



THE CRADLE OF INDIAN HOCKEY  
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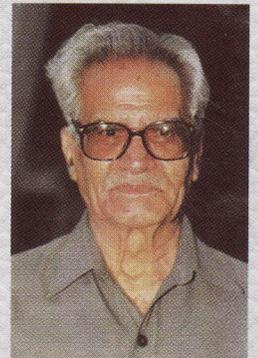
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Shiv Kumar Varma

M.N. Shome

*From the President's Desk*

The year 2005 was not a good year for Indian hockey as a whole although there were a few positive points worth noting. Title wins by the Indian colts and the women's team in four-nation tournaments in Bilbao (Spain) in June and at Singapore in August, respectively, were perhaps the only silver linings on the otherwise disappointing year for Indian hockey. The year began with Indian juniors (under-21) unable to defend their title in the six-nation KL tournament at Kuala Lumpur in April and finished third. It was followed by the national team finishing fifth in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup in June. A month later saw the Indians come fourth in the Junior World Cup at Rotterdam (Holland). At Amstelveen in August, the Indians finished seventh in the eight-nation Robobank Cup. And, perhaps, the most disappointed show by the former Olympic Champions was their sixth-finish in the six-nation Champions Trophy held in Chennai in December. The National Capital witnessed the emergence of the Current Olympic Champions Australia as the winners of the revived Indira Gandhi International Gold Cup, Indian women succumbed to pressure, losing 3-5 via tie-breaker in the final.



Unmindful of the poor performance at the international arena, the Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society continued with its efforts to revive the national pride in the game by organizing its annual fare of five tournaments, which witnessed some absorbing hockey. The Bangladesh boys made the U-17 junior boys tournament a memorable one by winning this tournament in its very first attempt. The Society's sanctimonious motto of '**Catching them Young**' was immensely reflected in the sub-junior (U-15) boys tournament. The Nehru tournaments culminated this year with the Indian Airlines winning the most sought-after senior competition.

At the end of the year, I, on behalf of all members of our Society, tender my grateful thanks to all our sponsors, who stood by us through the hard times to make the tournaments big success. The State Trading Corporation, Allahabad Bank, NDMC, ONGC, Pepsi, all advertisers as also all members of both print and electronic media have continued to support the game throughout the year, which went a long way to encourage players at all levels.

**Ram Niwas Mirdha**

## ***Australia Retain Indira Gandhi Gold Cup***

Indian Women succumbed to pressure in the tie-breaker as defending Champions Australia ran away with the title for the second time on the trot with a 5-3 verdict in the 7th Indira Gandhi International Gold Cup women's hockey tournament which was played after a gap of nine years. It was last held in 1996 in New Delhi. With both teams tied at 2-2 (India led 2-0 in the first half) at the hooter and failing to break the deadlock through a golden goal in the extra-time, the match had to be decided in a tie-breaker where Australia slammed three penalty strokes against India's one. Subhadra Pradhan was the lone scorer for India in the tie-breaker. Italy beat New Zealand 2-1 to earn the bronze. Only five teams participated in this year's edition. India beat Malaysia (2-1), Italy (5-0) and New Zealand (2-1) before losing to eventual winners Australia 0-2 in their last league encounter.

The only time India won the first place in the seven editions was in the inaugural year (1985) in Delhi when they shared the gold medal with the USSR. They finished runners-up in 1987 (Lucknow) and 1994 (Amritsar) and had finished fourth three times. Failure to convert Penalty-Corners was once again the main reason for India's failure. They earned as many as 28 Penalty-Corners but converted only four!

**FINAL PLACING:** Australia, India, Italy, New Zealand, Malaysia.

## ***27th Champions Trophy: India Finish Last Again***

India will not figure in the next edition of the most prestigious six-nation Champions Trophy hockey tournament to be held at Terrassa in Spain. Last year's bronze medalist India will be replaced by Argentina, who earned the spot on the basis of emerging champions in the Champions Challenger tournament. For the third time, India finished sixth and last in the Champions Trophy when they went down to its arch-rivals Pakistan in a match to decide 5-6 positions in the Chennai tournament, which concluded on December 18. That in a nutshell, is the story of Indian hockey at the moment. At Perth (1985) and Berlin (1989) also saw India finish last in the Champions Trophy. It may be recalled that in 2002 at Cologne and next year in Amsterdam, India won the league matches against Pakistan only to lose in the playoffs. What was most disappointing about the Indian team's performance was its inability to score a win despite taking early leads – 2-0 in the most crucial match against Pakistan. That the Indian defence allows their opponents to claw back and score the winning goal has of late become a worrying factor. India had beaten the same opponents 3-2 in the round-robin league and were leading 2-1 at the breather in the classification game before allowing them to reverse the result. Thus Pakistan won the match 3-2.

India began on the wrong note, losing 1-2 to Spain. Last year, it may be recalled, India lost 0-4 in their first match against that country. But the win against Pakistan in their next match lifted their spirits, so one thought. After being two goals in deficit, the Indians recovered to score a win. India's inadequacy was fully exposed by Germany in the next game when they lost 0-1, which they should have won easily. And then Australia left the host team in a tizzy with a 4-1 victory. The Olympic Champions did not force even a single Penalty-Corner and scored all their goals directly. Australia streak their unbeaten streak in the tournament by beating defending Champions, the Netherlands 3-1 in the Final on December 18. Spain finished third and took the 'Fair Play' trophy. Bevan George of Australia was awarded the "Player of the Tournament"

**FINAL PLACING:** Australia, Netherlands, Spain, Germany, Pakistan, India.

## ***Orissa Girls Clinch Nehru Girls Title***

The Nehru Hockey Tournament Society's new season began on October 10 in Delhi with the coveted NDMC-Nehru Girls tournament – its 12th edition. Inaugurating the show in Delhi on October 10 amidst usual fanfare in the presence of a full house, Mrs. Sindhushree Khullar, Chairperson, New Delhi Municipal Council, advised the players to take the game seriously and participate in as many competitions as they can afford whenever and wherever they are held to sharpen their skills. She also assured them of NDMC's all-out help if needed, if and when they happen to be in Delhi.

As many as 18 teams from all parts of the country took part in the nine-day tournament. In an engrossing final, last year's bronze medalists Birsa Munda Vidyapitha, Rourkela defeated Thenzawl Hr. Sec. School, Mizoram 1-0. The Rourkela girls reached the Final defeating Vidyadevi Jindal School, Hissar 10-0 at the knock-out stage and holders SGNP Girls Sr. Sec. School, Shahabad 2-1 in the Semi-finals. The Mizoram girls too reached the final thrashing Govt. Hr. Sec. School, Dharamjaigarh (Chhattisgarh) 14-0 at the knock-out stage, and last year's runners-up Govt. Girls High School, Ranchi 2-0 in the Semi-finals. The winners were richer by Rs. 96,000 while the runners-up took home Rs. 64,000 as prize money. The SGNP girls registered an emphatic 7-0 victory over the Ranchi girls to log the third place along with it Rs. 32,000 as prize money. Kreedha Prabodhini (Pune) were named the "Most Promising Team". Mizoram, Shahabad and Blooming Dales School, Hissar got Rs. 7,000 each for the 'PEPSI Penalty-Corner Award'. Their rate of conversion was 22.22 per cent. Cambridge English School, Imphal won the 'Geeta Bajaj Fair Play Trophy'.

## ***Memorable Debut for Bangladesh Boys***

The Bangladesh Institute of Sports made their maiden appearance in the Nehru Junior Hockey Tournament for Boys (under 17 years) a most memorable one by winning the trophy after beating Lyallpur Khalsa Sr. Sec. School, Jalandhar 5-4 via sudden death. The teams were tied 4-4 in the tie-breaker even after 85 minutes of sea-saw battle between them during the regulation period ending goalless. The victorious team received a cash award of Rs. 96,000 while the runners-up got Rs. 64,000. For the 3rd-4th position, Govt. Model Sr. Sec. School, Jalandhar, who thrashed Town High School, Sundergarh (Orissa) 8-0 were richer by Rs. 32,000. As many as 27 teams participated in this year's tournament with the Bangladesh outfit being the lone foreign team.

In the tournament's 34 years history, Bangladesh Institute of Sports has become the second foreign team to annex the trophy. Twenty three years ago West Germany School XI was the first foreign team to win the trophy defeating the State School of Sports, Jalandhar. Mehrab Hossain Kiron of the Bangladesh team was voted the "Best Player of the Tournament" and earned the 'Anup Trophy' while Govt. Hamid Inter College, Rampur (U.P.) won the 'Promising Team of the Tournament Award' and a cash award of Rs. 25,000. The 'PEPSI Penalty-Corner Award' of Rs. 20,000 was earned by the Govt. Model High School, Chandigarh and Guru Harkrishan Public School, Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi was declared the 'Best Disciplined Team'.

## ***Town High School, Sundergarh Win Sub-Junior Title***

The third of the prestigious annual five-tournament series being conducted by the Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society concluded its fortnight-long competitions successfully on November 14 in Delhi. Sponsored by ONGC, the 23rd edition of the sub-junior boys (U-15) had 23 teams participating. In fact, the Society's sanctimonious motto of '**Catching them Young**' at the grass-root level is well reflected in this small age-group boys tournament, which is always recognized as the most significant one, for, it's here that budding talents which generally remain invisible in obscure villages and small towns, are meticulously X-rayed and unearthed. And thus a genius is born.

The Town High School from Sundergarh (Orissa) stroked out the Sat Guru Partap Singh Academy (Ludhiana) 2-1 via sudden death to win the trophy. The match was stretched to tie-breaker when the teams were tied 1-1 at the end of regulation time and were again tied 5-5 in the tie-breaker. The winners received a cash award of Rs. 96,000 while the runners-up got Rs. 64,000. In the clash for the third place, the Govt. High School, Maqsudan (Jalandhar), which beat Spring Dales Sr. Sec. School (Amritsar) 7-5 via tie-breaker after being locked 2-2 at regular time, were richer by Rs. 32,000. Malak Singh of the SGPS Academy (Ludhiana) was chosen the "Best Youngest Player of the Tournament" while Shree Kamalkar Chaube Adarsh Sewa Vidyalaya Inter College (Varanasi) won the "Most Disciplined Team" award. Inderpreet Singh (Maqsudan) received the 'Sharma Trophy' for being the highest goal scorer (eight goals) which earned him Rs. 5,000. The Govt. Model Sr. Sec. School (Jalandhar), which converted as many as 50 per cent PCs received the 'PEPSI Penalty-Corner Conversion Award' and a cash prize of Rs. 20,000.

## ***I.A. Lifts STC Golden Jubilee Nehru Hockey Tournament***

The 42nd Senior Men's Nehru Hockey Tournament, the fourth of the five annual tournament series, concluded in a befitting way in the presence of a packed Shivaji Stadium in the national capital on the last day of the Year 2005. Off-season followed by the capital's extreme cold weather prevailing could not diminish the spirit and enthusiasm of the participating teams, thus maintaining the age-old tradition of the country's most sought-after and most-wanted annual event. Sponsored by the State Trading Corporation in its Golden Jubilee year, the tournament attracted as many as 19 leading teams of the country to battle it out for supremacy.

Two Penalty-Corner conversions by Sandeep Singh took the Indian Airlines to its 10th title triumph outclassing Punjab & Sind Bank 2-0 in the final. For Airlines the title win came after a gap of 11 years. Earlier in the super league stage, Indian Airlines lost to Bharat Petroleum 0-2. They beat Punjab National Bank 11-1 and reached Semi-final defeating Punjab Police 2-1 in the Quarter-final. In the Semi-final, Sandeep Singh converted two PCs as Airlines beat Namdhari XI 2-0. Punjab & Sind Bank also lost their first match in the super league. They lost to Indian Oil 1-3 but beat Tamil Nadu XI 3-0 to reach the Quarter-final where they defeated Air India 3-2 to gain a place in the Semi-final. In the Semi-final, PSB scored a 2-1 win over Indian Oil. The winners received Rs. 2 lakhs while the runners-up got Rs. 1 lakh as prize money. The 'PEPSI Penalty-Corner Award' of Rs. 20,000 was awarded to Bharat Petroleum. Virender Bahadur received the 'Sardar Gian Singh Best Umpire Trophy' alongwith a cash prize of Rs. 10,000.

## ***Indo-Pak Hockey Test Series 2006***

The more the merrier. India and Pak hockey players will yet again rub their shoulders with each other when they play a six-match Test Series between February 15 and 25 with both the countries hosting three tests each. **SCHEDULE:** February 15: **First Test** at Jalandhar/Amristar; February 17: **2nd Test** at Chandigarh; February 19: **3rd Test** at New Delhi; February 21: **4th Test** at Rawalpindi; February 23: **5th Test** at Faisalabad; February 25: **6th Test** at Karachi.

## ***IDB pip ILB for LB Shastri Tournament Title***

India Dark Blues (IDB), comprising the Seniors, edged past India Light Blues (ILB) in the Final on October 8 to emerge Champions in the 16th Lal Bahadur Shastri Hockey Tournament, coinciding with the birth centenary celebrations of India's second late Prime Minister. The participation of Youngsters Hockey Club from Pakistan and Telekom Malaysia added international flavour to the six-team tournament. The final match was decided on the basis of tie-breaker after the sides were tied 1-1 in the regulation time. In the tie-breaker, IDB got the better of ILB 5-3 to lift the prestigious trophy.

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Phone: Stadium: 23365720 • Fax: 91-11-23746586 • E-mail: nehruhockey@vsnl.net • Cable: 'NEHRUHOKY' New Delhi • Website: www.nehruhockeyindia.com

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