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20th July 2021

Press Release

Controversy around Indian team for Olympics

New Delhi: The AITA wishes to put on record its deep disappointment and unhappiness at the unsavoury controversy that has been needlessly generated due to some irresponsible tweets by some leading and respected players of India.

It is felt important that the air is cleared at the earliest so that this completely avoidable controversy is not fuelled any further by individuals or groups who appear to have their vested interests in creating rifts.

At the outset, we wish to make it clear that selection of players eligible for participation in the Olympics is strictly as per the rules of the ITF and within the purview of ITF and AITA's role is to facilitate with information as well as to make best efforts to ensure that no opportunities are missed.

The AITA is therefore putting up the details of the subject as well as the entire sequence of correspondence held with ITF to give a complete picture to one and all.

The AITA has issued a press release on 19th July where it has pointed out that twitter comments by some leading Indian players are inappropriate, misleading and it appears, without knowledge of the rules. They should have checked the rule book of ITF regarding qualifications.

Mr. Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan, our Men's Doubles nominated team, did not qualify as per ITF Rules, on the cut-off date of June 14, 2021.

Rohan and Divij were fifth on alternate list on 14th June.

Subsequently, the only possibility of this pair getting an entry would be based on withdrawals if any by July 16. **And without qualifying, the question of Rohan Bopanna partnering Ms. Sania Mirza in Mixed Doubles did not arise.**

Fact of the matter is that India's best Men's Doubles entry was sent for Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan, which was the correct decision. However, they did not qualify as per ITF rules since their performance over the last two years did not fetch them a world ranking that was good enough to qualify.

While our Men's Doubles players' rankings were not good enough for direct qualification, the AITA still continued to make all possible efforts and correspondence to keep the possibilities alive. One of the main reasons why AITA continued to try for Rohan was that there would then be a possibility of Rohan and Sania partnering each other in Mixed Doubles.

A detailed sequence of correspondence entered into between AITA and ITF on this specific matter of Men's Doubles team is being attached to give an idea of the constant follow up with ITF. This is besides the numerous phone calls and talks with ITF executives. It is therefore extremely disappointing that some vested elements seek to create the impression that AITA was not trying enough to ensure that we got the entry in the Olympics,



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especially after the government had spent huge amounts through its TOPS scheme over the last years, to support the pair of Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan as Olympic medal hopes.

From: aita@aitatennis.com <aita@aitatennis.com>

Sent: 28 June 2021 11:52

To: Alex Hughes <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>

Cc: Akhouri Bishwadeep <ab@aitatennis.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2020 Tokyo Olympics

Dear Alex,

This is with reference to the entry of Rohan & Divij for the Men's Doubles in Olympics.

The entry deadline for tournaments after Wimbledon is today.

We, therefore, request you to kindly see if you can confirm whether they are getting entry in mens doubles for Olympics...or not.

If yes, they may not need to plan their tournaments.

Of course, we will not disclose this to anybody, except to both players, until ITF officially declares the names.

Awaiting your positive response,

With regards,

(Akhouri Bishwadeep)

CEO, AITA

From: **Alex Hughes** <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>

Date: Mon, 28 Jun 2021, 17:59

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] 2020 Tokyo Olympics

To: INDIA ASSOCIATION <aita@aitatennis.com>

Cc: Akhouri Bishwadeep <ab@aitatennis.com>, Joanna Leech <Joanna.Leech@itftennis.com>

Dear Akhouri

Thank you for your message. Unfortunately they are not part of the 32 qualified pairs at this point in time. The reallocation process can occur up until 16 July so if we see some withdrawals their position may change.

We will be releasing the official list of entries on Wednesday.

Kind regards

Alex

From: aita@aitatennis.com <aita@aitatennis.com>

Sent: 02 July 2021 08:42

To: Alex Hughes <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>

Cc: Joanna Leech <Joanna.Leech@itftennis.com>; Anil Dhupar <anildhupar@outlook.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Olympics 2020

Dear Alex,



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We have gone through the Olympics Doubles Entry and found that the players who are ranked much below our players Rohan Bopanna & Divij Sharan (combined ranking 113) have been included in the list which are under :

- The combined ranking of players from USA (Sl. No. 28) is 118
- The combined ranking of players from Spain (Sl. No. 30) is 170
- The combined ranking of players from Portugal (Sl. No. 31) is 204

I shall be grateful if you kindly confirm the reason for excluding the Indian pair and including these entries?

With regards,

(Anil Dhupar)

Hon. Secretary General

From: aita@aitatennis.com <aita@aitatennis.com>

Sent: 02 July 2021 12:48

To: Alex Hughes <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>

Cc: Joanna Leech <Joanna.Leech@itftennis.com>; 'Anil Dhupar' <anildhupar@outlook.com>

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Olympics 2020

Dear Alex,

With reference to your mail, we may add that Rohan Bopanna and Divij Sharan were the Gold Medalist of the Asian Games held last. Therefore, a kind consideration for making them enter the Olympics should have been done. We request you to consider this aspect.

With regards

(Anil Dhupar)

Hon. Secretary General

From: Alex Hughes [<mailto:Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>]

Sent: 02 July 2021 13:35

To: INDIA ASSOCIATION

Cc: Joanna Leech; Anil Dhupar

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Olympics 2020

Dear Anil



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Thanks for your message and we understand the uncertainty. All places have been allocated strictly according to the Qualification System. The IOC requires us to include 'quota control' measures for doubles once our total athlete quota limit has been reached (we tend to break our quota at most Games because we can never be sure how many singles players will qualify in doubles).

As such in the Qualification System the last 7 places in doubles are subject to a 'singles priority' rule where pairs with singles players are prioritised if we have already reached our quota of 86 athletes (which we have). The pairs you list below all have qualified singles players which is the reason for their qualification.

Please note there is another doubles only pair higher ranked than Boppana/Sharan that has also not qualified at this stage.

Kind regards

Alex

From: **Alex Hughes** <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>

Date: **Fri, 2 Jul 2021, 17:34**

Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] Olympics 2020

To: INDIA ASSOCIATION <aita@aitatennis.com>

Cc: Joanna Leech <Joanna.Leech@itftennis.com>, Anil Dhupar <anildhupar@outlook.com>

Dear Anil

Unfortunately the IOC does not permit any flexibility to the rules and there are no wildcards. Each slot is allocated exactly according to the Qualification System and we are not allowed or able to apply any other considerations.

Kind regards

Alex

From: aita@aitatennis.com <aita@aitatennis.com>

Sent: **13 July 2021 10:22**

To: Alex Hughes <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>

Cc: Anil Dhupar <anildhupar@outlook.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2020 Tokyo Olympics

Dear Alex,

We would appreciate if you can let us know the position of our doubles players in qualification for the Olympics. We will further appreciate if you let us know in which position they are in the waiting list.



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With regards,

(Anil Dhupar)
Hon. Secretary general

From: Alex Hughes <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>
Sent: Wednesday, 14 July 2021, 03:35
To: INDIA ASSOCIATION
Cc: Anil Dhupar; Joanna Leech
Subject: RE: [EXTERNAL] 2020 Tokyo Olympics

Dear Anil

No movement with the doubles entry list unfortunately, the pair is still 5th reserve.

Kind regards
Alex

From: aita@aitatennis.com <aita@aitatennis.com>
Sent: 15 July 2021 19:34
To: Alex Hughes <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>
Cc: Anil Dhupar <anildhupar@outlook.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] 2020 Tokyo Olympics

Dear Alex,

Thank you for your message. Yuki Bhambri is out of station. He is in USA. We will get in touch and let you know.

Regarding our men's doubles entry, earlier you have written that there is only one pair above our Indian players. Now you are putting us at 5. May I humbly request you to provide me who are the other 4 before them.

With regards,
(Anil Dhupar)
Hon. Secretary General

From: Alex Hughes <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>
Sent: Friday, 16 July 2021, 10:56
To: INDIA ASSOCIATION
Cc: Anil Dhupar; hironmoy@aitatennis.com; Joanna Leech; 'Racheal ANDREW - レイチェル アンドリュウ'



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Subject: Tokyo reallocation: Sumit Nagal

Dear Anil, dear all

Following a withdrawal Sumit Nagal is now eligible for the men's singles event in Tokyo. Given the very short timeframe involved now (today is last day for reallocation) please could you confirm via email first whether you would accept this slot and then send the attached form at a later time for our records.

Kind regards
Alex

From: aita@aitatennis.com <aita@aitatennis.com>
Sent: 16 July 2021 16:42
To: Alex Hughes <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>
Cc: Anil Dhupar <anildhupar@outlook.com>; hironmoy@aitatennis.com; Joanna Leech <Joanna.Leech@itftennis.com>; 'Racheal ANDREW - レイチェル アンドリュー' <racheal.andrew@tokyo2020.jp>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Re: Tokyo reallocation: Sumit Nagal

Dear Alex,
Thank you for your mail. Kindly refer to our telecon earlier today. Now that Sumit Nagal is eligible for singles, the AITA wishes to CHANGE its nomination for Mens Doubles from ROHAN + DIVIJ to SUMIT + ROHAN. Kindly advise us urgently on the steps we need to take so that Rohan can partner Sumit in Mens Doubles at Tokyo Olympics.
Looking forward to an urgent reply,
Anil Dhupar
Secretary General
AITA

From: Alex Hughes <Alex.Hughes@itftennis.com>
Sent: Friday, 16 July 2021, 13:21
To: INDIA ASSOCIATION
Cc: Anil Dhupar; hironmoy@aitatennis.com; Joanna Leech; 'Racheal ANDREW - レイチェル アンドリュー'
Subject: RE: Tokyo reallocation: Sumit Nagal

Dear Anil

Thanks for your mail. Unfortunately changes to doubles nominations are not possible except in instances of illness/injury/exceptional circumstances.



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Please note that the doubles draw is full and reallocations are only possible for the next 7 hours so were you able to make this change it would not affect the likelihood of qualifying. The new pair's combined ranking would be 182 and there are already 2 pairs on the reserve list with singles players who have higher rankings.

Kind regards
Alex

Only on 16th July, when Sumit Nagal unexpectedly got a chance in Singles due to withdrawals, we saw a glimmer of hope, of a possibility of Sumit being able to partner with Rohan, since singles players having direct entry in Singles draw, were being given some preference in Men's doubles, based on their Singles ranking.

We asked ITF whether the singles entry of Sumit Nagal, will suffice to pair with Rohan Bopanna for an entry into Men's Doubles.

Unfortunately ITF informed us that this cannot be done at this stage because of various reasons and rules, including possibility of changing nomination only in case of injury/illness/exceptional circumstances. ITF added that 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 this something that is so difficult for a person of Mr. Bopanna's experience to understand. And is Mr. 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?

And despite all this, Mr. Bopanna has sought to further complicate and confuse the matter and mislead his twitter followers and others across the country, by first making a recording of a phone call with the Secretary General, which, considering that the Secretary General was not aware of, can at best be considered a morally incorrect act, and then releasing it to the Press while suggesting inferences that were wrong. Is this the way a respected, senior player of this country wishes to interact with the National Federation?

Also, may we ask Mr. Bopanna what was wrong if the Secretary General told him that he was waiting for some good news. This call was probably at the time when Sumit had secured a singles entry and the possibility of Rohan being able to partner him had emerged. Is it a crime to be optimistic? Why is Rohan trying to paint it as if the attempt was to mislead him and the country. What could be his motivation for doing something like this?

The comments by Rohan Bopanna, who is a senior player are unwarranted and totally misleading.

Even the comments of Sania Mirza are most inappropriate, because there was no possibility of her being able to partner Rohan in the Mixed Doubles event till he qualified.



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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 tweets and statements of Mr. Bopanna are condemned unequivocally by the AITA.

Anyhow, with the qualification of Sumit Nagal, there is now the possibility of his being able to partner Sania Mirza in Mixed doubles for India if they make the cut-off.

(Anil Dhupar)
Hon. Secretary General
All India Tennis Association