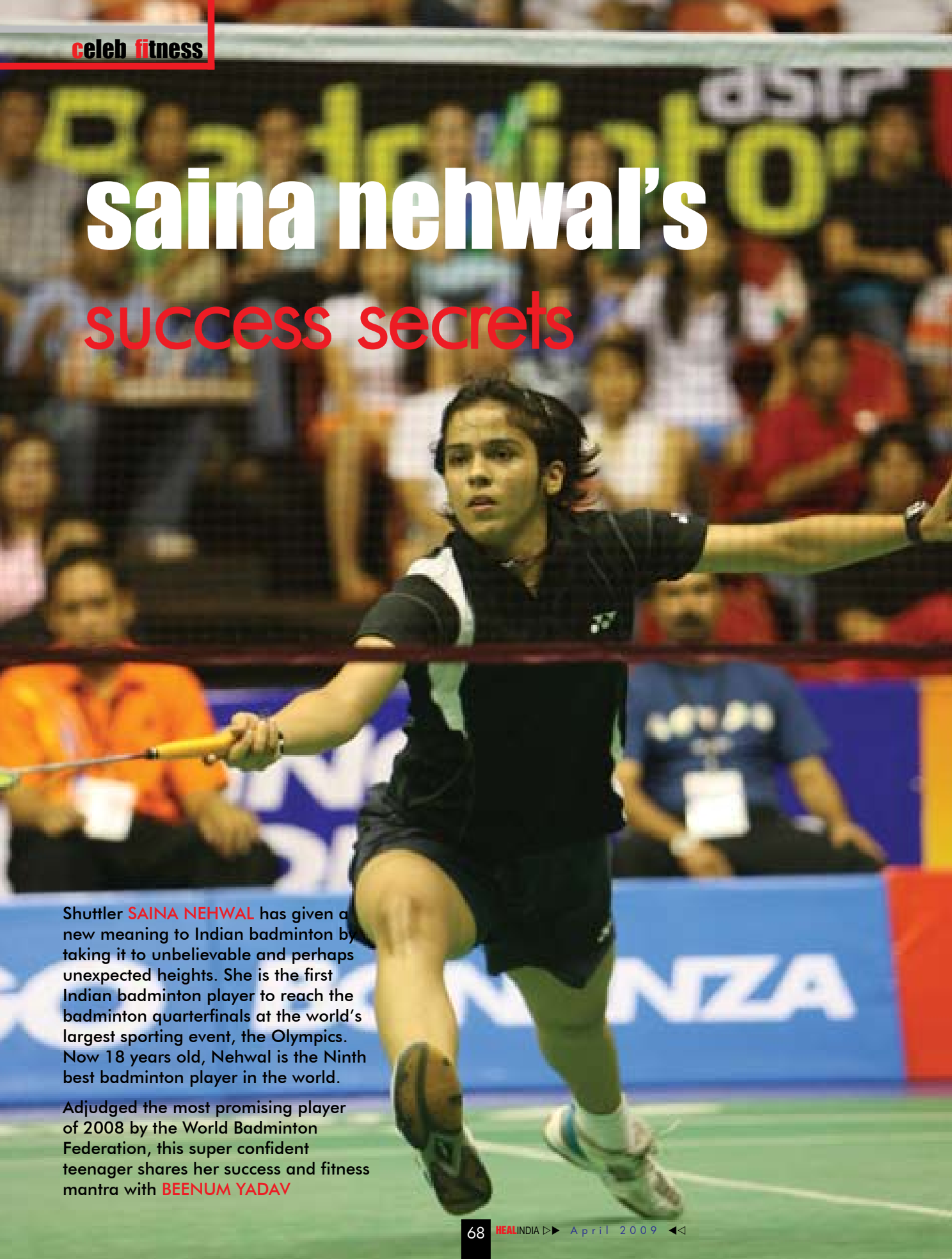


saina nehwal's success secrets

A full-page photograph of Saina Nehwal in the middle of a badminton stroke. She is wearing a black and white athletic outfit and is captured in a dynamic pose with her racket extended forward and her body leaning into the shot. The background is a blurred crowd of spectators in a large arena.

Shuttler **SAINA NEHWAL** has given a new meaning to Indian badminton by taking it to unbelievable and perhaps unexpected heights. She is the first Indian badminton player to reach the badminton quarterfinals at the world's largest sporting event, the Olympics. Now 18 years old, Nehwal is the Ninth best badminton player in the world.

Adjudged the most promising player of 2008 by the World Badminton Federation, this super confident teenager shares her success and fitness mantra with **BEENUM YADAV**

HI: Being the first Indian woman to reach the singles quarter- finals at the Olympics, how did you feel representing the Country?

SN: Yes, it is a matter of pride for any Indian to represent the country at the Olympics. For me reaching the quarter - finals was a dream come true.

HI: Do you think that the game has finally started getting its due?

SN: Yes, my results at the Olympics as well as the fact that I won a few of the world events are steps in a positive direction. The new generation is taking the game very seriously... I mean they don't just play it for exercise. The importance of badminton is being realized nowadays.

HI: How important is fitness for consistent performance?

SN: Our techniques in badminton are the best in the world but we lack in stamina. The Chinese and the Europeans have much more of it than the Indians. To be frank, I am much better placed compared to other girls who play badminton in India. Agility is the second important factor for success in badminton.

HI: What is your schedule like? What do you do to keep yourself fit and in shape?

SN: Daily exercise, good food on time, no junk food, and no sweets/ ice creams. I think regularity; sincerity and dedication are pivotal for good health.

HI: Can you suggest some healthy eating habits with respect to breakfast, lunch, dinner or smart snacking?

SN: You must always eat on time and have balanced food. All seasonal fruits/vegetables in reasonable quantities must be a part of your diet. Have a good breakfast followed by better lunch. Dinner must be light. Not too much of fat, no junk food is the 'good diet mantra'. Add milk and curds to your diet. It is good for health.

HI: How do you 'de-stress'? How easy or difficult is it to handle pressure?

SN: Play always with an open mind. Losing to a better player should not normally be stressful. Think of every

game as a new one. Handling pressure is easy if you keep on trying your best. There have been occasions when I lost the first set but came back well in the next set because, I gave my 100%. I avoid stress by exercising. I find crying to be a very effective stress buster particularly when I am away from home.

HI: Are there any specific medicines that you generally carry while traveling?

SN: God is kind to me. I never had any necessity of medicines on any of the tours. Once I had stomach pain and I took advice from my father who told me to take only bottled water and no junk food and if possible avoid tea etc. I take a few protein supplements when I am playing.

HI: How do you define fitness? And how do you think your game helps you keep fit?

SN: Fitness, I think, is synonymous with eagerness to do better. I play Badminton to keep fit. I think it is a generous mix of nutritious meals, exercise and good habits that helps you keep fit.



HI: In your opinion who is the fittest person in the sports world and why do you think so?

SN: Generally speaking, a winner is always the fittest person around.

HI: How important do you think physical fitness, technical expertise and mental ability are as far as being the best in Badminton is concerned?

SN: Being physically, mentally and technically well equipped, I would say, comprise the 'heart of the matter'. I think no doctor in Hyderabad can say that I have visited a clinic in the last 10 years. It is god's grace that I am fit and fine.

HI: Are you endorsing any brands?

SN: Yes, I am the brand ambassador for Herbal India... for the good food supplements.

HI: Would you like to convey any message to our health conscious readers?

SN: Do not worry; try to exercise every day to be fit and lively in this beautiful world. Be happy, polite and helpful to others in the society. ☑