

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

APRIL – JUNE
2026 (VOL - 15)



Welcome to the April–June 2026 edition of the Simply Sport Foundation Quarterly Newsletter.

This quarter was defined by collaboration, innovation, and a continued commitment to creating inclusive sporting environments where girls and athletes can thrive. Across our programs, we focused on strengthening systems that support athletes at every stage of their journey—from promoting health and well-being to expanding grassroots opportunities and preparing athletes for meaningful careers beyond sport.

This newsletter captures the milestones, partnerships, and stories that reflect our collective efforts to use sport as a catalyst for positive social change.



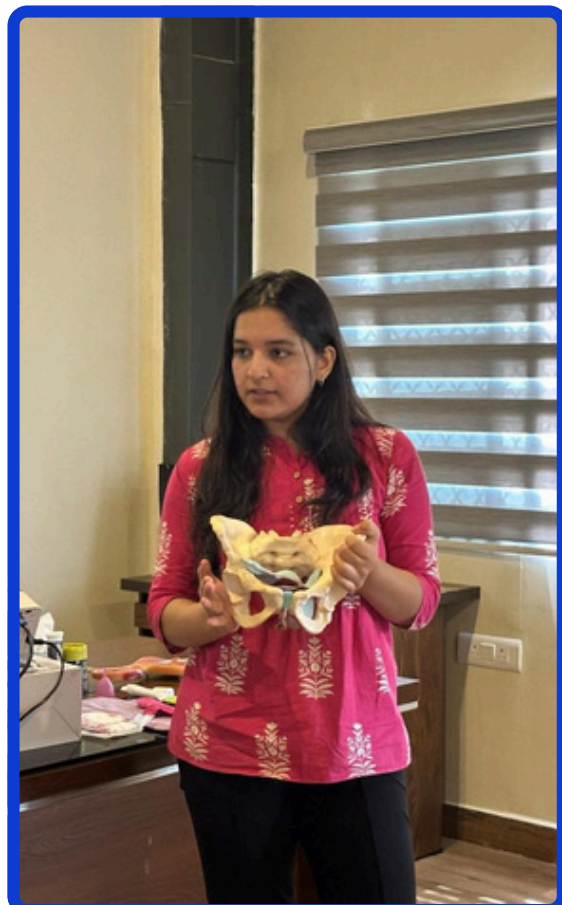
PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

1) Women in Sports



The last quarter marked significant progress across SSF's Women in Sports initiatives as we continued building more inclusive, informed, and supportive sporting environments for girls and women. Our work focused on generating evidence to understand the barriers faced by girls and female athletes, strengthening the capacity of coaches and communities, expanding opportunities for grassroots organisations, and equipping athletes with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in sport and beyond.

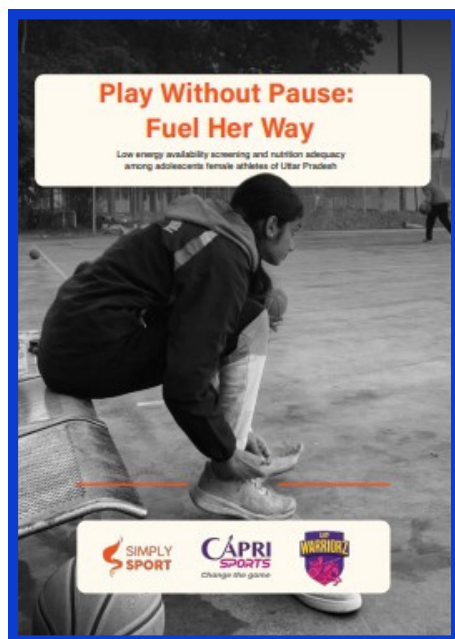
A major milestone this quarter was the launch of two research reports on girls' participation in physical activity and nutrition-related challenges among female athletes, providing valuable evidence to guide future programs and advocacy. We also strengthened coach education, parent engagement, and athlete development through workshops and the launch of Simply Learn sessions at the Simply Sport Badminton Academy. The Grassroots Development program advanced with the introduction of the Multi-Year Grant Partnership program and the expansion of the Girl Athlete Scholarship program to support more young athletes across India. Through PIVOT, athletes enhanced their leadership, employability, and career readiness through expert-led sessions, mentoring, and leadership bootcamps. Together, these achievements reflect Simply Sport Foundation's commitment to creating stronger systems that enable girls and women to participate, excel, and lead in sport while building sustainable pathways for their future success.





1.1 Women Health Program

Significant progress was made in advancing the health, well-being, and participation of girls and women in sport through research, capacity building, coach education, and athlete learning initiatives. These efforts focused on strengthening knowledge, awareness, and support systems that enable girls to participate in sport with confidence while equipping coaches, parents, and communities to create more inclusive sporting environments.



Launch of Research Reports

Simply Sport Foundation launched two research reports examining key challenges affecting girls and female athletes in Uttar Pradesh. **Play to Be Active for Life** explored the barriers to physical activity among school-going girls, while **Play Without Pause: Fuel Her Way** examined nutrition-related challenges faced by female athletes, with a particular focus on Low Energy Availability (LEA). Together, these reports provide an important evidence base to inform future programming, advocacy, and policy efforts aimed at improving girls' participation, health, and well-being through sport.

Train-the-Trainer program with Enabling Leadership

In partnership with Enabling Leadership, Simply Sport Foundation conducted a three-day Train-the-Trainer program at YMCA, Pune, bringing together eight trainers to strengthen their understanding of gender sensitisation through sport and physical activity. The program focused on building conceptual knowledge of gender and inclusion, enhancing facilitation and communication skills, and equipping trainers to facilitate parent engagement sessions within their communities, contributing to more inclusive and supportive sporting environments.



Coach and Parent Engagement at Simply Sport Badminton Academy

Coach and parent engagement initiatives were introduced at the Simply Sport Badminton Academy with an inaugural session on Effective Communication for coaches, followed by baseline assessments with parents to better understand their perspectives and support needs. These activities laid the foundation for stronger collaboration in supporting athletes' overall development.

Coach Education Initiatives

As part of ongoing coach education efforts, online Menstruation and Sport sessions were conducted for coaches from the Badminton Association of India centres in Raipur and Guwahati. These sessions enhanced coaches' understanding of female athlete health and menstrual well-being, while promoting informed, supportive, and athlete-centred coaching practices.



Simply Learn Sessions

The Simply Learn series was launched for junior and senior athletes at the Simply Sport Badminton Academy, covering topics such as sports nutrition and menstrual health. The sessions aimed to improve health literacy, encourage informed decision-making, and equip athletes with practical knowledge to better manage their health, training, and performance.

BWF Mental Health Grant

Work under the Badminton World Federation (BWF) Mental Health Grant, implemented in collaboration with Samiksha, progressed through program planning, stakeholder coordination, and preparatory activities that will support the successful implementation of the project in the coming months.



1.2 Grassroots Development Program

Grant Partnerships

Building on the learnings and relationships developed through its annual Grant Partnerships program, Simply Sport Foundation launched the Multi-Year Grant Partnership (MYGP) program—a structured three-year development model that marks a significant evolution in SSF's commitment to grassroots sports organisations working with girls. Moving beyond annual funding cycles, the MYGP combines phased financial investment with sustained technical support to strengthen partner organisations, enhance their institutional capacity, and create long-term sporting pathways for girls. The April–June 2026 quarter was dedicated to the inaugural selection cycle of the program, laying the foundation for identifying and onboarding SSF's first cohort of Multi-Year Grant Partners.



Girl Education Scholarship

As part of its continued commitment to enabling young female athletes to pursue their education alongside sport, SSF expanded the Girl Athlete Scholarship program from 65 to 100 athletes across India. During the April–June 2026 quarter, the application process was successfully completed, attracting strong interest from aspiring athletes nationwide. The program has now moved into the shortlisting phase, with applications being carefully reviewed to identify the next cohort of scholarship recipients who will receive financial support to continue both their academic and sporting journeys.



1.3 PIVOT

The PIVOT program continued to equip athletes with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to prepare for meaningful careers beyond sport. During the quarter, athletes completed 34 learning sessions, maintaining 85–90% attendance while progressing from foundational digital literacy and communication skills to leadership development, employability, and career readiness. The program focused on helping athletes recognise how the values developed through sport can translate into professional opportunities beyond active competition.



Expert-led sessions covered topics including goal setting, project management, personal branding, networking, financial literacy, workplace readiness, artificial intelligence, and career planning. Through the PIVOT Career Awareness Series, athletes also interacted with professionals from across the sports ecosystem, gaining insights into career opportunities in sports science, event management, coaching, sports law, analytics, broadcasting, and the development sector.

A key highlight was the second PIVOT Bootcamp at Anantapur Sports Academy, where athletes participated in immersive sessions on leadership, communication, teamwork, negotiation, and project development. Athletes also continued refining their team projects through structured mentoring and feedback, while preparations for the inaugural PIVOT PitchFest progressed for its online launch in August 2026.

The program also recorded encouraging outcomes beyond the classroom. Ten athletes expressed interest in professional opportunities with IKF Godrej, while cohort athlete Annu Saini secured selection into the Rajasthan Police through the Sports Quota, highlighting the impact of PIVOT's holistic approach to athlete development. These achievements reinforce the program's vision of empowering athletes with the confidence, skills, and opportunities to build successful careers beyond sport.

2) Simply Sport Badminton Academy



Simply Sport Badminton Academy (SSBA) continued to strengthen its athlete development pathway during the quarter with four fully operational training groups:

- Senior Elite
- Junior Elite
- Junior Advanced
- Beginner

A total of 53 athletes are currently enrolled and training at the academy. In line with our commitment to holistic athlete development, regular sports science sessions are being conducted to support physical conditioning, injury prevention, recovery, nutrition awareness, and overall performance enhancement.

The academy remains focused on creating a high-performance environment that enables athletes to progress from grassroots participation to competitive excellence.

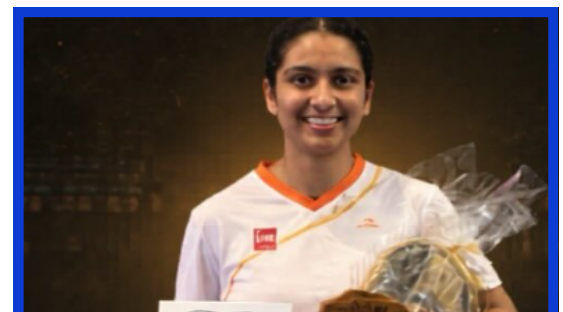
Harshad Shadish

- Champion – Men's Singles, Karnataka State Ranking Tournament, Bengaluru
- Runner-Up – U-19 Boys Singles, Karnataka State Ranking Tournament, Bengaluru



Tasnim Mir

- Champion – Women's Singles, Saint-Denis Reunion Open 2026



Saneeth Dayanand

- Runner-Up – Men's Singles, Saint-Denis Reunion Open 2026



Swara Raygandhi

- Bronze Medalist – Girls Singles, Gujarat State Badminton Championship
- Runner-Up – Girls Doubles, Gujarat State Badminton Championship



Aashi Das

- Runner-Up – U-19 Girls Singles, Karnataka State Ranking Tournament, Mandya



As SSBA continues to grow, the academy remains committed to delivering world-class coaching, integrating sports science, and creating pathways for athletes to compete at the state, national, and international levels.

Supporting this vision, Strength & Conditioning Coach Prajwal Acharya provides structured physical training that enhances performance, improves movement, reduces injury risk, and supports the long-term athletic development of players, ensuring a holistic approach to badminton excellence.

PODCAST

What does it actually take to build a world-class Badminton academy in India?



Watch Now

3) Athlete Support

Achievements



Dharmveer Choudhary

Dharmveer Choudhary continued to deliver outstanding performances across state, national, and international competitions, reflecting his consistent progress and dedication to excellence. Competing in both the 200m and 400m events, he achieved significant milestones during the quarter, including victories at the Rajasthan State Athletics Championship 2026 and the Indian Athletics Series – 10 in the 200m event. He also recorded new personal bests in both the 200m (20.82s) and 400m (45.85s), highlighting his steady improvement and competitive form.

Quarter Highlights

- 🏆 Winner – Rajasthan State Athletics Championship (200m)
- 🏆 Winner – Indian Athletics Series – 10 (200m)
- ⚡ New Personal Best – 200m (20.82s)
- ⚡ New Personal Best – 400m (45.85s)
- Represented India at the World Athletics Relay Championships, Botswana

NEW PARTNERSHIPS



The quarter witnessed several meaningful collaborations that strengthened Simply Sport Foundation's programs and expanded opportunities for athletes and girls in sport. Under the Women's Health program, SSF received international recognition through Aditi Mutatkar's participation at the 29th TAFISA World Congress 2026 in Prague. She showcased SSF's work on female athlete health, menstrual literacy, safeguarding, coach education, body positivity, and creating safe sporting environments for girls. As part of the Girls Positive and Safe Coaching Pathway, supported by Nike and implemented in India by the ITTF Foundation and Dani Sports Foundation, the platform enabled SSF to share India-based learnings with a global audience.



Within the PIVOT program, SSF continued its collaboration with Social Panga, the program's CSR partner, to deliver a LinkedIn personal branding session that helped athletes strengthen their professional identity and explore career opportunities beyond sport. SSF also deepened its engagement with the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and the IOA Athletes' Commission through the IOA Athletes Forum, where the team facilitated a networking session focused on communication, storytelling, relationship-building, and athlete transitions. These collaborations continue to strengthen SSF's efforts to prepare athletes for successful careers both within and beyond the sporting ecosystem.

EVENTS AT SSF

Under PIVOT, athletes participated in a series of sessions designed to strengthen career readiness, personal branding, financial awareness, and awareness of opportunities within the sports ecosystem. A LinkedIn personal branding session helped athletes build stronger professional profiles and develop effective networking strategies, while an AI session introduced practical ways to use tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, and NotebookLM to support learning, productivity, and everyday problem-solving.



The PIVOT Career Awareness Series exposed athletes to diverse career pathways, including sports science, sports law, sports event management, financial literacy, and the sports not-for-profit sector. These sessions highlighted how skills developed through sport—such as discipline, teamwork, resilience, communication, and decision-making can translate into meaningful careers beyond active competition. SSF also facilitated a networking session at the IOA Athletes Forum, encouraging athletes to recognise the value of their sporting journeys and build professional relationships for future opportunities.

Under the women's health vertical, SSF marked Menstrual Hygiene Day by reinforcing the importance of creating supportive environments where girls feel informed and empowered. Through resources such as Meri Udaan, Meri Pehchaan and Meri Khel Yatra, SSF continued to promote body literacy, menstrual health awareness, and overall wellbeing, making these resources more accessible to school girls, young athletes, and grassroots communities across India.

SSBA Open Badminton Tournament 2026

On 21 June 2026, SSBA successfully hosted its first Open Badminton Tournament, marking an important milestone in the academy's efforts to build a vibrant badminton community.

The tournament featured four categories:

- Men's Singles Open
- Men's Singles 35+
- Men's Doubles
- Parent-Child Doubles

The event received an enthusiastic response, attracting more than 40 registrations across categories. Beyond competition, the tournament fostered community participation, encouraged family engagement through sport, and strengthened SSBA's position as an emerging badminton hub in the region.



SUCCESS STORIES

Annu Saini: Creating Pathways Beyond the Track

Some stories remind us exactly why PIVOT was created.

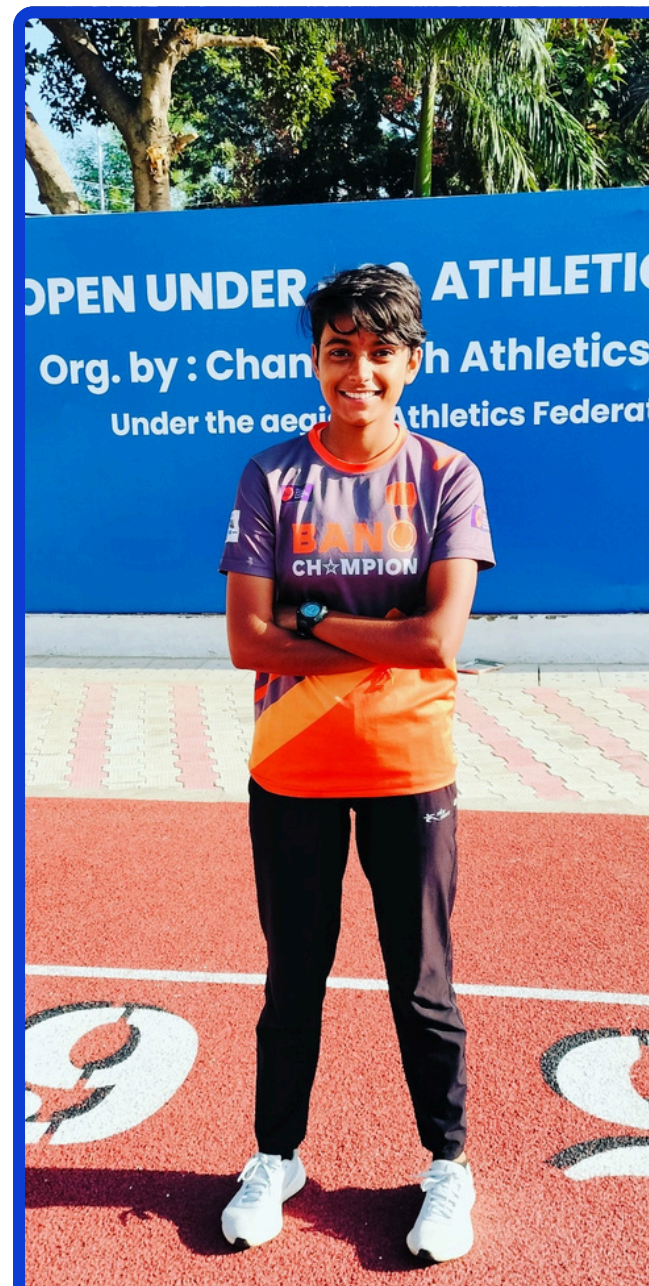
Annu Saini, one of Rajasthan's top female steeplechasers and a member of the PIVOT Cohort 2026, recently earned a place in the Rajasthan Police through the Sports Quota. For an athlete who has already established herself as one of the state's leading performers, this is a significant milestone in a journey shaped by discipline, resilience, and years of consistent hard work.

At PIVOT, we believe an athlete's journey should not be limited to medals, rankings, and tournaments. Sport builds powerful life skills – confidence, leadership, discipline, pressure-handling, perseverance, and the courage to keep moving forward even when the future is uncertain. However, many athletes need structured support to translate these strengths into opportunities beyond sport.

With Annu, the PIVOT intervention focused on simple but important areas: communication, resume building, goal setting, interview preparation, and helping her speak about her own journey with clarity and confidence. These inputs helped her prepare for the next stage of her career while staying rooted in the strengths she had already built through sport.

The achievement is entirely Annu's. Her selection into the Rajasthan Police is a result of her talent, effort, and commitment. But it is a proud moment for PIVOT to have played a small role in supporting her preparation for this next chapter.

Annu's story is a powerful reminder that when we invest in athletes beyond performance, we create pathways that last far beyond their sporting careers. Her journey will inspire many more girls from Itawa and beyond to believe that sport can open doors not only on the track, but in life.





GIVE YOUR HELP

Are you interested in collaborating with us

We're always open to building meaningful connections, sharing knowledge, and growing together. As part of our commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), we welcome opportunities that foster learning, innovation, and positive social impact. Whether it's through skill-building, joint initiatives, or knowledge exchange, we believe in the power of collaboration to create lasting value.

JOIN US IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Support grassroots female athletes in sports!

Your donation can help empower young women through access to training, equipment, and opportunities they might not otherwise have. By supporting grassroots female athletes, you're investing in talent, equality, and the future of sports.



DONATE NOW