

National Grass Court Tennis starts Dec 15

Karan Rastogi and Rushmi Chakravorthi will be the top seeds in this year's National Grass Courts Tennis Championships with a prize purse of Rs.450,000 to be played at the South Club here Dec 15-22.

The national championships will miss out on the top two players in the men's section, Rohan Bopanna and Prakash Amritraj, while the women's section will not see Sania Mirza, Sunitha Rao, Shika Uberoi and Tara Iyer, the top four women players in the country.

'In the absence of some of the top players, the younger pool of players from the country has a chance to make it to the top level,' Rajat Majumdar, president South club, said here Friday.

The main draw of the singles will be of 32, while the doubles will be of 16.

While there will be 20 direct entries in the singles, there will be four wild cards and eight qualifiers making up the team of 32.

The men have a lot at stake at the championships. While the winner gets an entry to the [Chennai Open](#), he also stands a chance of making it to the Davis Cup squad against Uzbekistan to be played in Delhi in February.

The field is also quite strong with Asutosh Singh seeded second. Asutosh, winner of the hard court nationals in Delhi, was also a member of the Asia Cup team recently in Bangkok. Vivek Shokeen, Vinod Sridhar and wild card Sayeed Fazaluddin are the players to watch.

The wild cards in the men's section are Harsh Mankad, Sayed Fazaluddin, Manoj Kumar Sewa and Saif Ali, while in women's section Mohana Sarkar, Richa Valecha, Dipti Srivastava and Rohini Das have made the cut.

The All India Tennis Association took the opportunity to hand over Rs.200,000 to local girl Shivika Burman to pursue her tennis career abroad.

The 2006 grass court winners were Vishal Uppal and Isha Lakhani. However, none of them is defending this time round.

Top eight seeded players:

Men: Karan Rastogi, Asutosh Singh, Aditya Madkekar, Divij Sharan, Vivek Shokeen, J. Vishnu Vardhan, Vinodh Sridhar and P. Prajnesh Guneshwaran.

Women: Rushmi Chakrovorthi, Sonal Phadke, Parul Goswami, Sweta Kumari Solanki, Ragini Vimal, Rashmi Teltumbde, J. Kesika and Anukriti Prasad.

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