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19<sup>th</sup> July 2021

Press Release

## **AITA condemns misleading and inappropriate tweets by Rohan Bopanna and Sania Mirza**

**New Delhi:** Twitter comments by Rohan Bopanna and then Sania Mirza are inappropriate, misleading and it appears, without knowledge of the rules. They should have checked the rule book of ITF regarding qualifications, something that Divij Sharan seems to have done while writing to TOPS.

Rohan Bopanna could not have qualified as per ITF Rules. Therefore Sania Mirza's tweet is also baseless and coming from a player of her stature, is condemnable.

Fact of the matter is that India's best entry was sent for Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan, which was the correct decision. However, they did not qualify as per ITF rules.

Our players' rankings were not good enough for direct qualification, and we made all efforts to get them in. Rohan and Divij were fifth on alternate list on 16th July.

Only on 16th July, when Sumit Nagal got a chance in Singles, we saw a possibility, since singles players were also being considered, of Sumit being able to partner with Rohan. We asked ITF whether the entry of Sumit Nagal will suffice to pair with Rohan Bopanna for an entry into Mens Doubles.

ITF informed us that this cannot be done at this stage because of various reasons and rules. Even if it is done, the pair would still not qualify.

Rohan with Sumit would be at third alternate pair.

We at AITA tried to help our players with all combinations but they failed to make the cut based on rankings. Is Rohan Bopanna suggesting that we should have entered his name with Sumit Nagal one month ago, when Sumit's ranking was in the 140s and Divij was at 78.

The comment by Rohan Bopanna, who is a senior player is due to lack of knowledge and without understanding the facts, rules of ITF and is unwarranted and totally misleading.

Even the comments of Sania Mirza are most inappropriate. Ranking of Rohan with Divij or Sumit Nagal were not good enough for qualification. So how did we we lose an opportunity to win medals either in men's doubles or mixed doubles.

This tweet and statement of Mr. Bopanna is condemned unequivocally.

(Anil Dhupar)

Hon. Secretary General

**All India Tennis Association**

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