

A HISTORICAL RECOVERY OF BADMINTON: FROM ASIA TO BRAZIL

Miguel Longo Vieira Vidal do Rosario¹
Márcio Vinícius de Abreu Verli^{2*}
Marcelle Karyelle Montalvão Gomes³
Leonardo Santos Macedo⁴
Daniel Mancini de Oliveira⁵
Luis Carlos Oliveira Gonçalves⁶
Aníbal Monteiro de Magalhães Neto⁷

Abstract:

Badminton is an Olympic and Paralympic sport. The main characteristic of badminton is to hit a shuttlecock using a racket towards the opponent's court, with the aim of causing the opponent's error. The sport was created in India and although it was popularized in England, the Asian continent is a powerhouse in the sport. Currently, Brazil seeks to expand its presence in the sport. Knowledge of the sport and its history could be central to the development of sport in our country. Thus, the objective of the current study is to carry out a narrative literature review, with a qualitative approach and exploratory objectives, in order to understand, demystify, and propagate the history of Badminton, from its creation to its development in Brazil. The following databases were searched: Periódico Capes, Scielo, Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations and Scholar Google, the Journal of Sport History and official websites. Several publications were found, between 1930 and 2022, from which the following information was extracted; historical information on the sport and its global development, the spaces used for its practice, the evolution of equipment, and its main competitions. There is a prevalence of studies published in American journals, and a gap in publications on the history of badminton in Brazil.

Keywords: Racket; Shuttlecock; Sport History; Net and Wall Games; Olympic Sport.

UM RESGASTE HISTÓRICO DO BADMINTON: DA ÁSIA PARA O BRASIL

Resumo:

O Badminton é um esporte Olímpico e Paralímpico de rede/quadra, que tem como principal característica rebater uma peteca utilizando uma raquete na direção da quadra do adversário, com o objetivo de provocar o erro do adversário. O esporte foi criado na Índia e popularizado na Inglaterra. Apesar de ter se popularizado na Inglaterra o continente asiático é uma potência no esporte. Atualmente, o Brasil busca seu espaço no esporte. Conhecer o esporte, sua história pode ser fulcral para o desenvolvimento do esporte em nosso país. Com isso, o objetivo deste estudo é realizar uma revisão de literatura narrativa, com abordagem qualitativa e objetivos exploratórios, a fim de conhecer, desmitificar e propagar a história do Badminton, desde a sua criação até o seu desenvolvimento no Brasil. Foram utilizadas as bases de dados: Periódico Capes, Scielo, Biblioteca Digital Brasileira de Teses e Dissertações e Scholar Google, o Journal of Sport History e sites oficiais. Diversas publicações foram encontradas, entre 1930 e 2022, a partir da leitura dessas publicações foram extraídas as informações históricas do esporte e seu desenvolvimento global, dos espaços que eram utilizados para a sua prática, a evolução dos equipamentos e suas principais competições. Foi observada uma prevalência de estudos publicados em revistas americanas, e uma lacuna nas publicações sobre a história do Badminton no Brasil.

Palavras chave: Raquete. Peteca. História do Esporte. Esportes de Rede e Parede. Esporte Olímpico.

¹ Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação (ProEEd – UERJ – Rio de Janeiro – Brasil)

² Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação Física – UFMT. Mestre em Ciências da Saúde – PPGCS – UFMT. Email – marcioaverli@gmail.com – contato principal

³ Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação Física – UFMT. E-mail - marcelle_karyelle@hotmail.com

⁴ Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação Física (PPGEF) UFMT – Cuiabá - Brasil

⁵ Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação Física – UFMT. Email – d4nlelbg@hotmail.com

⁶ Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação Física – UFMT. Programa de Pós-graduação em Imunologia e Parasitologia Básicas e Aplicadas – UFMT. Email – luisogoncalves@yahoo.com.br

⁷ Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação Física – UFMT. Programa de Pós-graduação em Imunologia e Parasitologia Básicas e Aplicadas – UFMT. Email - professoranibal@yahoo.com.br

1. INTRODUCTION

Badminton is a net/court Olympic and Paralympic sport, whose main characteristic is to hit a shuttlecock using a racket in the direction of the opponent's court, with the aim of causing the opponent's error, and thus allowing the hitter to score points (BRASIL, 2018). The sport was created in India under the name of Poona and popularized at the end of the 19th century by English soldiers during British colonial rule (GUILLAIN, 2004). Its name was changed to Badminton because it was practiced at Badminton House, belonging to the Duke of Beaufort (BAUER, 1936; LIM & AMAN, 2017). Another aspect of its history is that there are records of this sport 2000 years ago in ancient Greek civilization (ABURACHID & SILVA, 2011), as well as it having emerged in another country in the Asian region (BAUER, 1939).

Modern Badminton is a sport practiced in several countries, and although it was first popularized in England (GUILLAIN, 2004), the Asian continent has great relevance in competitions (SIRYK & GLADCHENKO, 2021). Asian athletes have been a force in the sport since the second phase of expansion of the sport, with Malaysian dominance (LIM, 2012) until today. The evidence of this can be seen in the latest ranking, updated on June 28, 2022 by the Badminton World Federation (BWF);

among men, 8 of the top 10 athletes are Asian, and among women, only one does not represent an Asian country. In the men's, women's, and mixed doubles all top 10 athletes are Asian (BWF, 2021).

Currently, Brazil seeks to expand its presence in the sport. The athlete Ygor Coelho is the best ranked Brazilian badminton athlete in the world, occupying the 51st place, and is in the 3rd place in the Pan American Games. The greatest achievement of a Brazilian in this sport was at the Pan American Games in Lima in 2019, where Coelho occupied first place (BWF, 2021; BPA, 2022). Although Badminton is popular, especially in Asia and Europe (LIM & AMAN, 2017), in Brazil the sport is still being discovered by practitioners, Physical Education teachers, and researchers.

Knowledge of the sport and its history, and demystifying prejudices could be key to the development of the sport in our country. Thus, the objective of this study is to carry out a literature review, in order to gain knowledge, demystify, and propagate the history of badminton, from its creation to its development in Brazil.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current study has a qualitative approach, with exploratory objectives, through a narrative bibliographic review. Bibliographic research aims to establish a theoretical

foundation on a particular subject, based on the analysis of other previously published articles (ROTHER, 2007). In addition, according to the author, specifically, reviews of a narrative nature are explained as a bibliographical research with the intention of presenting and arguing a subject in the light of the conceptions and choices of the authors, which allows greater breadth in the research, including for subjects that are little explored.

The following databases were used: Periódico Capes, Scielo, Brazilian Digital Library of Theses and Dissertations and Scholar Google to search for and select articles in scientific journals, theses, dissertations, and books. Consultations were also carried out in the Journal of Sport History and citations of the publications found that could encompass the theoretical framework of this work were checked. Official websites about the sport were also used. The descriptors adopted were: “badminton”, “ponna”, “history”, “chronology”, “past”, “creation”, “USA”, “China”, “Asia”, “Europe”, and their variations in English and Spanish languages. The descriptors were combined with the Boolean operators AND and OR. Searches took place between June and July 2022 and there was no minimum time limit for publications.

Inclusion criteria were defined as: studies in Portuguese, English, or Spanish that are in line with the theme of the history of

badminton. The exclusion criteria were: publications that included the history of badminton, however the full text was not available, or in which the content was specific to other topics such as: sports injuries, technology, and game strategies.

To select the articles, initially the titles were read, and if the title was not in accordance with the proposal, the article was excluded. In case of doubt, the abstract was read and if there were still doubts, the full text was read.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Several publications were found, between 1930 and 2022. Historical information was extracted from the reading of these publications, considering the spaces used for the practice of the sport, the evolution of the equipment, the main competitions, and the history of the sport from its beginning in India to Brazil.

3.1 BEGINNING OF BADMINTON

Badminton was practiced in various parts of India, such as Madras, Bombay, Peshawar, Calcutta, and Poona, which was once a military base of great importance (LIM & AMAN, 2017). Before being called Badminton, the sport was called *Poona* (GUILLAIN, 2004), probably in reference to the name of the city. It changed to being called Badminton because it was practiced at *Badminton House*, belonging to

the Duke of Beaufort when the British colonists took the sport to England (BAUER, 1936; LIM & AMAN, 2017).

The first rules of the sport – when still called poona – are from the mid-1870s, practiced in the streets of London, but in 1873 the first badminton club was formed in Bath, when new rules were created (SAMUEL, 1991). On the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, the first badminton club in the United States was formed in New York City in 1878 (BAUER, 1936) and in Canada in 1921 (LIM & AMAN, 2017).

According to Samuel (1991), when the British noticed a difference in the size of the courts used by practitioners of the sport in different British cities, in 1893, to solve this problem, the *Badminton Association* was founded, and soon the whole of the United Kingdom had its own badminton clubs, the *Badminton Union of Ireland* in Ireland, the *Scottish Badminton Union* in Scotland, and the *Welsh Badminton Union* in Wales.

In 1934, the *International Badminton Federation* (IBF) was founded in London, England (LIM & AMAN, 2017), and the *Badminton Association* was of great importance in its creation (SAMUEL, 1991). At its inception it included nine founding members, Canada, Denmark, England, France, Holland, Ireland, New Zealand, Scotland, and Wales. According to LIM (2012) the creation of the IBF is the

milestone of the first of four phases of the globalization of Badminton in the world.

Lim and Aman (2017), report that the British and European decline in badminton took place after the Second World War, with the dominance in Europe passing from England to Denmark and the world dominance of the sport from Europe to Asia, since Europe was destroyed after the war period.

In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Malaysia had a hegemonic period in the sport. As it was an English colony, there was great influence from the British in the development of badminton in the country. Following Malaysian dominance, another Asian country dominated the sport. From 1958 to 1976 Indonesia was the champion country of the Thomas Cup, its supremacy being interrupted only in 1967, with the Malaysian victory (LIM & AMAN, 2017). This period marked the second phase of the globalization of the sport, which lasted until 1981 (LIM, 2012).

3.2 ASIAN DOMINANCE

Badminton is a very popular sport among Asian countries (SIRYK & GLADCHENKO, 2021). It emerged in India, when it was still a British colony (GUILLAIN, 2004), and soon spread to other colonies, such as Malaysia and Singapore (LIM & AMAN, 2017). In addition to the British colonies, Badminton was practiced in other Asian countries, such as

the former colony of the Dutch East Indies, present-day Indonesia, and a small Malay territory. The proximity between the two colonies led to the development of the sport in Indonesia (LIM & AMAN, 2017). In 1957, the Korean Badminton Association (KBA) was founded, which joined the IBF in 1962. South Korea took a while to become an internationally expressive country in Badminton, its first achievements came two decades later, however it stood out in the doubles categories, male, female, and mixed (LIM, 2012).

In 1920 Badminton was introduced in China, but the first organization of the sport in the country was founded only in 1954, with the Chinese Badminton Association. It should be noted that China was experiencing a revolutionary process that began in 1949 with the Chinese Communist Revolution. With the beginning of the Chinese Cultural Revolution, which aimed to remove any capitalist influence from China, badminton as a sport became extinct. Only in 1971 did the Chinese government reorganize a selection (LIM, 2012). In 1981, China joined the IBF and started to participate in the Thomas Cup, in the same year it became champion, starting a supremacy in the sport that continues until the present day (LIM & AMAN, 2017). According to the Badminton World Federation (2022), China is the second biggest champion of the competition, behind only Indonesia, and has won 14 of the 17

editions since its first participation in the 80s. China's affiliation with the IBF is considered the main milestone at the beginning of the third phase of the sport's globalization (LIM, 2012).

3.3 BADMINTON AS AN OLYMPIC SPORT

The main milestone of the fourth phase of the Badminton globalization process was the official inclusion of the sport in the Olympic Games. The first participation of Badminton in the Olympic Games was in Munich in 1972, where it was disputed only as a demonstration, the official participation running for medals took place only in the Olympic Games in Barcelona, in 1992 (LIM, 2012). China has the most Olympic medals in the sport, with 47 in total, followed by Indonesia with 21, and South Korea with 20. Denmark is the only non-Asian country among the five biggest Olympic champions, in fourth position with nine medals. To date, Malaysia and England, former powerhouses in the sport, have not won an Olympic gold medal (COI, 2022).

At the 2012 London Olympics, eight players were disqualified for intentionally missing their matches. This was the biggest disqualification of athletes from the 21st century Olympic Games. Despite their involvement, no athletes were punished (BLAIR, 2018).

3.4 BADMINTON ORGANIZATION: FROM IBF TO BWF

In 1934, the first International Badminton Federation was founded in England, known as the “International Badminton Federation” (IBF) (LIM & AMAN, 2017). In 1959, the Asian Badminton Confederation (ABC) was formed in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. In 1977 the ABC split from the IBF and created the World Badminton Federation (WBF) in 1978, with member countries from Asia and Africa. In 2005 the IBF and WBF joined and formed the current Badminton World Federation. With that, many changes occurred including the increase in the number of competitions and participating countries (LIM, 2012).

3.5 BADMINTON IN EUROPE

Despite having been very popular on British soil, after the Second World War Denmark became a powerhouse in Badminton. Although the country has won the Thomas Cup only once, in 2016, it has reached the final on other occasions, being the only non-Asian country to achieve this (LIM & AMAN, 2017; BWF, 2021). In France, the sport first developed in Dieppe at the beginning of the 20th century (LIM & AMAN, 2017).

In Eastern Europe, member countries of the former Soviet Union were influenced in the practice of badminton. In 1961, the Badminton

Federation of the USSR was formed and in the same year, the first competitions took place, with teams from Soviet cities, such as Moscow and Leningrad. The Ukrainian team started to participate in the competitions the following year, along with Belarus, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, and Tajikistan. When the USSR joined the IBF in 1974, Ukrainian athletes participated in tournaments representing the Soviet Union (SIRYK & GLADCHENKO, 2021).

3.6 BADMINTON IN THE AMERICAS

In the 1930s, Badminton was a sport popularly practiced in the United States, in gymnasiums, clubs, parks, church halls, and schools. In addition, there were predictions of an even greater growth of the sport in this country from its insertion in schools. However, Badminton practice has reduced over time (LIM & AMAN, 2017; SAMUEL, 1991), being considered an unimpressive sport more commonly practiced in backyards or on beaches, (SAMUEL, 1991) losing ground to “hamburgers and ice cream” (SAMUEL, 1991 p. 28 apud ATKIN, 1980, our translation). Training conditions in the country were considered underdeveloped compared to their British peers, and due to lack of sponsorship, the athletes were unable to become professional (SAMUEL, 1991).

In 1976, the Pan American Badminton Confederation (PBC) was founded in Mexico. Its founding members were Canada, Curaçao, Guyana, Jamaica, Mexico, the Netherlands Antilles, Peru, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, and the United States (LIM, 2012).

3.7 BADMINTON IN BRAZIL

Little is known about the history of the sport in Brazil. When consulting the scientific literature and the official website of the Brazilian Badminton Confederation, few records were found, a fact corroborated in the study by Dias et al. (2020). It is known that the sport had its first competition in Brazil in 1984, called Taça São Paulo, organized by the Associação Paulista de Badminton (APB) (FEBASP, 2013). The Brazilian Badminton Confederation (CBBd) was founded just nine years later, in 1993, with the participation of the Paulista, Catarinense and Brasília federations (DIAS, VIEIRA & PEREIRA, 2020) and joined the Brazilian Olympic Committee in 1995 (FEBASP, 2013). It should be noted that until 1987, the APB was the only entity that organized badminton tournaments in Brazil. In 1988, the São Paulo Badminton Federation was founded, which was affiliated with the IBF (FEBASP, 2013).

In 2007 at the Pan American Games in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil received its first medal, bronze, won by Guilherme Kumasaka and Guilherme Pardo. In 2011, the Brazilian Daniel

Paiola won bronze at the Pan American Games in Guadalajara. Hugo Arthuso and Daniel Paiola won the silver medal in the men's doubles at the Pan American Games in Toronto in 2015, and in this same event Lohaynny Vicente and Luana Vicente became the first two Brazilian women to win a Pan American medal in badminton, silver. Lohaynny Vicente won another medal, bronze, in the mixed doubles with Alex Tjong (BPA, 2022).

The greatest achievement of a Brazilian in the sport was at the Pan American Games in Lima in 2019, where Coelho occupied the first place. In this same competition, Jaqueline Lima, Samia Lima, Fabiana Silva, and Tamires Santos won bronze medals in the women's doubles and Fabrício Farias and Jaqueline Lima in the mixed doubles (BPA, 2022). It is noteworthy that several medalist athletes, such as Ygor Coelho and Lohaynny, among others, were discovered at the Miratus Badminton School, located in an area of social vulnerability, in the Chacrinha community in Rio de Janeiro (BRASIL, 2022).

Some other reports can be found about the history of Badminton in Brazil, mostly taken from the work entitled: “The Miratus Badminton School and the Relationship of the Brazilian State with Sport” (MELLO, 2011), where the author reports that according to the São Paulo Badminton Federation, in February 1984, the first exhibition of badminton took place at Clube Pinheiros, promoted by the Young Men's

Christian Association. In 1992 the sport arrived in Santa Catarina, after a Santa Catarina family went to São Paulo to learn about the sport, and when they returned they developed the sport in Joinville and Blumenau. In Rio de Janeiro, the sport developed from the Nikkei Association (MELLO, 2011).

3.8 PRACTICE SPACES

Although high-performance Badminton is practiced in closed courts, avoiding external interference as much as possible, during its growth in the United States of America its practice was not limited only to sports gyms, but was also carried out in clubs, church halls, and outdoor spaces, such as parks (RUTLEDGE, 1955; BAUER, 1936) and beaches (SAMUEL, 1991).

With regard to practice in open or closed spaces, there was always a concern for excellence. Jackson and collaborators report on concerns with the indoor play space: “Obviously, the appropriate ceiling height, lighting and space between walls and boundaries of the court are important” (JACKSON, SWAN & WILLIAMS, 1938), as well as recommendations for the outdoor game space: “The shuttlecock is naturally very light and therefore the outdoor court must be located in a place protected from the wind, such as among trees” (JACKSON, SWAN & WILLIAMS, 1938). Furthermore, Rutledge (1955) brings

indications of the game space, stating that there should be space around the court in order to avoid accidents.

Badminton was also practiced in schools and became part of the North American school curriculum in the 1930s, as it was considered a healthy sport and, if supervised by a teacher, could be practiced by both boys and girls (BAUER, 1936). In 1935 there were intercollegiate badminton tournaments in Singapore (LIM & AMAN, 2017). Rutledge (1955) stated that Badminton is a sport that should be included in Physical Education classes in schools and colleges.

According to Jackson, Swan and Williams (1938) more than forty thousand young people, children, and adults practiced badminton at night in the courts of schools in the city of Detroit in the United States of America. The game could be played with the official rules or by just hitting the shuttlecock, meaning it could be played by up to 100 participants at a time. The author also states that the sport is safe, cheap, and adaptable for school practice.

3.9 EVOLUTION OF GAME EQUIPMENT

The essential equipment for the practice of this sport is: racket and shuttlecock. The racket can be made of different materials, such as aluminum and carbon fiber. When compared to tennis rackets, badminton rackets are lighter and their base is more elongated.

Shuttlecocks represent the 'ball' used in badminton. They can be made with goose down or nylon. Goose shuttlecocks are more widely used by professional players, while nylon shuttlecocks are used by amateur/beginner athletes. Shuttlecocks are like feathery corks that are light and small (SMITH, 1939). There are reports of different types of shuttlecocks in the late 1930s, some produced for indoor practice and others for outdoor practice (SMITH, 1939). The first reports of the production of plastic shuttlecocks date back to 1955 in the work by Rutledge (1955) entitled "Let's teach Badminton", published in the Journal of Health, Physical Education, Recreation. This material was considered more durable and well suited to the practice of beginners in the sport.

As the sport evolves, so does the equipment used. The old wooden rackets were replaced by new lighter and more technological models. According to Lim and Aman (2017), in the early days of the sport, the rackets used were made of wood, were small, and very similar to current table tennis rackets. The work entitled "Hello Badminton" published in The Journal of Health and Physical Education in 1930, reports on the evolution of badminton rackets, from the traditional wooden rackets to more modern materials (HEDGES, 1930), however in the work of Rutledge (1955), the author still recommends the use of wooden rackets, with nylon strings, bearing in mind that these could

be heavier. The author reports that lighter steel rackets were already being produced, with the grip made of leather and nylon strings. Not only the game equipment has been updated, the athletes' attire has also undergone constant changes, such as the evolution of badminton shoes (LIANG; LI, 2018).

3.10 MAIN COMPETITIONS

The All-England Championship, organized by the Badminton Association of England in 1899 is considered the sport's first international championship (SAMUEL, 1991). The first world-wide badminton competition organized by the International Badminton Federation was the Thomas Cup, which was similar to the main tennis competition, the Davis Cup. The first winner of this competition was Malaysia (LIM; AMAN, 2017; SAMUEL, 1991). Currently Indonesia holds the most titles, with 15, followed by China, with 10 (BWF, 2021).

China had an exponential rise from the 1980s, shortly after joining the International Badminton Federation (LIM; AMAN, 2017), winning 14 out of 17 editions of the Thomas Cup between 1981 and 2016 (BWF, 2021). Badminton was included in the official program of the Olympic Games in 1992, at the Barcelona Olympics (LIM, 2012).

3.11 A SISSY SPORT? NO, A SPORT FOR EVERYONE.

Bauer (1936) in his article “Badminton Grows in Popularity” and Jackson, Swan and Williams (1938) in the article “Badminton in Schools” bring the vision about Badminton of the society of that time, in contrast with what was said, it wasn't "a sissy sport" (BAUER, 1936; JACKSON, SWAN & WILLIAMS, 1938), but yes, a strong body was actually needed, with strong arms and legs, strong lungs, and a quick reaction time. However, strength was not enough, the author recalls that the practitioner also needs to have coordination between the body and brain for an effective game (BAUER, 1936). It should be noted that the author mentions the magnificence of athletes of both sexes, male and female:

“If you see the champions - men or women - in action, you will be fascinated by their graceful movements, their power, their swiftness. You will see them deliver a mighty blow in the air; you'll see them in the next second bending over backwards only to be almost kneeling on the ground in the next shot” (BAUER, 1936, p. 590).

In this sense, this excerpt indicates that at this time the sport was also practiced by women in the United States of America. Another excerpt from the author corroborates this idea, when citing the Badminton practice nights, he cites the beautiful image of men and women, children, and older people practicing the sport (BAUER, 1936). Corroborating this idea, Smith

(1939) states that Badminton can be practiced by men and women, together or separately. Furthermore, Jackson et al. (1938) and Samuel (1991) found that the sport could be practiced by men and women and by different age groups. However, the discussion about the sport being for frail people went on for years. In 1987, a Wall Street Journal journalist classified Badminton's failure in the United States as being due to its reputation as a ‘sissy sport’ (SAMUEL, 1991).

Regarding the practice of badminton by boys and girls at school, there is a tendency to indicate this sport as a healthy practice between boys and girls, as their physical differences are of little relevance. However, what draws the most attention is the fact that they observe the sport as insurance against sexual complications between both sexes. Sport is then used to create good habits of coexistence between boys and girls (JACKSON, SWAN, WILLIAMS, 1938).

Badminton was also seen as a support sport for other athletes. Bauer (1936) cites that boxers practiced badminton to get faster, and football, baseball, and rowing practitioners also used badminton as a support sport to their main sport.

Regarding people with disabilities, German wheelchair users began to adapt badminton to their reality in 1990. In 1998 the first world championship was held in Amersfoort, Holland and in 2011 Para

badminton became part of the Badminton World Federation (JANIACZYK, 2015). In 2014 the International Paralympic Committee chose Para badminton to join the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Sports Program (CBBB, 2015).

4. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The current work aimed to carry out a literature review, in order to understand, demystify, and propagate the history of this sport, from its creation to its development in Brazil. When carrying out the search and reading the studies found, a reasonable number of articles dating from the beginning of the 20th century was observed, which was pleasant surprise, since this study aimed to recover the history of the sport. The studies found were published in several countries, but were predominantly American or European. This may have occurred due to the language limitation in the inclusion criteria. There is a lack of scientific publications on the history of Badminton in Brazil, since most of the historical findings were found on websites and in course completion papers.

The history of Badminton is vast, and its beginning is controversial, since although its creation is generally associated with India, other countries are also mentioned, however, there is no doubt that the popularization of the sport began in England and its colonies. After the Second World War, the hegemony of the sport

passed to the Asian region, which maintains supremacy in the sport until today. Countries on the American continent are not sports powers, and little has been reported about countries in Africa and Oceania.

Finally, it should be noted that the historical particularity of each nation influenced the development of the sport around the world during the 20th century, and that although the sport is starting to show signs of worldwide growth, it is still particularly associated with the Asian region.

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REI
ISSN 1984-431X

Revista Eletrônica Interdisciplinar
Barra do Garças – MT, Brasil
Ano: 2023 Volume: 15 Número: 2

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REI
ISSN 1984-431X

Revista Eletrônica Interdisciplinar
Barra do Garças – MT, Brasil
Ano: 2023 Volume: 15 Número: 2

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