, my love for the sport has only deepened.

Who serves as your greatest inspiration in your sporting journey?

My greatest inspiration is Mr. Sharath Kamal. He represents India on the big stages. He is the first Indian table tennis player ever to become ten times



Senior National Champion. Currently, I have the privilege of working with him at his coaching academy. Despite my time constraints, being involved with him is a blessing.

Reflecting on your achievements, what stands out as your proudest moment?

Sharath Kamal won a gold for Madras university back in 2001. After that, I won the championship in 2012, thereby ending a long, dry, and painful streak. After that for SRM university, I won a gold. That made me the only recipient to win two university golds from Tamil Nadu. The funny part about this is, I keep bragging about this to Sharath whenever I can.



BALANCING WORK AND PRACTICE CAN BE CHALLENGING. HOW DO YOU MANAGE IT?

These days I shifted my focus on coaching rather than playing. Even then, I seize every opportunity where I can take a swing. In the recently concluded State Level Corporate Table Tennis Championship, I bagged the silver medal which was a big boost to me.

I coach my students in the morning for at least 2 days in the weekdays and 1 day in the weekends.

Can you share with us a moment that stands out as your proudest so far?

There are many along the way. But one such moment that stays vivid in my memory will be this match against Uttar Pradesh. I was facing tough odds throughout the tournament, and that particular game was a must-win for me. The fierce battle and eventual victory left me immensely satisfied.

Is there any quote that you live by?

Yeah, absolutely. I live by the quote which goes like,

**“EVERY DECISION LEADS TO A GOOD OUTCOME.”
I ENCOURAGE EVERYONE NOT TO SHY AWAY FROM
MAKING CRITICAL DECISIONS.**

How do you see the connection between sports and your professional life?

The synergy between my sport and work is striking. The split-second decisions required in table tennis mirror the quick thinking needed in my professional role. I found myself using my decision-making skills in my work too.

Reflecting on the evolution of the game, what changes have you witnessed?

Lots to be honest. From the colour of the ball to the point system, lots have changed. Earlier we used orange and white balls. Now for better viewership they have let us use only the white ones. The point system has also seen a shift from 21 points with 5 serves each to the current 11 points and 2 serves.

Can you talk about the support you family renders towards your passion?

My wife, an Ayurveda doctor by profession, helps me with medication and guidance to stay healthy so that I perform better in the sport and work. She knows exactly how much I love the sport. To be honest, I can't really ask for more. After having two children, my sister—who is also a national player who has represented the state—has kept up her passion for the sport till date. This has been inspiring for me to be with the sport always.

KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK, ADITYA.

Chola is proud of you!

Can you share with us your future aspirations?

Currently, I'm working closely with Sharath. Our goal is to win at the 2024 Paris Olympics. He is 41 now. So, we need to watch him closely as he shouldn't pick up any injuries along the way.

Beyond that, my long-term vision includes expanding the community of table tennis players in India. If we ask the number of people who play Cricket in India, it would be in crores. But for Table Tennis it would be in thousands. In such a big country like India, it is disheartening to see such low numbers. So, we're dedicated to raising awareness and increasing participation in this wonderful sport across the nation.

