

# Sania Mirza - Indian Tennis Player

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**Sania Mirza** is a tennis diva from India. She is a very popular name in India, favourite among youths. Sania is a hard-working, overachieving phenomenal who has stayed remarkably down-to-earth. This tennis sensation is dispatching foes at a historic rate. Sania is the first Indian woman to advance to the fourth round of a Grand Slam tournament, the first to win a WTA singles title and the first to win a junior Grand Slam title.

## Earlier Days

Born in Mumbai on November 15, 1986 to Imran and Nasima Mirza, Sania started playing tennis at the age of six. Sania's father Imran Mirza and mother Nasima were watching a Steffi Graf and Conchita Martinez battle, when they decided to make their daughter a tennis star. She started practicing under CK Bhupati, Mahesh Bhupati's father and first started playing tennis at the Nizam club in Hyderabad. She learnt the professional game at Sinnet Tennis Academy in Secunderabad before finally moving to Ace Tennis Academy in the USA.

## International Career

Sania played her first international tournament in 1999 when she represented India at the World junior Championship at Jakarta. She has also appeared till the semifinal round of the French Open girls' doubles and in the girls' singles at Wimbledon where she suffered a second round defeat. Back in 2003, Sania defeated Katerina Bohmova of the Czech Republic and Michaela Krajicek of the Netherlands 3-6, 6-2, 6-3 in the junior girls' doubles to become the first Indian to win a women's Grand Slam title. Sania partnered 13-year-old Russian Alisa Kleybanova.

It was after 51 years that an Indian girl figured in the final of a Grand Slam, the last being Rita Dabur, who had finished runner-up in the singles event in 1952.

In 2003, the then Minister for Health and Family Welfare, Sushma Swaraj, announced the appointment of teenager Sania Mirza, as the brand Ambassador for the Government's 'Save the Girl Child' campaign. The 18-year-old tennis player hit to fame when she entered the third round of the Australian Open Tennis woman's tournament and went down to Serena Williams, but only after a spirited tennis court match. Sania has emerged not just a superb sportsperson, but a youth icon.

## Career Highlights

- 2007 East West Bank Classic, beats Martina Hingis for the second time in a row in the second round 6-2, 2-6, 6-4.
- 2007 Acura Classic, reaches quarter-finals after defeating two Top 20 players Shahar Peer and Dinara Safina. However loses to top-seed Maria Sharapova 6-2 6-1.
- 2007 Bank of the West Classic, reached third career final after defeating Akiko Morigami, Tatiana Golovin, Patty Schnyder and Sybille Bammer, but lost to Anna Chakvetadze 6-2 6-3. Claimed the Doubles title with partner Shahar Peer, beating Anna Chakvetadze and Victoria Azarenka 6-4 7-6.
- 2007 Western & Southern Financial Group Women's Open, won the doubles title with Bethanie Mattek as the 1st seeds. In the final they defeated Alina Jidkova and Tatiana Poutchek 7-6 7-5.
- 2007 Western & Southern Financial Group Women's Open, reached the semifinals as the 3rd seed, finally losing to 1st seeded, and eventual champion, Anna Chakvetadze 2-6, 7-5, 3-6.
- 2006 15th Asian games, Doha, Qatar: Mixed doubles - won gold medal for India partnering Leander Paes. They beat Japan's Satoshi Iwabuchi and Akiko Morigami 7-5, 5-7, 6-2
- 2006 15th Asian games, Doha, Qatar: Singles - won silver medal losing to China's Jie Zheng 4-6, 6-1, 1-6
- 2006 15th Asian games, Doha, Qatar: Team Tennis - won Silver medal for India pairing Shikha Uberoi. They lost to Chinese Taipei team.
- 2006 Sunfeast Kolkata Open singles: reached semi-finals, losing to eventual champion, Martina Hingis 6-1 6-0
- 2006 Sunfeast Kolkata Open doubles: Won the tournament partnering Liezel Huber. They beat Yulia Fedak and Yuliana Beygelzeimer 6-4 6-0
- 2006 Bangalore Open (Hyderabad Open in the previous years) doubles: Won the tournament (partnering with Liezel Huber)
- 2006 Won Silver medal in Qatar Asian Games
- 2006 Women's singles final and Gold medal in mixed doubles (partnering with Leander Paes)
- 2005 Japan Open: reaches the semi-finals of women's singles and doubles (partnering Shahar Peer of Israel); reaches her highest doubles ranking of 114. 2005 US Open: reaches 4th round by defeating Marion Bartoli of France in straight sets (7-6(4), 6-4) before losing to top seed Maria Sharapova 6-2, 6-1. Voted Best

Player of the day on the 3rd day for winning her 2nd round match despite bleeding toes.

- 2005 Forest Hills Women's Tennis Classic, New York: reaches her second WTA final but fails to win.

- 2005 Acura Classic: upsets Nadia Petrova in 2nd round but loses in the third round to Akiko Morigami of Japan (2-6,6-4,4-6). By beating the 8th-ranked Petrova, she breaks into top 50 in world rankings for the first time ever.

- 2005 Dubai Tennis Championships: Upset reigning US Open Champion Svetlana Kuznetsova 6-4, 6-2 in 2nd round to reach the quarter-finals

- 2005 Hyderabad Open singles: Won the tournament defeating Alyona Bondarenko of Ukraine 6-4, 5-7, 6-3 in the final and became the first Indian woman to capture a WTA singles title.

- 2005 Australian Open singles: 3rd round: Became first Indian woman to reach the 3rd round of a Grand Slam tournament.

- 2004 Hyderabad Open doubles: Won the tournament (partnering with Liezel Huber) to become the youngest Indian to win a WTA or ATP tour title and the first Indian woman to capture a WTA tour title. entered the singles as wild card but lost in the first round to the eventual winner Nicole Pratt.

- 2003 Wimbledon Championships Juniors doubles: Won the tournament (partnering with Alisa Kleybanova) to become the youngest Indian and the first Indian woman to win a junior Grand Slam title.

- 2003 Afro-Asian Games: won four gold medals - Women's singles, Mixed doubles (with Mahesh Bhupathi), Women's doubles and Women's team events (the last two golds in partnership with Rushmi Chakravarthy).