



THE CRADLE OF INDIAN HOCKEY NEWSLETTER

No. 5

October-December 2004

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From the President's Desk

The sincerity and dedication of the Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society and its constant endeavour to promote our National game of Hockey despite several financial constraints came for high praise from world leaders and connoisseurs of the game across the country. They have lauded the efforts of the Society to keep the game alive at grass root level and prepare our budding talents to stoutly face tough international competitions. One may recall that the year ended with mixed fortunes. Our performance at Athens, Pakistan and other places were something not too encouraging indeed.

The 'Hockey diplomacy' initiated by the Dr Manmohan Singh Government at the Centre, with full support from the IHF, to build lasting relations between India and Pakistan has apparently yielded the desired result. The reciprocal tours after five years between the two neighbours to play eight 'friendly' Test Series followed by a Pakistani team's participation in the Society's tournament, is a positive step forward in proper direction. The four annual tournaments viz. the Junior Girls (U-17), Junior Boys (U-17), Sub-Junior Boys (U-15) and the Senior tournament were successfully conducted during Oct. 7-Nov., 25. As usual a number of foreign teams took part in the tournaments. IHF's long-standing promise of conducting a Premier league will be staged at Hyderabad from January 13 next year with about two dozen foreign players expected to rub shoulders with Indian Stars. The scheme was profusely commended by no less a person than the Chief of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) Ms. Elsyen Breda Viresmann herself.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to extend our heartfelt thanks to our patron-sponsors NDMC, ONGC, SAIL, Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC), Hindustan Organic Chemicals, Steelbird Hi-Tech and Pepsi Foods without whose help we would not have been successful in our commitment. Also I am obliged to the Print and Electronic Media for their unstinted support in publicising and popularising the activities of the Society. WISHING EVERYBODY A VERY HAPPY & PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR 2005



Ram Niwas Mirdha

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Mrs. Tajdar Babar, MLA & Vice-Chairperson, N.D.M.C. taking salute at the march-past of the NDMC-Nehru Girls Hockey Tournament



Mrs. Sailaja Chandra the Chief Guest taking salute at the march-past of the Oriental Bank-Nehru Junior Tournament.

We'll Fulfil Our Commitment : R.N. Mirdha

"The standard of hockey in our country has fallen over the years, but at the Nehru Hockey Society, it is our commitment to the nation to promote the game and we will fulfil it, come what may", said Ram Niwas Mirdha, President of Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society (JNHTS) at a press briefing after the Society's AG meeting held in Delhi on October 5. We have been facing shortage of funds, but that has not deterred us from continuing with the various tournaments every year. Although the country has been emotionally attached to the game, not much has been done to improve it. The need for regular hockey tournaments to enhance the competitive spirit among our young hockey players assumes significance. The sincere efforts of JNHTS in preparing our players to face the international competitions have produced good results. In the years ahead, I am confident that its endeavours shall enable the country to regain the past glory, said the Nehru Hockey Society President. Society's Vice-President Maj. Gen. Virendra Singh (Retd.) said: "We are struggling to continue our annual tournaments and lack of sponsors has made it very difficult despite our efforts to encourage the game at the grass-root level. The General lamented that" the way our team performed against Pakistan made me feel sick. However, I am sure that the Nehru Hockey tournaments will help further in building the game and also in achieving excellence, so as to restore India to its position of primacy in the World Hockey, he said. Former IHF President and Vice-President of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Ashwini Kumar, who was present on the occasion, called for professionalism. He admired Nehru Hockey Society's hard work and long term planning, which the organisers have always provided in hunting and grooming talents.



Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha with Shri Ashwini Kumar, Maj. Gen. Virendra Singh and Lt. Gen. M.S. Bhullar at the Press Conference held on October 5, 2004

Government's Hockey Diplomacy Yields Better Ties with Pakistan

The 'Hockey Diplomacy' put in action by the Dr. Manmohan Singh Government at the Centre with full support from the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) to build lasting happy relations between India and Pakistan has, apparently, yielded the desired result. It was followed by a series of tournaments and competitions between the two countries across the Wagah border. That first series of Cricket 'Test' matches between India and Pakistan was a great success is an understatement. The Indian Cricket team not only won matches but also won the hearts of the Pakistan public as well with their charming performances. The same was the case with the Pakistani players when they came to India.

That tradition was carried over on to the field of hockey as the Dr. Manmohan Singh Government took the initiative to allow hockey diplomacy to continue between the two Asian powers. And going by the results and the response from spectators, the eight 'Test' series after five years, both home and away, was more significant in more ways than one. Winning or losing did not matter much on this occasion. The important thing was to build people to people relations. Camaraderie was the buzz word on both sides. The matches will surely usher in an era of peaceful coexistence between the two nations who have fought two wars and came close to fighting another. These tours signalled the resumption of more and more sporting ties – a positive step forward in the right direction indeed.

Indo-Pak Friendship Series

The Indo-Pak eight-match 'Test' Series – four in each country – was a grand success in terms of the hockey dished out after a gap of five years and camaraderie that was seen throughout. It was a Friendship Series in the true spirit and the final results hardly mattered in the end. It was the battle between the two giants of Asian hockey, which finally triumphed. India ended the series on a positive note with a 2-0 win over their traditional rivals at Hyderabad (India), only their second in eight matches, which the Pakistan team won 4-2 overall. Pakistan's ace drag-flick exponent Sohail Abbas etched his name in history by becoming the new world record holder for maximum goals in International hockey – 268 goals – more than Dutch legend Paul Litjens. Abbas has played in 219 International matches. The Indians fielded a new-look team for the series. Several regulars, including Dhanraj Pillay and Gagan Ajit Singh were rested. Indian skipper Dilip Tirkey summed up the series thus: "It's fantastic to be a part of an IndiaPakistan Series". Indeed, it was a great series. It is good for the game and better still for improving friendship and excellent relations between the two great nations in this part of the world.

RESULTS: (Pakistan-Leg): Karachi: Sept. 24: Pak bt. India 2-1; Quetta: Sept. 27: India bt. Pak 4-1; Peshawar: Sept. 29: Pak bt. India 3-2; Lahore: Oct. 1: Pak drew India 4-4. **Overall: Pak bt. India 2-1 (India-Leg):** New Delhi: Oct. 4: Pak bt. India 3-1; Chandigarh: Oct. 6: Pak drew India 1-1; Amritsar: Oct. 8: Pak bt. India 2-1; Hyderabad: Oct. 10: India bt. Pak 2-0. **Overall: Pak bt. India 2-1**

PC CONVERSIONS: (Pakistan-Leg): Karachi: India earned 3 (converted 1); Pak – 4 (converted 1); Quetta: India – 4 (2), Pak – 5 (1); Peshawar: India – 3 (nil); Pak – 3 (1); Lahore: India – 4 (1); Pak – 5(3). **Total PC Conversion:** India – 4 out of 13; Pak – 6 out of 17, **(India-Leg):** Delhi: India – 4 (nil); Pak – 5 (1); Chandigarh: India – 4 (nil); Pak – nil; Amritsar: India – 1 (nil); Pak – 1 (1); Hyderabad: India – 1 (nil); Pak – 6 (nil); **Total PC Conversion:** India – nil out of 10; Pak – 2 out of 12. **Penalty Stroke:** Amritsar: India – 1 (nil).

Shahabad Girls Retains 11th NDMC-Nehru Junior Girls Tournament



SGNP School Shahabad receiving winners trophy from Mrs. Sailaja Chandra, Chairman, Public Grievances Commission, Delhi on the finals of the Girls Tournament.

Sri Guru Nanak Public Girls Senior Secondary School from Shahabad (Haryana) in a repeat performance retained the 11th edition of the NDMC-Nehru Junior Girls Hockey Tournament (U-17) defeating Govt. Girls High School from Ranchi (Jharkhand) 7-1 in the final on Oct. 16. Interestingly, these two teams met each other in the final last year also when the Shahabad girls pipped the Ranchi girls 6-4 through tie-breaker. The track record of the Shahabad girls is unique. This year it is their fourth win-in-a-row. They had earlier won the trophy twice-in-a-row (1997 and 1998) and were runners-up in 1994, 1996 and 2000. The Ranchi girls also do not lag much behind. They had won the very first two editions of the Trophy. In 1964 they defeated their arch-rivals Shahabad girls 2-0 and next year Birsa Munda girls 3-0. The Ranchi girls also annexed the trophy in 1999 and runners-up in 1998. The winners reached the final beating Birsa Munda Vidyapitha, Rourkela 3-2 in the Semi-finals. The runners-up reached the final defeating Govt. Girls Sr. Sec. School, Kairon (Amritsar) 6-5 via tie-breaker (sudden death) in the Semi-finals. The winners received Rs. 96,000 and the NDMC Gold Trophy while the runners-up got Rs. 64,000 and a Silver Trophy. Birsa Munda Vidyapitha Rourkela (Orissa) beat Govt. Girls Sr. Sec. School, Kairon (Amritsar) 4-1 for the third place and earned Rs. 32,000. The Geeta Bajaj Fair Play Trophy went to Kreedha Prabodhini Shiv Chattrapati Kreedha Peth (Pune) and a cash award of Rs. 5,000 with it Govt. Girls Sr. Sec. School (Kairon) also got Rs. 25,000 as the most 'Promising team' of the tournament. The "Foreign Participation Trophy" went to the School Girls Team from Sri Lanka. As many as 19 teams, including a school team from Sri Lanka, took part this year, as against 17 last year. In 2001 it had only 12 teams and the next year increased to 17. It may be recollected, this tournament started in 1994 with only 12 teams. Therefore, the increase this year brings out the fact that this tournament is gaining popularity year after year.

Lyallpur Khalsa School Annex Nehru Junior Trophy

The Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society continued its mission for the overall improvement of the game in the country by organising tournaments at grass-root level. As a part of its endeavour, it organised Nehru Memorial tournaments for various age groups. The 33rd Oriental Bank-Nehru Junior Tournament (U-17) was won by Lyallpur Khalsa Sr. Sec. School, Jalandhar defeating their city-mates Govt. Model High School 5-4 via tie breaker in the final on Nov. 1. It may be recalled that in 1999 Lyallpur Khalsa School was runners-up having been defeated by Birsa Munda Vidyapitha, Rourkela. The winners earned Rs. 96,000 while the runners-up got Rs. 64,000. The third position went to the Guru Harkrishan Public School (India Gate), New Delhi, who earned Rs. 32,000. Raja Dumbra Singh High School, Imphal was declared the "Most Promising Team of the Tournament" and received a cash award of Rs. 25,000, while the Foreign Participation Trophy went to the school boy's team from Sri Lanka. The "Best Youngest Player of the Tournament" award went to Sujan Das of Behala Parnasree Bidyamandir, Kolkata. This award is known as Anup Trophy instituted by Mr. V.P. Puri. Army Boys Sports Coy. (BRC Danapur) earned the "Best Disciplined Team Trophy". As many as 28 best teams of the country took part in the tournament.



Mr. S.C. Gupta General Manager, Oriental Bank of Commerce at the finals of the Oriental Bank-Nehru Junior Tournament and inauguration of the Sub-Junior Tournament

Jalandhar School Wins Nehru Sub-Junior Hockey Title



Lt. Gen. J.F.R. Jacob, former Governor of Punjab and Chief Guest on the finals of ONGC-NEHRU Sub-Junior Tournament - awarding runners-up trophy to Govt. Model School Chandigarh.

Govt. Model Sr. Sec. School, another institution from Jalandhar, was the proud recipient of the 22nd ONGC-Nehru Sub-Junior hockey (U-15) title when they beat Model High School, Chandigarh 2-1 in the final on Nov. 13. It was the third title victory in-a-row for the Jalandhar boys who are trainees at the noted Surjit Hockey Academy. The winners received Rs. 96,000 while the runners-up were richer by Rs. 64,000. SGPS Academy (Sri Bhaini Sahib), Ludhiana defeated Birsa Munda Vidyapitha, Rourkela to take the third place and alongwith it Rs. 32,000. J.J. Sarvjanik High School, Bilimora (Gujarat) was declared the "Promising Team of the Tournament," which saw the participation of 26 teams, including one from Sri Lanka. Gumla's St. Ignatius High School was named the "Most Disciplined Team of the Tournament" and Ajay Kumar of Motilal Nehru School of Sports, Rai (Haryana), the "Best Youngest Player of the Tournament" and received the Anup Trophy. Chandan Pathak of Udai Pratap Inter College, Varanasi was given the Jagdish Sharma Trophy and a cash award of Rs. 5,000 for being the "Highest Scorer of the Tournament".



Shri Ashwini Kumar, former Vice-President, IOC and Chief Guest addressing the gathering on the finals of the ONGC-Nehru Tournament on November 25, 2004

PUNJAB POLICE completes Hat-Trick



Mr. Muti Ullah Khan, Chief-de-Mission, Afghan Sports Club, Bahawalpur (Pakistan) at the Shivaji Stadium during ONGC-Nehru Senior Hockey Tournament

Punjab Police completed a hat-trick of wins in the 41st ONGC-Nehru Senior Hockey Tournament and in the process, they ended their losing streak to Border Security Force, Jalandhar in the finals on Nov. 25, having lost thrice to the same opponents in the past (1975, 1978 and 1996). This is the fourth time the two teams met each other in the final. This win in the 41st edition gave Punjab Police their seventh ONGC-Nehru Senior hockey title, but the match was anything but exciting. The winner was decided through tie-breaker. For the first 70 minutes, though, what one witnessed was an unimpressive display from the defending champions and some stout defending by the BSF men. The Policemen finally managed to win 4-3 in the tie-breaker after being level 3-3 when BSF's Raj Singh's shot was saved by PP's goalkeeper Manpreet Singh. The winners received the Nehru Gold Cup and a cash award of Rs. 2 lakhs and the runners-up got Rs. 1 lakh and the Nehru Silver Cup. Indian Oil, who finished third defeating Bharat Petroleum 5-4 in the 3rd-4th Position tie, got Rs. 50,000 and the Hero Honda Hardline Trophy. (Incidentally, these two teams also met each other in the 2000 final when also the Indian Oil thrashed Bharat Petroleum). The ONGC Fair Play award went to Bharat Petroleum and the Sardar Daljit Singh Trophy to Namdhari XI. Army XI was awarded the Lt. Gen. Harbaksh Singh Trophy and a cash award of Rs. 10,000. There were only 12 participants this year, four less than that of last year. The highest number of participants in this tournament was 43 in 1986. Afghan Sports Club (Bahawalpur), Pakistan was the foreign participant this year.

One of Pakistan's hockey greats Muti Ullah Khan was the Chief-de-Mission of the team. The three-time Olympian (1956, 60 and 64) was so impressed with the functioning of the Nehru Hockey Society that he 'promised to do his best to make the PHF agree to send Pak teams to participate in the Nehru Hockey tournaments regularly from next year onward'.

Champions Trophy: India missed another opportunity to regain lost pride

With Olympic gold medal winners Australia deciding to withdraw from this year's elite six-nation Samsung Champions Trophy in Lahore due to "Security reasons", the Indian team was invited to replace them. In fact, this was the first time that India was to participate in the three back-to-back competitions. And it will be four-in-a-row as India are scheduled to host the competition at Chennai next year. Australia had been participating in every Champions Trophy since its inception in 1978 at Lahore. India started their league campaign with a flop show. Spain's four goals in the second session – three of them soft ones – left the young Indian team despondent. Luck also did not favour them in the second match against Holland. The Dutch team was made to fight for a 5-4 win. India's third encounter was against Germany. The Indians flexed their muscles to win the match 3-1. India met their arch rivals Pakistan in their fourth match. As always, it had all the makings of a thriller but the end came as an anticlimax. After 65 minutes of absorbing hockey, Pakistan finally won the crucial league encounter 2-1, but only thanks to a controversial penalty stroke awarded to them by umpire Tim Pullman in the 66th minute. Amazingly, the same umpire refused to award a clear penalty stroke to the Indians just two minutes later. India ended the league stage with a 1-1 draw against New Zealand. India thus secured the fourth position in the league with four points.

India thus earned the right to play for the bronze medal against the third placed Pakistan and a last chance to regain her lost pride. However, India's hopes of a podium finish came crashing down after they suffered a 3-2 defeat against Pakistan in a tension-filled play-off match. The loss also dashed India's hopes of matching their best-ever finish (3rd) in the elite six-nation event which had come in 1982 at Amstelveen, Holland. The Indian strategy was defensive in the whole competition. That the forwards lacked fire power was evident by the number of goals India scored: 11 in six matches while conceding 16. The returns (goalwise) of Adam Sinclair (0), Tushar Khandekar (0), Hari Prasad (0), V.S. Vinay (1), Vikram Pillay (1) and Vivek Gupta (1) make for depressing reading. The rebuilding of a team always takes on the foundation of experience. That foundation was missing in Lahore. Spain won the 26th edition of the Champion Trophy for the first time defeating defending Champions the Netherlands 4-2 in the final. New Zealand were knocked out of next year's tournament after being beaten 2-1 by Germany in the playoff for fifth and sixth positions.

India's PC Conversion at a Glance: Vs Spain: India 2 (converted 0), Spain 3 (conv. 3); Vs Holland: India 2 (1) and PS 1 (1), Holland 3 (3); Vs Germany: India 4 (0), Germany 3 (1); Vs Pakistan: India 3 (1), Pakistan 5 (0) and PS 1 (1); Vs New Zealand: India 2 (0) and PS 1 (1), New Zealand 7 (1).

India Fifth in World Hockey Rankings

India hung on to fifth place in world rankings despite finishing outside the medal bracket in the recent Champions Trophy hockey tournament in Lahore. World champions Germany went one position up to replace Australia at the top. The Olympic champions paid the price for skipping the Lahore meet. They are now second, followed by Holland, Pakistan and India, an FIH release said. Spain is sixth.

Dwyer Voted Hockey Player of the Year

Australia's mercurial forward Jamie Dwyer was voted "World Field Hockey Player of the Year" on December 9, while Santiago Freixa of Spain was named the "Year's Young Player". The voting was held in Lahore by 108 players from six countries – Pakistan, India, New Zealand, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands – who were competing in the 26th edition of the Champions Trophy. Dwyer, the 25-year-old striker, scored the golden goal against Germany in the Olympic final at Athens that gave Australia its first ever field hockey gold medal.

Premier Hockey League

IHF's long-standing promise of conducting a premier league on the lines of the National Football League is about to come true. The inaugural Premier Hockey League (PHL) to be sponsored by ESPN and Leisure Sports Management will be staged at Hyderabad from January 13 next year, with about 17 foreign players expected to compete along with Indian stars. The month-long two-tier league will see the winner of Tier 1 take home Rs. 30 lakh while the runners-up will get Rs. 10 lakh. Similarly, the winners and runners-up in Tier 2 will be richer by Rs. 4 and Rs. 2.5 lakh respectively. IHF President KPS Gill said five teams – Sher-e-Jalandhar, Maratha Warriors, Chennai Veerans, Hyderabad Sultans and Bangalore High-Flyers – will play in Tier 1 while Tier 2 will consist of Delhi Dazzlers, Lucknow Nawabs, Imphal Rangers, Bengal Tigers and Chandigarh Dynamos. Gill announced that Gagan Ajit Singh, Viren Rasquinha, Ignace Tirkey, Dilip Tirkey and Arjun Halappa would lead their respective Tier 1 teams. Gill also informed that IHF would encourage young talent, which has put an end to the return of veterans Dhanraj Pillay and Baljeet Singh Dhillon. "We have been working towards the Premier Hockey League for over two years. Innovative ideas will help hockey regain the interest it held at one time, Gill said". Meanwhile, the Pakistan Hockey Federation is so impressed with the idea of the Premier Hockey League mooted by its Indian counterpart that it has not only allowed eight of its players to play the tournament but is also planning a similar competition from 2006. The Olympians – Ahmad Alam, Zeeshan Ashraf, Muhammad Saqlain, Muhammad Sawar, Ali Raza, Dilawar Hussain, Kashif Jawwad and Mudassar Ali Khan – will be taking part in the league, a PHF spokesman said "During discussions with the Indian officials, the PHF allowed the players to feature in the event," he said.

FIH Chief commends IHF's new league plan

The President of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) Ms Elsyane Breda Viresmann has said at Lahore during the Champions Trophy that she was happy with the way the Indian Hockey was progressing. The Indian team I saw here is young, talented and creative. The result should have been better. Hockey has major potential in a billion-strong country, was her opinion. She was 'excited' about IHF's new League plan. "It can be a good driving force", she added.

Published by Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society, Shivaji Stadium, New Delhi-110001.

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• Printed at Arun & Rajive Pvt. Ltd., 10 DSIDC Scheme-II, Okhla Industrial Area Phase-II, New Delhi-110020 • Ph: 26388005 / 6 / 7