



# THE CRADLE OF INDIAN HOCKEY NEWSLETTER

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## From the President's Desk

Indian hockey turned a new leaf with the conduct of the first-ever Premier Hockey League in Hyderabad. The competition, in which some of the top foreign players also participated, is expected to give the much-needed hype and boost to the game in the country. It was an attempt by the IHF to resurrect the game that has for long been overshadowed by the national obsession with cricket. Ushering in a new chapter in the history of Indian hockey, the PHL ended in glory where the Dilip Tirkey-led Hyderabad Sultans emerged the winners with 19 points in Tier-I. Chandigarh Dynamos lifted the title in Tier-2 beating Delhi Dazzlers 4-3 in sudden-death. There might have been a few minor clichés in the conduct of the tournament (like imbalance in the teams) as noted by a few players and administrators. But overall, it was a tournament well appreciated and applauded.



Champion Colleges Hockey Tournament is one of the most awaited competitions conducted by the Nehru Hockey Society. It is the last of the five tournament series conducted by the Society to promote the game at grass-root level. DAV College (Jalandhar) won the coveted trophy beating Faculty of Social Sciences of Jamia Millia Islamia 6-5.

In keeping with its time-tested tradition to help people in great distress, the Nehru Hockey Society donated a sum of Rs. 1 lakh towards the PM's Relief Fund, as its contribution for Tsunami victims.

The period between Dec.-04-Feb.-05 witnessed the passing away of a few hockey exponents, including former Olympian and National Coach Balkishan Singh, Olympian Vivek Singh and IHF Vice-President Prof. Gursewak Singh. Nehru Hockey Tournament Society pays its respects to the departed souls and prays for peace of their souls.

**Ram Niwas Mirdha**



Shri Saiyid Hamid, Vice-President, Nehru Hockey Society inaugurates the ONGC-Nehru Champion Colleges Tournament.



Prof. Dayanand Dongaonkar, Secretary-General, Association of Indian Universities was the Chief Guest in the final of the Champion Colleges Tournament.



## **DAV College Jalandhar lifts ONGC-Nehru Champion Colleges Tournament Title**

The Nehru Hockey Society's fifth and the last of the five-tournament series was successfully concluded with the DAV College, Jalandhar lifting the coveted ONGC-Nehru Champion Colleges Tournament for the SAIL Trophy, outlasting the Faculty of Social Sciences of the Jamia Millia Islamia, Delhi 6-5 in a tie-breaker on Feb. 10 at the Shivaji Stadium in the Union Capital.

The tournament unexpectedly had to cross over an unforeseen difficulty – acute financial constraints. However, considering keen interest taken by the top hockey playing universities as also this tournament having been judged as a potential platform to assess the youth power at its best, the Society took the decision to maintain its continuity. The entries were, however, restricted only to eight as against 16 who usually take part each year. The prize money was also reduced.

DAV College, Jalandhar in a repeat performance not only retained the 12th edition of the tournament, it has also completed a hat-trick of wins (2003-2005). The Jalandhar boys earlier won the trophy in 1996, 1997, 1999 and 2000. They received the glittering trophy and a cash award of Rs. 48,000. The Delhi boys got Rs. 32,000.



Woh! We've done it! D.A.V. Jalandhar boys celebrating their victory.

## **Indian Oil humble Airlines in Maharaja Ranjit Singh Hockey Tournament**

Rarely had Indian Airlines been so thoroughly outplayed by any team as it was by the Indian Oil in the final of the first Maharaja Ranjit Singh Hockey Tournament held at the Shivaji Stadium in New Delhi. A 4-0 drubbing proved not just an embarrassing margin for the Airlines but a huge letdown for a good crowd that had turned out. The tournament began on Feb 21 and concluded on March 2. Two foreign teams – Sapura Club from Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia) and Water & Power Development Authority of Lahore (Pakistan) – added colour to the tournament. The tournament carried prize money of Rs. 2 lakh. The winner won Rs. 1 lakh and runners-up Rs. 50,000. The Malaysian Club took the Fair Play Trophy. The remaining amount was awarded to the Man of the Match from the Super League onwards.

## **Hockey Seminar – Kal Aaj Aur Kal**

The Union Capital witnessed yet another significant event deeply concerning Indian Hockey. The occasion was celebration of the 30th anniversary of India's World Cup Victory at Kuala Lumpur on March 15, 1975. A Hockey Seminar was organized to commemorate the occasion by the Federation of Indian Games at the Constitution Club, on March 15, the theme being "Hockey – Kal Aaj Aur Kal". Presided over by Triple Olympic Gold Medalist Balbir Singh, a host of hockey greats like Cdr. G. Nandy Singh, Ajit Pal Singh, Ashok Dhyani Chand, M.P. Ganesh, Col. Balbir Singh, Rajinder Singh, Brig. H.J.S. Chimni and Rajesh Chauhan spoke on the occasion and made a number of useful and significant suggestions in regard to technical and other aspects of the game.

The organizers comprising Lt. Genl. M.S. Bhullar, S.S. Chopra, Sqn. Ldr. Kamal Choudhary, Dr. Gurdeep Singh and Shiv Kumar Varma also made useful suggestions. It is hoped that the suggestions put forward will help improve the standard to regain India's lost glory. The organizers will forward the suggestions to the IHF, SAI and the Union Sports Ministry for taking appropriate action in the matter.

## **India lose to Pak in 'Rough' Final**

India once again ended on the losing side when they went down 0-2 to arch-rivals Pakistan in an emotion-charged final of a four-nation junior hockey tournament in Karachi. Both team members displayed poor temperament as they kept arguing with the umpires over several decisions. Some of the players also got engaged in physical contact with each other. Both teams finished the match with 10 players each when Vikram Kanth was given marching orders in the 52nd minute while Imran Khan was asked to leave the field six minutes later. The Indians, as on many recent occasions, lacked finishing touches although they displayed better cohesion and understanding. They failed to convert any of the five penalty corners they earned. In fact, the Indians failed to convert any penalty corner in the entire Tournament! India's Hari Prasad was declared the Player of the Tournament while Pakistan's Imran Warsi (seven goals) was named the highest scorer of the competitions.

In the semi-final earlier, India beat South Africa 3-0 goals coming through the sticks of Vikram Kanth (6th min), Birender Lakra (25) and Ajitesh Roy (32). Pakistan beat Japan in the other semi-final. South Africa beat Japan 4-2 to finish third. Japan had the consolation for returning with the Fair Play Trophy.

## **Nehru Hockey Society donates for Tsunami Victims**

In keeping with its time-tested tradition to extend help to persons in great distress, the Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society, despite its limited resources and financial constraints, immediately comes to the forefront and contributes its mite howsoever small it may be. With this in view, the Society's Vice-President Maj. Gen. Virendra Singh has sent a cheque of Rs 1 lakh to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund, for the relief of Tsunami victims. One may recall in this connection that in 1977 a sum of Rs 1,21,000 was contributed to the PM's National Relief Fund in aid of the cyclone affected people of Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. In 1993, a similar amount was contributed in aid of the earthquake victims of Latur in Maharashtra and another Rs. 51,000 to the earthquake victims of Gujarat. The tradition continues.

This tradition is not confined to victims of national calamities alone. Whenever such a situation demands, the Society rises to the occasion to give relief to needy individuals also. One may also recall in this connection that just a few months ago the Society paid a sum of Rs. 50,000 to former international hockey player Vivek Singh for his treatment of urinary bladder cancer. Earlier in 1979, a benefit match was organized by the Society in aid of ailing hockey wizard Maj. Dhyani Chand and in 2000 a sum of Rs. 8.50 lakh, collected out of a benefit match, was given to Olympian Joginder Singh Gindi for treatment of his kidney ailment.



### Tier-1: *Hype will Help Revive Indian Hockey*

India's national sport – hockey – received a much-needed makeover with the Indian Hockey Federation's (IHF) brain-child, the 'Premier Hockey League' (PHL), which was an attempt to resuscitate a game that has for long been overshadowed by the national obsession with cricket. For a game that is starved of finance, the PHL's prize money of Rs. 70 lakh – Rs. 30 lakh for the winners and Rs. 10 lakh for the runners-up – is a welcome news. Besides the increase in prize money, there were several other 'firsts' associated with the PHL: a TV friendly playing format, designer uniforms, foreign players and even a theme song. Unlike the normal hockey game, which is split into halves of 35 minutes each, every game in the PHL consisted of four quarters of 17.5 minutes each with timeouts. Top foreign players were lined up to give an international flavour to the PHL.

Ushering in a new chapter in the history of Indian hockey, the PHL ended in Hyderabad in glory for Hyderabad Sultans who emerged the winners with 19 points. Dilip Tirkey-led team notched up an impressive 2-1 win over Sher-e-Jalandhar in the final league match of Tier-I. The winners were richer by Rs. 30 lakh while the Jalandhar team received Rs. 10 lakh. Dilip Tirkey was named the 'Player of the Tournament' and given Rs. 1.5 lakh. Len Aiyappa, who was the top scorer with eight goals, was declared the 'Man of the Match'. Dhanraj Pillay guided Maratha Warriors to a 4-3 win over Bangalore Hi-Fliers and settle for the third place in the last Tier-I league match. Warriors finished with 13 points from eight matches and pocketed Rs. 6.5 lakh while Hi-Fliers got nine points from similar number of matches.

### Tier-2: *Chandigarh Dynamos Clinch Title*

Chandigarh Dynamos lifted the title in Tier-2 beating Delhi Dazzlers 4-3 in sudden-death in their final league match. Dynamos won all their eight matches to finish with 23 points. The title win earned them Rs. 4 lakh as prize money. The Dazzlers finished second with 19 points and got Rs. 2.5 lakh. Of the 103 goals scored in Tier-2, the Champions (Chandigarh Dynamos) struck 39, conceding just six. Bengal, once considered the nursery of Indian hockey, got just one point (!) by virtue of extending the issue into extra time and not for any win or draw while Imphal Rangers were marginally better, picking up seven points to finish third. Delhi Dazzler's Gurcharan Singh emerged the top scorer with 12 goals while M. Chittaranjan of Imphal Rangers was named the best player. The huge gap between Chandigarh Dynamos (23 points) and Delhi Dazzlers (19 points) and the other three teams was in itself a reflection of what separates the rest of the teams from these two.

### *India needs a good Foreign Technical Director, not Foreign Coach: Maurits Hendriks*

Celebrated Dutch Hockey Coach Maurits Hendriks, currently incharge of the Spanish national team, feels India don't need a foreign coach. "What the team do need is a good foreign technical director, who can work with the boys and the young talent coming up the ranks". Hendriks, who came to Hyderabad as technical consultant for the 'PHL', admitted that he was not aware of the talent pool or the administration of the game in the country. However, he is hopeful of the current Indian line-up doing well in the future. I have seen the Indians since the 2001 Junior World Cup. Since then I have seen about 50 players. They are fantastic, you can do something incredible with them.

About the inaugural PHL, Hendriks had his reservations about its success. He said that success cannot come overnight. The recruitment of foreign players could prove to be a double-edged sword. If there are too many, then the local talents get overshadowed. If too little, then there is the danger of missing out on the star power. What is needed in India at present, he observed is to build up a player's base. What is also important is to make the PHL one of the best and most competitive.

### *PHL Teams Not Balanced: Juan Escarre*

India's national sport – Hockey – has carved out a distinguished place for itself among the World hockey leaders because of sheer joy it provides to the crowd in spite of its wavering performances of late. However, the Spanish international great Juan Escarre, who came to India to take part in the PHL, said that the Indian style is redundant in the current era. Before coming to India, Escarre led his national side to its first-ever major international hockey title at the Champions Trophy in Pakistan. Recounting nostalgically India's glorious past, he said that the style of Indian hockey was one of the greatest in the world. Gone are the days, he said, when the European teams tried to emulate the Indian side, who had dominated the game practically for more than 40 years or so. But that was about three decades ago. Now the game plan and strategy have drastically changed. What matters today, he emphasized, is 'speed' and that's what is lacking with India and Pakistan teams, which are still living in the past. He even criticized the Indian team which took part in the recently held Champions Trophy. He felt that it never played as a collective team.

About the PHL, Escarre said it was a very good idea with some of the best players in the world taking part in the tournament. The entire world was watching the proceedings here. However, the teams who took part, he said were not balanced in their strengths. For example, while Hyderabad Sultans had four best players in their ranks, Chennai Veerans (the team Escarre represented) did not even had an international forward.

### *Charlesworth on Indian Hockey*

Australian hockey legend Richard Charlesworth who had represented his country in both Hockey and Cricket, felt that the present Indian hockey team's poor performances in international tournaments was due to lack of confidence. He suggested that the team's approach had to be multifactorial. "India's hockey needs to emphasise on coach-education programmes. Indian hockey has of late seen so many coaches in the last one year". To do the job thoroughly, he emphasized, a coach would need a full four-year term. However, some of the coaches are at fault as they have taken short-term assignment, promising results that cannot be delivered. The present situation is a case in point, he said and added, the change three weeks before the Athens Olympics was sheer opportunism and unnecessarily disruptive. The preparation of Olympics is a four-year task and it should have already started for Beijing Games. Charlesworth, a Doctor of Medicine, also said, he did not believe the European approach is the way to utilize the Indian players' skills. Australians play attacking hockey and has shown they can win easily. They need to take some things from the Europeans but still play with their flair and play to their strengths.



## FIH Chief Commends IHF's New Plan

Elsyan Breda Vriesmann, 63 years-old Dutch Women is the President of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) since 2001. She has given the game more visibility and a professional outlook. In a chat at Lahore during the Champions Trophy, Vriesmann said, FIH was trying to commercialise the sport. She knew she had to get in sponsors, TV companies and marketing the game better to sustain its popularity. There is still not much money in the game and hockey is not looked upon as a career option. Therefore, to make hockey TV-friendly, the IHF is having discussion with ESPN and hopes to have a contract in place, the FIH Chief said. The FIH Chief also said that indoor hockey and six-a-side events can help popularize the game. We have already had an Indoor Hockey World Cup and it was very successful, she said. About the format of FIH sponsored tournaments, she said, FIH is looking at a World Cup every two years – instead of four – and a Champions Trophy every two years. The decision is expected to be taken soon.

## Forthcoming Events of International Hockey Federation (2005)

|                 |                  |                               |
|-----------------|------------------|-------------------------------|
| Jan 13 – Feb 13 | Hyderabad        | PHL                           |
| Mar 26 – Apr 3  | Kuala Lumpur     | 6-Nation Junior (u-21)        |
| May 26 – Jun 5  | Kuala Lumpur     | 14th Sultan Azlan Shah        |
| May 30 – Jun 5  | Giezno (Poland)  | 8-Nation Junior (u-21)        |
| N/A             | Australia        | 4-Nation Tournament (1st leg) |
| Jan 6 – 12      | Australia        | 4-Nation Tournament (2nd leg) |
| Jun 29 – Jul 10 | Rotterdam        | 8th Junior World Cup (men)    |
| N/A             | Hamburg          | Hamburg Masters 4-Nation      |
| N/A             | Amstelveen       | Robobank 8-Nation Mini WC     |
| Sep 14 – Sep 25 | Santiago (Chile) | 5th Junior World Cup (women)  |
| Oct 1 – Oct 9   | Delhi            | 6-Nation Indira Gandhi Hockey |
| Dec 10 – Dec 18 | Chennai          | 27th Champions Trophy (men)   |

## "Total Hockey" Exponent is No More

Balkishan Singh, who introduced the 'total hockey' concept in India died of a cardiac arrest at his Patiala residence on the last day of the year 2004. He was 71. A veteran Olympian and a former Chief National Coach of the Indian men's and women's teams, Balkishan served Indian hockey as a player and a coach for over four decades. He represented India in the Melbourne (1956) and Rome (1960) Olympics, besides the Jakarta Asian Games in 1958. Balkishan joined the Indian Railways before making his way into the national team. After the Rome Olympics, Balkishan joined the Netaji Subhash National Institute of Sports at Patiala to pursue a diploma course in coaching. He later became the Chief Coach of the NSNIS and retired as Dean (Teaching) from India's Premier Sports Institute. He was the Chief Coach of the national men's team that participated in the Mexico (1968), Moscow (1980), Los Angeles (1984) and Barcelona (1992) Olympics. He also coached the women's team that won a gold medal in the 1982 Asian Games in Delhi.

Nehru Hockey Society joins scores of his trainees, fans and admirers to mourn the sad demise of this genius of Indian hockey. May his soul rest in peace!



## Olympian Vivek Singh Passes Away



Former hockey Olympian Vivek Singh passed away on the morning of Wednesday, Feb 2 after a prolonged battle with cancer. Vivek was first diagnosed and treated for urinary bladder cancer in 2000 but the doctors last year detected that the disease

had spread to other parts of the body, including the lungs and finally the brain. He was hospitalized the previous night and soon slipped into a coma early on Feb. 2 and breathed his last at about 9 p.m. He was only 37 years old and is survived by his wife and two daughters. An Office Superintendent with the North-Eastern Railways, Vivek had represented India at over 200 internationals, including 1988 Seoul Olympics, Champions Trophy in Germany in 1989, Lahore World Cup in 1990 and Beijing Asian Games the same year.

It was only on July 7 last year, the Nehru Hockey Society handed over a cheque of Rs. 50,000 to his father for his treatment. Another member of the Society (who did not want to be identified) made a donation of Rs. 20,000 for this purpose. But that was of no avail. The Nehru Hockey Society deeply mourns the sudden demise of one of the country's finest centre-forwards along with his colleagues, fans and admirers. May his soul rest in peace!

## Prof. Gursewak Singh Passes Away



The cruel hands of death has taken away the life of a great Indian academician and sports administrator par excellence on Feb. 10 at his residence in Mohali. He was 82 and survived by his wife and a doctor son.

Indian hockey and Gursewak Singh were made for each others. Representing Patiala Hockey Association, Prof. Singh was elected as Treasurer of the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) in 1986 and remained in that position till 1990 when he was elected its Secretary-General. In 1998, he was elected Vice-President and held the post till he breathed his last. The other notable positions held by him include among others that he was Member, Organising Committee of the Champions Colleges Hockey Tournament and Advisor of the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). His dedicated services to sports earned him an eminent place universally. He was honoured by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) by awarding him the "Olympic Order of Merit", a dream award for any sportsperson in the world.

His love for spreading education was another success story. He held the exalted position as Vice-Chancellor of the Punjabi University at Patiala. In his death the country has lost a great mentor and guide of sports. The Nehru Hockey Association joins millions of his fans and admirers in mourning the sudden demise of this great academician-administrator. May his soul rest in peace!

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