



# THE CRADLE OF INDIAN HOCKEY NEWSLETTER

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## From the President's Desk

This is the year of the Olympics. And as usual expectations of the Indian Sports lovers rise with hockey being one of the disciplines in which India expects to be among the medal brackets.

The Indian Hockey Federation has made all-out efforts to give the best of facilities (including international exposure) to the Indian team preparing for the mega event. The 26 probables were sent on pre-Olympic training and acclimatization to the United States and Holland where the team also participated in a four-nation tournament. These exposures are expected to help the team finetune for the Athens Games. However, the road ahead is a tough one. Our present team members must remember the past glories of the game and the former players and try to emulate them. I am sure these efforts by the IHF will bear fruits.

Lastly, it gives me great pleasure to say that the NEWSLETTER is becoming popular day by day. It seems to have attracted the attention of innumerable ardent fans and connoisseurs of the game as it contains important news about the game, both domestic and international and information of archaic nature. The Nehru Hockey Society will continue to give more and more such things. Please wait and watch.



Ram Niwas Mirdha



Dr. A.K. Balyan, Director (H.R.) O.N.G.C. Ltd. –  
Chief Guest receiving memento from  
Maj. Gen. Virendra Singh at the Finals of  
ONGC-Nehru Sub-Junior Hockey Tournament.

## **India Outplays Pakistan to Lift Junior Asia Cup**

Left winger Tushar Khandekar scored a hat-trick as India outplayed arch-rivals Pakistan 5-2 in the final to clinch their maiden Junior Asia Cup hockey title in Karachi on April 29. Sandeep Singh, who scored two goals, helped India win the first match between the two sides on Pakistani soil in five years. With the win India also took a giant step towards defending their World Junior title next year at Amstelveen, the Netherlands. It may be recalled that India won the Junior World Cup in Hobart, Australia in 2001.

Earlier, defending Junior Asian Champions South Korea beat Malaysia 2-1 to finish third and gained the last berth for the World Cup.

## **Indo-Pak Hockey Series Revived**

In an attempt to revive the stalled bilateral hockey ties between India and Pakistan, the Indian Hockey Federation Chief K.P.S. Gill announced a series of four "Test" matches in Pakistan in September. It will be followed by a reciprocal series in India in October. India will play matches in Karachi (September 25), Quetta (September 27), Peshawar (September 29) and Lahore (October 1), before hosting Pakistan in Delhi (October 4), Chandigarh (October 6), Hyderabad (October 8) and Bangalore (October 10).

The last time both the sides played a bilateral series was in 1999 when India hosted four matches and Pakistan staged five "Tests". This series gave a tremendous boost to the game in the Sub-Continent. The Indo-Pak series will be an "annual" affair and this regular exchange would be the best thing to happen to hockey in both the countries", Gill said. The IHF Chief, however, made it clear that there would be no prize money on offer, but added the players would stand to benefit financially from the series.

## **PSB Beat Army XI to Lift the Prestigious Beighton Cup**

Formidable Punjab and Sind Bank made good use of the setpieces to outplay Army XI 4-2 via Tie-Breaker and lift the crown in the final of Indian Oil Servo 109th All India Beighton Cup hockey tournament in Kolkata. The bank men, who clinched the title for the third time after consecutive victories in 1999 and 2000, dominated the show but failed to break the ice and finished goalless in regulation time of the exciting encounter at the CCFC ground.

The victory made the bank men richer by Rs. 1.25 lakh while Army XI, three-time champions during 1992-94, were awarded Rs. 75,000. PSB captain Baljit Singh Chandi, notwithstanding his missed stroke in the tie-breaker, put up a stellar display and was adjudged the Man-of-the-Tournament and awarded Rs. 10,000.

## **Indian Women Lose Hockey Series Against New Zealand**

New Zealand took an unbeatable lead in their final match of the four-Test Women's hockey series against India on May 9 at Christchurch. Their third Test ended in a 3-3 draw. New Zealand, which won the first and second Tests, clinched the series when they squared the third match after trailing 2-0 at half time. India scored goals through Saba Anjum and Surja Devi to dominate the first half and raise the hope that they might square the series. Surinder Kaur scored the 3rd goal for India in the second half. New Zealand fought back with second half goals to tie the match and clinch the series.



Shri Ram Niwas Mirdha, President – Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society meeting the Girls team from Lucknow in the Nehru-NDMC Girls Hockey Tournament.



NCC Cadets witnessing Nehru Hockey Tournament

## ***Tata Honours Former Captains***

Tata Group honoured ten former Olympic hockey team captains and two former Olympians for their contribution to the sport. Tata felicitated the Olympians with a citation and a purse of Rs. 1 lakh each. Those who were felicitated on the occasion by Sm. Simone Tata, wife of Shri Naval Tata, included Balbir Singh (1956), Charanjit Singh (1964), Gurbux Singh (1968), Ajitpal Singh (1976), Harmik Singh (1972), V. Bhaskaran (1980), Zafar Iqbal (1984), M.M. Somaiya (1988), Pargat Singh (1996) and Ramandeep Singh (2000).

## ***Training Programme of India's Olympic Probables at Arizona***

The IHF Chief K.P.S. Gill observed the other day that 26 boys are "training hard at Arizona (USA) and are enjoying the training. There has been a tremendous improvement in the physical and mental efficiency of the players" he said.

Gill described the Olympic draw that has pitted India against favourites Holland in their first match in Pool-B on August 15, as a "good one". "We expect it to be a tough match. But it's always good to play a tough match in the beginning", he said. India will play their Second match against South Africa (August 17), then take on Australia (August 19), New Zealand (August 21) and Argentina (August 23).

Gill also informed that the second part of the training in Holland and Germany will involve 20 players, four of whom would be stand-bys.



Umpires attending Seminar organized by Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society

## ***PC Conversion: Needs Further to Gear Up***

Penalty Corner Conversion is one of the aspects of the game which fetches goals aplenty for any team which is accurate in its conversions. This is where most teams have out-scored the Indians in the last two-three decades.

Keeping in view the low rate of PC conversions of the Indian team in various International tournaments, the Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society, the Cradle of Indian Hockey, instituted an award in 1996 in all its five tournaments Senior, Junior, Sub-Junior, Girls and colleges in an effort to focus special attention to this important aspect of the game in the present-day context. To add incentive to teams converting maximum number of Penalty Corners during their domestic tournament matches, the Society announced cash awards worth Rs. 10,000/- for the team achieving the highest rate of conversions from the Super League stage onwards, subject to attaining a minimum of 20 per cent conversion. The Penalty Corner Award is sponsored by M/s PEPSI Foods.

Despite the Society's novel efforts, things do not seem to have improved to the extent desired. One look at the country's top teams participating in the Nehru tournaments and their PC conversion percentages would reveal that the teams have a long way to go before achieving hundred per cent levels. Punjab Police, Punjab and Sind Bank, Indian Airlines, Indian Railways, Air India, ONGC, Corps of Signals, Sikh Regimental Centre and Namdhari XI are some of the regular teams participate in the Nehru tournaments. While Punjab Police were successful in converting only seven out of the 25 earned by them in five matches, Punjab & Sind Bank scored six goals from the 23 earned in three matches. Indian Airlines, with a host of former and present internationals in their ranks, could convert only five out of 28 in five games. Air India's share was a mere two out of 10 while ONGC converted just one out of six. Corps of Signals and Sikh regimental Centre drew a blank from their eight and 11 PCs that they took. Indian railways failed to convert even one of the 24 they were awarded in four matches. Competitionwise the average rate of conversion of Penalty Corners during the tournaments held last year has been: Girls (18.63 per cent), Sub-Junior (17.5%), Junior (15%), Main (16.4%) and Colleges (15.22%).

While the Society will continue with its effort to improve the standard of the game, it's now for the participating teams to take this aspect of the game more seriously so as to improve the rate of P.C. Conversions.

## How To Be A Top Scorer

*(If you want to be a top scorer, keep the following "Ten Commandments" in mind. These wise and thoughtful tips come from no less a person than Brig. HJS Chimni (Retd), the willy centre-forward of the country's 1975 World Cup winning team.)*

(1) Put yourself in the shoes of your teammate in possession of the ball and appreciate what you would have done if you were in his place; (2) Using your hockey sense, be at the appropriate place at the right time; (3) Receive the ball in a manner that you get into position to execute the next stroke, be it push, hit, scoop or deflection in least possible time. Practice these strokes to perfection; (4) A first time try at the goal gives least amount of reaction time to the goalkeeper; (5) Always be ready for the rebound. Your positioning for rebound is based upon the angle and speed at which a try at the goal is taken by any of your players. Remember, a goalkeeper who does not give rebound is yet to be born; (6) Be ready to take even half a chance. Best of the goalkeepers can make a mistake. Don't be shy to taking a try at the goal; (7) A static goalkeeper is difficult to beat. Make the goalkeeper move and catch him on the wrong foot; (8) If you miss a goal, remember the angle/position from which you have missed it. Practice hard to overcome this shortcoming. You may once again get the ball in the same position in another match; (9) If standing behind a defender, try to come in front of him to receive the ball. If you can't then get back a step or two from the defender to receive the ball should he miss it. This will give you more reaction time; and (10) Lastly, remember the 3 Cs. Be calm, cool and composed.

## How, When & Why Artificial Surface in Hockey came into Being

K.N. Sharma, Former Regional Director, SAI

It is, perhaps, not known to many hockey lovers in the country as to how, when and why the artificial surface came into use in the game of field hockey. In the early sixties one field hockey tournament was scheduled to be held in the U.S.A. Because of very bad weather and heavy rainfall, the organizers were compelled to cancel the tournament after waiting for few days. One of the members of the Ford Foundation, who was also one of the Organizers, made an appeal to the scientists, particularly associated with the Chemical Industry to invent a synthetic artificial surface.

One of the multi-billionaire firms i.e. Monsanto International Sales Company came forward and invented the artificial surface in mid-sixties. This surface was first installed in Houston City of the USA in the famous Stadium named Astro-dome. The Inventor took the word Astro from the name of the Stadium and the turf for the grass named as "Astro-turf". In the USA this surface was used in all types of activities like PT, Rugby, Football, American Football, Field Hockey etc.

In 1976, the Olympic Games were allotted to Canada but due to uncertain climatic conditions in Montreal where the Olympic Games were scheduled to be held, the Canada Olympic Committee showed their inability to conduct field hockey. The future of the Field Hockey in Olympic Games was thus at stake. The Monsanto International Sales Company, the inventor of the Astro-turf came forward and offered to install an artificial field hockey ground consisting of Astro-turf, free of cost. To save the game of field hockey in the Olympics, the International Hockey Federation then agreed to this proposal and the Hockey competition was ultimately held with surprising results. The eight-time Olympic Champions India, two time Olympic Champions Pakistan and England and the then current Olympic Champions West Germany were nowhere. New Zealand who had neither won any International Competition before nor afterwards won the Gold Medal, defeating Australia in the finals. India who was the then World Champions stood seventh. In 1980 Moscow Olympics, another artificial surface, invented by M/s Balson Company, Germany, Polly-Grass was used.

Because of the unexpected results, the International Hockey Federation then decided that after the 5th World Cup, which was held in Mumbai in 1981-82, all International Competitions approved by FIH will compulsorily be held on artificial surface. Keeping in view the margin of profit and International demand, the various brands of artificial surfaces came in the market i.e. Super Grass, Desso turf, Pollytone, Conygreen, Sendfill turf, Astro-turf System 5 and System 90 and many other brands.

The use of artificial surface is said to be one of the reasons for the downfall of the 'Asian style of Hockey'. In India, we do not have much artificial surfaces in our country as compared to Holland where a couple of hundred turfs in that country exists. India has less than twenty-five turfs situated at Delhi (3), U.P. (4), Punjab (3), Chandigarh (1), Haryana (2), Gujarat (1 – torn out), Madhya Pradesh (2 – both torn out), Jharkhand (1 – torn out), Tamil Nadu (1), Karnataka (2), Andhra Pradesh (2), West Bengal (1 – torn out), Maharashtra (2) and J&K (1).

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