



Badminton player shines

To win three titles at a badminton tournament is exceptional but then to go on and repeat the same feat a year later is amazing.

Through this dominant display of shuttlecock chasing and hitting Bongani van Bodenstein, of TuksBadminton, might have done enough to book his place in the South African team that is going to compete at the World Student Games in Taipei.

He won the singles, doubles and mixed doubles titles at the South African Universities Championships (USSA) in Pretoria. Last year, he also achieved a hat-trick of victories.

The men's singles was an all Tuks affair as Van Bodenstein played Anoop Nair in the final. The BCom Accounting student won in two sets (21-10 and 21-9).

The two Tuks players then went on to win the men's doubles by beating Pieter Hattingh and Stefan Steyn (Pukke) in the final (21-13 and 21-15).

Van Bodenstein continued his dominance by teaming up with Lee-Ann de Wet (Varsity College) to win the mixed doubles, beating Nair and Anri Schonees (Maties) in the final (21-13, 19-21, 21-7).

The Tuks player made it clear there were no guarantees he would dominate to the extent he did as he injured his knee during the Gauteng North Championships. He only got the all

clear to play last week.

"It was important to me to do well at the USSA Tournament as I had to prove to myself that I am able to overcome setbacks. To win all three titles for the second time is something special," he said.

Collecting titles seem to come naturally to Van Bodenstein. As far as local tournaments are concerned he has a perfect record, winning the South African singles title in each age group that he has competed in.

Part of his success is that he is a true student of the game. He never misses an opportunity to learn something new about badminton. When he played a tournament in Bangkok he talked to a few players to find out how they work towards improving their game.

An Indonesian player helped him understand that it is all about hard work. The player is part of the training squad that does nothing but train all day. It is a luxury that Van Bodenstein as a student cannot afford to do. He is lucky if he gets to train three hours a day.

The 19-year old Van Bodenstein learned from personal experience the importance of fitness.

"When you play at a senior level it is not just about the quality of your shots, trying to move your opponent around in the hope of catching them off balance."



Bongani van Bodenstein in action on the badminton court. Photo: Zander Erasmus