

A CASE OF INDIAN HOCKEY UNABLE TO ANCHOR IN ITS GLORIOUS PAST!

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ABSTRACT

The game of hockey dates back to ancient civilisation in different formats but was introduced in India by the British. The game gained popularity amongst the army soldiers and later in other public sector units and clubs. India rose to the top in the Olympics and remained undisputed leader in the Olympic arena till the powerful European nations highjacked the sport to their advantage. India has not recovered from the change in the eco-system and has not adopted as well as it should have owing to various reasons. Analysis of the Indian team performance in the international arena and the consequent fall out has been elaborated in this case study. It provides a comprehensive analysis of the various reasons for the drop in performance and possible solutions to remedy the situation. The limitation of this case study is that no tournament-match wise analysis has been undertaken, besides a host of factors which has impacted Indian team performance namely playing conditions, umpiring errors etc.

Keywords: Olympics, Hockey, Tournaments, Coaching, Umpiring, Rules, Surface, FIH, IHF, Hockey India.

INTRODUCTION

Field hockey, has traces of being played in some form or the other dating back to 4000 years ago in Egypt (Saradindu, 1972a), but many believe that this game was born in Persia 500 BC before the earlier discovery. From Persia to Greece, the game travelled and there is evidence of the Romans having their own version of the game called pagnacia. Similar evidence has also been traced to the Aztec Indians playing this game in Mexico. Centuries ago, the game with different names was played in European countries and in Ireland it was called 'hurley' and was played as the national game. The French called their game hoquet, and early roots were found in Holland too, but modern hockey owes its origin to England from middle of the 16th century. In England it was called bandy and earlier in 1425 it was called commock but the name 'hockie' has its origin in 1838.

Hockey is believed to date from the earliest civilizations. The Arabs, Greeks, Persians, and Romans each had their own versions and traces of a stick game played by the Aztec Indians of South America have been found. Hockey can also be identified with other early games, such as hurling and shinty. During the middle Ages a French stick game called *hoquet* was played, and the English word may be derived from it (Britannica 2020).

The evolution of field hockey as an Olympic Summer Sport in the inter-war years was marked by two contrasting developments. England, the home of modern hockey, made a solitary appearance in Antwerp in 1920 and won gold but thereafter refused to play while the other constituent parts of Great Britain stayed away from Olympic hockey altogether. On the other hand, India, then a colony under British rule, aligned with countries on the Continent and joined

the newly founded International hockey federation (FIH) to take part in the 1928 Amsterdam Games and, over the next decade, played a crucial role in keeping hockey within the Olympic fold. Where the English refused to tread (Nikhilesh, 2015).

Hockey was introduced into India by the British during the end of the last century. Mostly confined to the British and Indian soldiers, the hundreds of cantonments across the country were the nurseries of this magnificent game. Indian citizens outside the army regiments first took to the game in Kolkata way back in 1885 and the first domestic tournament the Beighton cup was inaugurated in 1895 and later 1896 the Aga Khan Tournament was held in Bombay (Saradindu 1972b)

The game gained momentum and popularity in most parts of Punjab and all educational institutions took to it in a large scale. The first association came into being in 1908 and Bengal Hockey Association took the lead and thereafter, the Army sports control board was established in 1919. The Indian Hockey federation came into being on 7th September, 1925 and Gwalior was the Head Quarters which was later shifted to Delhi 1927.

The popularity of the game in India was established after it became a member of International Hockey Federation and was included in the 1928 Amsterdam Olympic Games. India made it to the international arena with a bang and won its first Olympic gold medal in 1928 and its victory put India on the global map of sports and games. The game became so popular that the Services, Railways and various institutions invested in promoting the game across the country and consequently, 100's of local tournaments were being organised nation-wide.

The British introduced the game in India before independence amongst the sepoys and very quickly to avoid embarrassment of defeat in the hands of Indian soldiers refused to play with game for a long time in India and focussed on Football which they played well. The British kept away from 1928 to 1936 in Olympic hockey to avoid defeat in the hands of bravehearted, talented and fit Indian soldiers representing India, though having won both the previous Olympic gold medals before 1928. It was only in 1948 after Indian independence Britain returned to the Olympic arena in London Olympics where India beat England in the final to retain the Gold medal. Such was the talent, grit, team work and extreme focus to fight to finish and be a winner. However, the country's association with the sport has been long and glorious. The sport gained popularity in India when the British Regiments introduced it in the early nineteenth century; the natives quickly picked up the game. While field hockey had been typically played on a playground, it has now moved to a more modern synthetic hard court. When compared to ice hockey, field hockey was more suited to the climatic conditions in the Indian subcontinent and as also much cheaper to maintain.

The first Hockey Club had been formed in Kolkata in 1885-1886, followed by the Bombay Provincial Hockey Association and a similar one in Punjab (Bikramjit et. al. 2017a).

Known to be one of the oldest forms of sport in the world, field hockey is believed to have come into existence many years before the Ancient Games of Olympia. Also, despite the widely held belief that field hockey was India's national sport, the sports ministry washed off some of the game's glory in 2012 when it declared that India did not have a national sport (Press Trust of India, 2012).

India claims to be the foremost in many things in the world. The world admits that she is foremost in hockey'. Hockey, like all modern sports, had been taken to India by the British and became a popular sport in the Indian army much encouraged by the British officers in charge. Dhyan Chand, the '*Bradman of hockey*' and its greatest ever player, was introduced to the game while serving the army (Basudhita 2015).

The case is presented in a manner where the performance of the Indian team is depicted in various tournaments. Goals scored, games won and the medal tally. The performance is split into two eras one prior to 1980 and other post 1980 Moscow Olympics. The current state of the domestic tournaments, the player's discipline, coaching and umpiring standards, the sponsorship of the game by the Government and other related factors have been closely studied.

This case rendition is from the perspective of a Player, Umpire, Coach, former University, State player, National Umpire in India and USA and Coach of a leading club, India and Coach Under 21 Girls team, Pittsburgh, USA, 2000-01, who played the game in natural surface, umpired and coached in artificial surfaces.

Case Overview

Indian hockey was introduced in the 1928 Olympics with no prior international tournament experience. The game predominantly confined to the army barracks and since 1885 a few leading national tournaments were organised involving clubs from other states. The popularity of the game rose to such a large extent that the British allowed an Indian team to participate in an Olympic tournament prior to independence (Saradindu 1972 c).

The medal tally of teams in the Olympics from 1928 till date is depicted in Table 1.

SN	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	India	8	1	2	11
2	Pakistan	3	3	2	8
3	Great Britain	3	2	4	9
4	Germany	3	1	3	7
5	Netherlands	2	4	3	9
6	Australia	1	3	5	9
7	West Germany	1	2	0	3
8	Argentina	1	0	0	1
8	New Zealand	1	0	0	1
10	Spain	0	3	1	4

On studying the performance of teams in the Olympic games (table 1), it is clear that India still holds the highest number of medals when compared to any other hockey playing nation. The changes administered by the FIH to alter this trend drastically have paid off and the country has not been in the reckoning for over four decades.

Independence did not change India's dominance on the international stage. It continued as the Olympics restarted after World War 2. The team won gold at London 1948, Helsinki 1952, Melbourne 1956, broken by a mere silver at Rome 1960, and gold at Tokyo 1964. This was followed by the start of the decline, as India won bronze at Mexico City 1968 & Munich 1972, followed by the last gold medal at Moscow 1980. Since then, Indian hockey has been in the doldrums, though things might be looking up now (Wikipedia 2020).

The major destinations in the country that promoted the sport or gained popularity in the early days were Bengal, Punjab, Delhi, Bhopal, Lucknow, Bombay, Madras and Coorg. The Indian Army or services teams, Indian Railways, Police teams, BSF, CRPF, Indian Airlines and few Banks promoted the game and provided employment that gave the players the necessary opportunity to stay gainfully employed and be focused on the game.

For 28 years, India went unbeaten in hockey at the Olympic Games. India won 25 straight matches across that period, which also brought them six straight gold medals. Their run was ended by Pakistan at the 1960 Olympics final. Thanks to that record-breaking streak, India still have the most wins by any team in Olympics.

Dash board of Indian team performance in various international events depicted in Table 2

SN	Competition	Go ld	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Olympics	8	1	2	11
2	Sultan Azlan Shah Cup	5	3	7	15
3	Asian Games	3	9	3	15
4	Asia Cup	3	5	1	9
5	Asian Hockey Champions Trophy	3	1	0	4
6	South Asian Games	1	3	0	4
7	Hockey Champions Challenge	1	1	2	4
8	World Cup	1	1	1	3
9	Afro Asian Games	1	0	0	1
10	FIH Hockey Series	1	0	0	1
11	HOCKEY Champions TROPHY	0	2	2	3
12	Common Wealth Games	0	2	0	2
13	FIH Hockey World League	0	0	2	2
	Total (13 Competitions)	27	28	19	74

On analysing the details of Table 2, we can safely assume that after Independence, Pakistan hockey team has dented Indian dominance in the Olympics, Asian games, Commonwealth games and Champions trophy. Tournaments involving Europeans has relegated the subcontinental teams to lower in the pecking. The style of play in the artificial surface-modern hockey has impacted both India and Pakistan in equal measure.

Most wins and goals scored in Olympic Games by Indian Team is depicted below in Table 3.

Teams	Wins at Olympic Games	Goals scored at Olympic Games
India	76	433
Netherlands	73	306
Pakistan	70	302
Australia	65	294
Spain	50	227

Details in Table 3 indicates the number of goals scored by the Indian team and the consequent wins was a delight to watch for the fortunate ones and the spectators who managed to visit the stadiums or hockey grounds had a treat of a life time. The delight and the jealousy triggered the Europeans to tweak the rules, the way the game should be played to gain dominance. Most consecutive medals at Olympics by any team are shown in Table 4.

Teams	Most consecutive medals	Medal colours	Period
India	10	Gold: 7	1928-1972
		Silver: 1	
		Bronze: 2	
Pakistan	6	Gold: 2	1956-1976
		Silver: 3	
		Bronze: 1	
Australia	6	Gold: 1	1992-2012
		Silver: 1	
		Bronze: 4	
Germany	4*	Gold: 2	2004-2016*
		Silver: 0	
		Bronze: 2	
Netherlands	3	Gold: 2	1996-2004
		Silver: 1	
		Bronze: 0	

* indicates the run is not yet broken

Source: Scroll.in

How encouraging it is to see the era between 1928 to 1972 (Table 4) a complete domination with one or two aberrations. That tells a tale of how adversaries joined hands to snatch the game away and the laurels by reengineering the sport to suit the rich hockey playing nations.

India's performance in the Olympics is broken down into two era's one before 1980 and the other post as shown in Table 5 for setting the context and road map for the future of the sport in India.

ERA	Medals	Wins	Goals scored
Before 1980 Olympics	11	56	328
After 1980 Olympics	0	20	105

Source: Scroll. In

India's dominance faded in the 1960s, thereafter teams like Netherlands and Australia rose to prominence in men's hockey but even they couldn't conjure up a run of dominance to match that of the Indian teams of the past. No team comes close to matching India's gold-medal streak at the event that stretched for six straight Games (Table 4). The factory and goal scoring machine that India was in the yester years was a delight to watch. Large crowds used to gather at a public place where a radio broadcast used to be aired, when we had no television or direct telecast. Unfortunately, the archives are not in possession of videos since technology had not evolved and bulk of information of India's mesmerising performances are heard or read only as stories. Few photographs of Indian players on the medal podium etc., gave the youth the motivation to the pursue the game. However, the untold stories are that most of the players who gave their best part of their lives for hockey were not compensated and many lived in penury towards their end. The neglect of the successive governments in not giving the players the respectability and honour had a major impact on the future generations taking to hockey as a sport or career. Lack of

social security benefits for players other than the Services, Railways or other government organisations kept a large cross section of players outside the financial security net. The winners were not given enough prize money; medical and housing benefits etc., to lead a respectable and dignified life. That was surely a let-down that could be the curse for Indian hockey.

India has qualified for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics where they will look to put an end to 40 years of wait for an Olympic medal. India's golden era was filled with glory until 1980. Forty years without an Olympic medal in the sport would have been unthinkable for the nation ruling the roost. Since then it has all gone downhill for the team. After 1980 Olympics, the team's performance failing to win a medal at the Olympics or the World Cup the only respite is that India dominates the Asian arena by winning Asian Games, Asia Cup and Asian Champions Trophy (Scroll.in, 2020).

From February 2018, the Government of Odisha has started sponsoring the Indian national field hockey team, both men and women team. In a first-of-its-kind association, the state has decided to support the India's field hockey team, since there is no support in any tangible form by successive governments to bring back the glory of the past!

World Cup: India's Performance Track Record depicted in Table 6.

No	Year	Host	Position	Win	Loss	Draw
1	1971	Barcelona, Spain	3 rd	5	0	1
2	1973	Amstelveen, Netherlands	2 nd	4	3	0
3	1975	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	1 st	5	1	1
4	1978	Buenos Aires, Argentina	6 th	4	1	3
5	1982	Bombay, India	5 th	5	0	2
6	1986	London, UK	12 th	1	1	4
7	1990	Lahore, Pakistan	10 th	1	1	5
8	1994	Sydney, Australia	5 th	3	2	2
9	1998	Utrecht, Netherlands	9 th	3	0	4
10	2002	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	10 th	3	1	5
11	2006	Mönchengladbach, Germany	11 th	1	1	5
12	2010	New Delhi, India	8 th	1	1	4
13	2014	The Hague, Netherlands	9 th	2	1	3
14	2018	Bhubaneswar, India	6 th	2	1	1
		Total	1 Title	40	14	40

One gold and one silver in 14 world cup tournaments (refer Table 6) a disastrous run for the team and clearly indicated the slide in performance since 1978 only solace is that 1980 Moscow Olympic gold medal that too many countries boycotted the games for political reasons. The champion's trophy that was introduced in 1980 until it was scrapped in the year 2018 was a nightmare of a tournament for India refers Table 7.

Table 7
CHAMPIONS TROPHY PERFORMANCE OF INDIA SOURCE WIKIPEDIA

Sno	Year	Host	Position	Win	Draw	Loss
1	1980	Karachi, Pakistan	5 th	1	3	2
2	1982	Amstelveen, Netherlands	2 nd	3	0	2
3	1983	Karachi, Pakistan	4 th	2	1	2
4	1985	Perth, Australia	6 th	1	1	3
5	1986	Karachi, Pakistan	5 th	2	0	3
6	1989	Berlin, West Germany	6 th	1	0	4
7	1995	Berlin, Germany	5 th	0	3	3
8	1996	Madras, India	4 th	2	1	3
9	2002	Cologne, Germany	4 th	2	1	3
10	2003	Amstelveen, Netherlands	4 th	2	0	4
11	2004	Lahore, Pakistan	4 th	1	1	4
12	2005	Chennai, India	6 th	1	0	5
13	2012	Melbourne, Australia	4 th	3	0	3
14	2014	Bhubaneswar, India	4 th	2	0	4
15	2016	London, UK	2 nd	2	2	2
16	2018	Breda, Netherlands	2 nd	2	3	1
		Total	2 Runners-up	27	16	48

The Champions trophy performance is depicted in Table 7 clearly indicating the slide and lacklustre performance in successive tournaments indicating the rot the game developed in the country.

National Tournaments and Grass Root Level Competitions

Many leading tournaments such as Beighton Cup, Agha Khan Cup, MCC Murugappa Gold Cup, Nehru Senior Hockey Tournament, Junior Nationals, and Senior Nationals are all losing shine and hardly attract any crowds. The only tournament that has some viewership and money for the players is the hockey league.

The new generation had growingly drifted away from hockey. States, such as Uttar Pradesh, which were once the bedrock of field hockey training in India, saw most training centres shutdown while also scrapping local annual hockey tournaments (Avasthi, 2015).

Many tournaments continue on natural surface at the grass root level which are sponsored by the local community and gathers local crowds cheering their respective teams. One gets to hear or see tempers rising in such tournaments and many end-up with rough play, lathi-charge and police intervention. Such is the state of the game now in many parts of north India where the game still draws enthusiasm.

Inter district tournaments, Rural Nationals, Inter-school tournaments, School Nationals, Junior Nationals; Inter-University tournaments are not in the priority calendar of Hockey India body. Sponsoring Indian university team for National, world university games and international tournaments is seldom heard of. Senior and Junior National tournaments formed the basis for attracting talent and sourcing players for the big teams in the domestic circuit and the national team. Slowly but sturdily over the last two decades most of these tournaments have neither been taken seriously or conducted with the purpose to build a viable pipeline of players and for scouting talent for the national teams.

Sports hostels were created to fully focus on grass root hockey providing them scholarship, accommodation, kit, equipment and coaching by NIS coaches. But other than few sports hostels

in the country the rest created a pool of talent desperately looking for jobs in Banks or government sector to settle down financially, since most of the players come from rural-poor social and economic background. Sports hostels did attract talent but did not provide a sturdy feed of national players owing to the coaching structure and career opportunities for the players. Lack of motivation to scale up performance in the absence of reward, recognition and employment opportunities resulted in this model losing its shine over the years.

In a country like ours, sports laurels don't result in economic freedom, job guarantee or pension and majority of the players coming from lower income group look for stable jobs. Sports such as Tennis, Cricket, and Badminton have managed to up the standards and also make a mark in the global scenario, whereas hockey performance has not been encouraging over the years, resulting in the youth taking to popular sports which are yielding better results.

Hockey India league had achieved exactly the opposite of what it intended to – not only was its road to success short-lived but additionally it also revealed blatant weaknesses within the sport, ranging from the lack of direction and internal synergy amongst the players to the continued lack of and poor state of existing infrastructure. The training for field hockey players in India required improvement at various levels – physical, technological and psychological (Ali, 2014).

A member of the Indian Hockey team at the 1984 Olympics, Shashwat Singh, said that he had watched all the HIL matches in 2012. All throughout the world, the game is now being played several notches up in terms of skills and speed, but in India it remains the same as it was during my time. He added that a lack of proper infrastructure was the major reason behind such dismal performance. The country has just one blue-pink turf matching international standards, located in Ludhiana; but even that wouldn't be sufficient to better the quality of the game (Kalia, 2012).

What Changed The Winning Trends For The Indian Team!

FIH world body, looked at every possibility to change the rules, surface, the equipment and ensured the European nations dominate the centre stage and in a structured manner demolished the dominance of Indian hockey. For the gains of the Europeans the Indian marvel was destroyed. Countries like India had various economic, social, political issues to confront. Investing in new artificial surfaces, providing expensive sporting gear, inability to provide modern training methods using Artificial Intelligence, Augmented reality, Virtual reality and Mixed reality put Indian hockey in the back burner and the dominance of European and Australian hockey teams began.

Inadequate Government focus, poor adaptation of technology tools for coaching (AI/AR/VR/MR), inability to develop newer skills by the players, lack of exposure to artificial surfaces at the grass root level all resulted in a steady downfall in performance of the team.

Sports medicine, physiotherapy, diet considerations, inadequate use of modern technology tools to assess skill gaps and coaching, NIS coaching course not aligned with modern trends, coaches from the by-gone era coaching players on artificial surfaces with no or little knowledge of modern hockey, officials and umpires lacking training in modern hockey rules and regulations, IHF administrators either politicians or players of yester years refusing to change with the times - all contributed to the downfall of the game in the country. Players lacking physical fitness, no scientific training or body building for modern hockey, resulting in many

young players suffering injuries and discontinuing the game during their prime. Playing hockey on both natural and artificial surfaces has also resulted in players carrying injuries and not being able to give their best.

Indiscipline amongst players, on and off the field, was a huge challenge. The Services' teams slowly shifted their focus from the game owing to lack of investment by the Services Sports Control Board to acquire new surfaces for training of players, Coaches development, sponsorship for participation in national and international tournaments for exposure had impact on the country's performance. Other government organisations such as the Indian Railways, Police Teams (BSF/CRPF) Indian Airlines (Air India) and Banks had the same fate once the surface/ ecosystem changed, everything in their world of hockey changed and is yet to be remedied even after four decades.

Governing Body of Hockey In India

The IHF (Indian Hockey Federation) was the governing body for the sport in the country. However, following allegations of highhandedness, corruption in 2008, the IHF was de-recognized by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA), with a new body Hockey India (HI) taking over the reins of managing Indian hockey. This was followed by court cases between the two (where HI was declared as the sole hockey body), and compromises; finally, Hockey India is responsible for hockey in India.

Before this fight broke out, the IHF had started the Premier Hockey League in 2005; 5 city-based franchises, international players made it quite popular. But the PHL was disbanded in 2008 (apparently in the aftermath of the corruption scandal at IHF). Then, during the fight between IHF & HI, IHF again started a tournament called World Series Hockey in 2012; a number of International & Indian players played for the teams in the league. HI reacted by targeting the Indian players who had participated in the tournament by removing them from the national squad. HI understood the importance and resumed the tournament the Hockey India League in 2013.

Every hockey fan always compares hockey to cricket now with cricket gaining popularity after India winning the world cup in cricket in England in 1983. IPL to Duleep trophy to Ranji trophy to every cricket tournament organised by BCCI has so much publicity, huge cash awards and player contracts yielding huge chunks of money that attracts youngsters to pursue the game for a career. If we look back over the last 15 years, Indian hockey had nearly 20 coaches. And these coaches were hired and fired according to the will of top officials of IHF. Coaching assignments were at the will of the IHF/HI masters and favours were given and taken for coaching assignments and result orientation was given a pass.

A Musical Chair of Head Coaches and Pathetic Approach by the Administration

With less than a year to go for the re-scheduled Tokyo Olympics, John India's high-performance director has cited health and personal reasons to resign. He had joined in 2016 and this was his second stint with Hockey India, having been with the team as a physiologist in 2011-12.

Table 8
ASSESSMENT OF COACHES PERFORMANCE SOURCE BG JOSHI-FIRSTPOST.COM

Sno	Years	Coach	Tournaments Played	Matches Played	Won	Draw	Lost	Best Result	Worst Result
			Foreign Coaches						
1	April 2019 till date	Graham Reid	Tokyo Olympics 2021						
2	Sep 2017 - May 2018	Sjoerd Marijne						HWL and Asian Cup	Failure in Aslan Shah
3	2013-2017	Roelant Oltmans	7	43	20	7	16	Silver in CT 2016, Bronze in HWL 2015	8th in OG 2016, 6th in HWL 2017
4	2014	Tery Walsh	4	24	11	3	10	Gold in AG 2014	9th in WC 2014
5	2011-2013	Michael Nobbs	5	30	10	7	13	Gold in ACT 2011	12th in OG 2012
6	2010	Jose Brasa	3	18	9	2	7	Silver in CWG 2010	8th in WC 2020
7	2015	Paul Van Ass	1	7	3	1	3	NIL	4th in HWL 2015
8	2004	Gerhard Rach	2	13	3	2	8	4th in CT 2004	7th in OG 2004
		Total	22	135	56	22	57	Silver in CT 2016	12th in OG 2012
				Indian Coaches					
9	1982	Balbir Singh Sr.	2	11	8	0	3	Bronze in CT 1982	NIL
10	1980-92	Balkishen Singh	4	25	14	4	7	Gold in OG 1980	7th in OG 1992
11	2002-2003	Rajinder Singh Sr.	4	22	11	2	9	Gold in AC 2003	NIL
12	1993-1994	Zafar Iqbal	2	11	7	2	2	Silver in AC93,AG94	NIL
13	1998	MK Kaushik	2	13	9	2	2	Gold in AG 1998	NIL
14	1986-1990	JL Sharma	2	12	6	2	4	Silver in AC 1990	4th in 1980 CT
15	1988-1990	MP Ganesh	5	29	9	4	16	Silver in AC 1989	10th in WC 1990
16	1994-2002	Cedric D'Souza	4	24	5	9	10	NIL	8th in OG 1996
17	1996-2006	V.Baskaran	6	38	16	6	16	Bronze in AC 1999	11th in WC 2006
18	1982-1986	Harmik Singh	4	24	12	2	10	Silver in AC 1982	12th in WC 1986
19	2009	Harendra Singh	1	4	2	1	1	NIL	5th in AC 2009
20	1976	Gurubux Singh	1	8	4	1	3	NIL	7th in OG 1976
21	2005-2006	Rajinder Singh Jr.	2	11	3	1	7	NIL	6th in CWG 2006
22	May 2018-March 2019	Harendra Singh						Asian games Bronze-defending champion	Failure in Asian Games and World Cup Quarterfinal loss
23	2007-2008	J. Carvalho	1	7	7	0	0	Gold in AC 2007	Failed to qualify OG-08
		Total	40	239	113	36	90	Gold in OG 1980	Not Qualified 2008 OG

Notes: Olympics(OG), World Cup(WC), Champions Trophy(CT), Hockey World League (SF and Finals rounds-HWL),Commonwealth Games(CWG), Asian Games(AG), Asia Cup(AC), Asian Champions Trophy(ACT) have been considered for performance review

Comparison of winning %: Foreign vs Indian Coaches: Analysis of Table 8
Foreign Coaches 41.50%

Indian Coaches 47.30%

Analysis indicates more medals by Indian coaches rather than foreign Coaches

1986 to 2017 worst phase of Indian Hockey The analysis of the Table 8 indicates that foreign coaches haven't done anything remarkable for Indian hockey in relation to the investments made and it would be better the foreign coaches spend time at the grass root level and on NIS coaches and leave the coaching of the Indian side to the home-grown talent. Point to ponder for Sports Authority of India and Hockey India folks.

NIS Coaching Program

The coaching program run by the National Institute of Sports has produced very few great coaches who could evolve into National team coaches. Most of them involved in the grass root level coaching have done a decent job at the university level, but the NIS program is found wanting in developing high profile coaches in large numbers. This experiment since the mid 80's has not reversed the trend in the country's performance in the international arena and hence IHF/HI continues to look for foreign coaches to manage the team which is a sad state of affair. One significant contribution of the NIS coaching program is that Korean coach Kim Sang-ryul, who had a NIS degree from Patiala, took Korea to the Olympic final and had a free run for 10 years before being replaced.

India's Poor performance in international sports events is a serious concern for all sports lovers. After every international event, be it Asian Games, the Commonwealth Games or Olympic Games, a lot of hue and cry is raised in Parliament, in the public and in the press. Why is it that, India which ranks third highest in trained scientific and technical manpower, next only to the USA and USSR, lags behind even small nations like the Germany or Japan. A vast country like India with a population of more than 100 crores, performs so poorly in international events, when small countries like South Korea with hardly a twentieth of India's population do much better (IFBDR 2002).

Lack of use of video analytics, AR, VR, MR, Artificial Intelligence in the coaching techniques has resulted in poor use of technology for training players and consequently Coaches use gut feel and intuition rather than analytics in the coaching program.

Changing Paradigm of the Sport

It was clear then, that synthetic pitches actually produce a whole new game, warranting a whole new approach and a whole new apparel, equipment - the good old mulberry shaft slowly gave way to graphite and fiberglass sticks; the goalkeepers donned a Star Wars look - helmet, smock, specialized kickers and lightweight pads. New-look hockey acquiesced to the demands of modern sport: Speed, stamina and strength replaced sublime skill, and, protective gear such as gum guards and face masks for field players too made their appearance. The ball changed from the good old seamed leather to a spheroid made of a mixture of rubber and plastic, dimpled to reduce considerably higher velocities than witnessed on natural grass. For the sleight-of-hand artistes, the new era held ominous forebodings (TOI 2010).

Astroturf was inducted in Hockey post-Montreal Olympics (1976). Indian Hockey has been struggling since then. The rules have been tinkered to suit the new playing conditions and the introduction of artificial surface has changed the way the game was played earlier. Umpiring standards have improved substantially with the aid of technology and umpires coaching. Video

assessments of decisions, training of umpires has raised the bar. Bulk of the interpretation of the rules is suited to European style of hockey.

In order to make hockey faster and more attacking, the International Hockey Federation (FIH) has affected two major rule changes, including the abolition of long corners, which became effective from January 1, 2015 (The Hindu 2014).

The change in the penalty corner, long corner, dangerous play, substitution rules, penalty shootout and duration of the game have all impacted the flow of the game. Multiple changes in quick succession have uprooted the sub continental flavour of the game. The surface has drastically altered the speed, skill sets and formation of play not to the advantage of the teams of the sub-continent. The cost of playing equipment's, hockey stick, the ball etc., has rendered it out of reach of the common player in the rural scene.

Lack of modern coaching, artificial surfaces, flood lights, sponsorship for the playing kits and career opportunity has made hockey not so attractive over the years. Majority of the players donning the national colours came from the Services, Railways, and Police teams including BSF, CRPF and Indian Airlines (Air India) besides Banks, Universities and other leading Clubs. With the government and defence sector not enhancing the infrastructure for the sport to flourish, unable to provide jobs in the desired numbers, which has had a substantial impact on the sport.

Discipline of Players and Coaches

As per the code of conduct document published by the HI for the Hockey league the responsibility of the Members of Hockey India (2019) whose teams are participating to instruct their players and team officials as to the provisions of this Code of Conduct. All Members of Hockey India shall share joint and several liabilities with their players and team officials should breaches of the Hockey India Statutes, Rules and Regulations occur. (Hockey India 2020). However, we seldom see coaches, managers and other stake holders penalised let alone players who get away quite often in the domestic tournaments.

Serious indiscipline issues due to unruly player behaviour, riot on the field in domestic tournaments have seriously dented the sport and the primary cause for the decay. The administration of the support by IHF and HI is far from desirable with politicians or unconnected individuals holding on to posts resulting in lack of focus and poor governance. This has resulted in coaches, officials and players having a free run and not being regulated according to the rules and spirit of the game. Many untoward incidence involving players, umpires and officials on the field continues to haunt the domestic circuit with no conclusive approach of governance by the administrative body to prevent such recurrences. Players man handling umpires or arguing or demonstrating vague gestures is still a common site in domestic tournaments, which needs to be dealt with seriously and adequate sensitivity training is required on an ongoing basis at the grass root levels to avoid any serious recurrence of the Asia Cup episode in the international arena.

On reviewing the Hockey India disciplinary communication as on 19.10.2020, one gathers from the master list rampant indiscipline across the cadre of sportsmen in the country and the efforts being taken by the federation to tackle this menace (Hockey India 2020).

Sponsorship of Events

February 2014 after a month-long Hockey India League (HIL) had concluded and investor sentiments were at an all-time low. There were talks of stakeholders threatening to pull out of the league. Taking the phenomenal success of the Indian Premier League (IPL) as an inspiration

to build its own brand image, the HIL aimed at being the next big thing in the Indian sports arena (Barua, 2015).

The strong transformation in television viewership patterns across Indian households, coupled with major socio-economic and lifestyle changes influenced the youth to take to cricket, tennis, badminton, golf and other sports for pursuing their interests.

Hockey India league's investors lost more than 18 million euros in the first edition. Corporate sponsors were pulling out of the league, and it was almost certain that the league would hardly find any takers the following year, it was seemingly too late to do any kind of damage control for the maiden season of the HIL. Should the HIL take steps to revitalise the sport or let it fall away into oblivion? How could the HIL accomplish a revival? (Bikramjit et. al., 2014b).

Sponsorship of the game had been dismal until the Orissa government decided to promote the sport which has made some impact on the revenue, viewership, and improvement in the standard of the game and earnings for the players. The hockey league in India involving foreign players has also added to the impetus and resurgence. The recent trends of corporates pitching in to support the sport have helped the cause. However, the grass root hockey has not improved pan India and the sport is now restricted to eight or ten centres and the rest awfully falling short in the standards. Bulk of the advertising, sponsorship has been towards cricket, badminton, tennis etc leaving very little for hockey. Very few private sector companies have a hockey team fielded in the national levels and is surely an indication of the private partnership in the development of the game.

Cricket and Hockey may be called two of India's most coveted and heralded sports. While the former is nothing short of a religion, the latter of this game is played by legends such as Dhyan Chand. A very curious question arises out of the wildly different trajectories exhibited by these sports – cricket – a game given to us by our colonial masters – never ceases to be immensely popular, while hockey – the game we taught the world to play with elegance – languishes in mediocrity on the popularity scale. In a country with a population of over a billion, the market for sports is enormous, which necessitates a major role to the amount of money pumped into a sport (Naman, 2016).

Umpiring Standards

Poor training or lack of use of video analytics, modern technology to train umpires has rendered them ineffective in the modern hockey arena. The speed of the game and constant change in rules has made umpires susceptible to errors on the field. Use of modern technology for training would help raise the umpiring standards.

The umpiring standards in the country never were in the primary focus or agenda for many years. Adapting to new rules, interpretation as desired by the FIH and investment in identifying talent for umpiring, training and development was a low priority. Hardly any international umpires from India resulted in lack of proper orientation of players in the domestic circuit as regards rules and fair play.

Players were caught on the wrong foot in international tournaments ending up arguing with umpires and picking up cards and suspension which was a routine affair. Adding salt to injury was when a Japanese umpire declaring a goal (dangerous play - an alleged wrong decision) in the Asia cup finals at Dhaka, Bangladesh in 1985 between India and Pakistan, resulted in altercation and many Indian players were suspended for 5 years including some banned for life. This was a

sad day in the history of hockey in our country. We lost top class players from the scene and without bench strength it took 5-8 years to recover to bring talent back into the national squad. The IHF without any say fell in the hands of the FIH which had a biased approach. Neither did the government of the day take cognizance of this and lobby to restore parity, lead to the downfall of hockey in the country.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Setting up highly equipped medical and sports therapy centres in all leading hockey playing destinations to cater to sport related injuries and rehabilitation is required for a focused approach on high performance, development and recovery of players from wear and tear owing to excessive exposure to artificial surfaces. Nearly 208 scientific studies covering the fields of biochemistry, physiology, sport injuries, psychology and tactics were found, which were published within the last 50 years (from 1960 to 2010). Despite the popularity of field hockey and its status as an Olympic sport, the number of scientific studies which focused on field hockey was much smaller when compared to the amount of publications on other team sports, such as soccer, basketball, or baseball.

Especially at the elite level, the injury rate appears to be high. During major international hockey tournaments in 2013, an average of 29.1 injuries per 1000 match-hours and 48.3 injuries per 1000 match-hours were registered in women and men, respectively. During the London Summer Olympic Games 2012, 17% of all field hockey players sustained an injury. While injury data from tournaments may provide valuable information on injuries in elite field hockey, the brief follow-up period in such tournaments may result in a skewed estimation of the injury problem. Retrospective data have shown that 74% of players have sustained at least 1 acute injury during their career.

Field hockey is a team sport with a high amount of running, stepping manoeuvres and player/material contact. Consequently, it can be expected that injury risk is high. Yet, little is known about injuries in this sport monitoring field hockey injuries: the first step for prevention (Saulo et al. 2017).

Inducting sports medicine, sports management in curriculum and syllabus at under graduate level is also an initiative the ministry of sports and education needs to take. Proactive and positive journalism with a constructive role will help the sport regain its rightful position with adequate publicity and review for the public to be kept abreast of the developments.

Sports research in field hockey is dismal in India. Looking at the advancements in the game research indicates that exercise intensity in hockey can be gauged from a motion analysis of match play. This analysis can be used to highlight the frequency and level of activity cycles during games and the recovery periods punctuating the bouts of physical activity. In the field hockey game, the duration of the game and the distance run by field hockey players demand a high aerobic contribution to the energy supply. Field hockey also involves short, more intense periods of running which required running greater distances in the game might use equal proportions of aerobic and anaerobic energy.

We need to invest in research in Game motion analysis, player motion analysis and skill development to excel in the game.

For coach's enormous research insights are required to pursue their strategy as indicated in the study of David et al., (2012) the exercise intensity in hockey can be gauged from a motion analysis of match play. This analysis can be used to highlight the frequency and level of activity cycles during games and the recovery periods punctuating the bouts of physical activity. In the

field hockey game, the duration of the game and the distance run by field hockey players demand a high aerobic contribution to the energy supply. Field hockey also involves short, more intense periods of running which required running greater distances in the game might use equal proportions of aerobic and anaerobic energy (David, et al. 2012).

Monitoring stick speed and ball control in field hockey drills using a stick-mounted inertial accelerometer

Public- private partnership in the promotion of the game is required in our country to balance the social, cultural and sports objectives and fills the gaps, the need for a lot of funds and expert advice in management of the game, to deal with strategies and new generation technologies for promoting the game at a national level.

The NIS coaches have to work at the grass root level with the help of the foreign coaches. The national team must be managed by coaches who understand the players psyche and communicate in the language understood by them. Each state government will have to sponsor one national tournament and the player's remuneration and career aspirations addressed by local state governments, to ensure financial stability of players pursuing the sport.

Having a sizeable number of artificial pitches in the rural areas in popular hockey destinations is a pre-requisite to raise the bar of grass root hockey which is the feeder to the national team. Services sports control board and Railway sports boards will have to commit to this cause if India has to come back to the winning streak.

Blatant misuse of powers by sports administrators by letting over age player's play in Sub-Junior and Junior tournaments, letting spent forces continue in the game and not paving way for youngsters are serious issues that need to be addressed. Human rights violations, respecting diversity especially with a large chunk of players coming from tribal backgrounds, misbehaviour by coaches, managers and administrators to be dealt with a severe hand will enhance the respectability of the sport and set an example for the players to follow suit.

Health and hygiene of players in sports hostels needs emphasis since many players are coming from rural background and need to be handheld to remain healthy, fit and agile during the playing days. Acclimatisation to artificial surfaces, climatic conditions, food habits and behaviour- mannerisms need to be developed to be in sync with the other international teams.

Multiple hockey associations in states must collaborate and operate under a single umbrella and state associations focussing on running bars, restaurants and other commercial activities must be immediately shut so as to bring focus on the game rather than promoting other commercial activities in the name of Hockey. This has made things worse for the game where alcohol and other addictions have ruined talent. Sale of liquor and tobacco/Cigars inside stadium premises must be banned. Limiting the maximum of tenure i.e., three years for any sports administrator to be in the helm of affairs is mandatory to prevent powerful persons from using the association for their personal purposes and ignoring the primary agenda of development of the sport and all its stake holders.

Qualitative and quantitative performance parameters of all administrators must be evaluated and shared in public for review and continuance in office which must be regulated by the government and sports authority of India. All administrators of the sports must possess some standard qualification with connection to the sport and have a decent standing in the society. Must live for hockey and not on hockey as the saying goes!

Players association must be set up for transparency, collective bargaining and for players voice to be heard. Similarly, coaches appointed for national and state teams should be based on certain parameters, performance review tournament wise against pre-set targets including, decent

remuneration followed by three to five years stints must be guaranteed to make sense of their engagement, providing stability and demanding results.

Grass root coaches to be trained by international players and foreign coaches and are required to be developed for modern hockey. Respective state governments must empanel its veterans and drive the development agenda with the help of young coaches. Sports hostel talent must be given a clear road map towards performance and consequent economic benefits if players have to stay the course and deliver superior performance in national and international tournaments. All appointments in government jobs must be temporary during the playing days and based on contributions must get regularised into permanent appointment with social security benefits, housing benefits once they retire from the sport. Mandating such measures will ensure players to remain connected with the game as officials, coaches, administrators or umpires and remain focused on the game even after retirement, since they are beneficiaries of government jobs and social security benefits.

Investment in training of umpires by leading international umpires at the grassroots level will improve umpiring standards and understanding of the rules and their interpretation. This will go a long way in improving the discipline of players and their adherence to the rules of the game. The government of India must mandate that sports bodies in the country be managed by professionals with knowledge of the sport to manage associations, instead of leaving it to politicians or veteran players with ulterior motives managing the affairs of the game.

Organising international hockey tournaments in grass or gravel surfaces with the relevant rules just like the French tennis open tournament that still persists with the clay surface is a good example why India must not shy away from the old surface and old rules to dominate the sport with skill and technique that was mesmerising the world. We need to play to our strengths and get the world to align when we have shown we can raise the sponsorship levels and get large crowds to watch matches live. Please visit the FIH web site Indian sponsors are keeping world hockey alive but India continues to languish what a dichotomy! (FIH 2020).

It is for India and the subcontinent to set the trend of alternative surfaces for tournaments, while we continue to improve our skills and performance to meet the standards of the International tournaments such as Olympics and World cup. The domination of the Europeans in the FIH must end to have a level playing field for which the government of the day needs to play its card to restore the glorious past of India hockey. The Asian hockey federation has to play its part to restore the dominance of the Asian power horses and needs to secure its interests rather than being a puppet in the hands of the FIH. It goes without saying, currently sizeable sponsorship revenue is coming from Indian companies.

How much longer do we have to wait to see the Indian players on the Olympic winner's podium. It is high time now or never!

Questions from the Case Study

1. What could be attributed to the downfall of Indian Hockey?
2. What circumstances led to the poor performance and decline of performance?
3. Validate the approach of the IHF/HI in changing coaches regularly?
4. Umpiring standards are directly proportional to the standard of the game?
5. Artificial surface, new equipment and rules changed the dynamics of the game and India has not adapted well to modern hockey? Please discuss
6. Discipline of players is deteriorating due to the lack of positive results and poor umpiring standards?
7. Grass root hockey is failing owing to lack of exposure, investments and motivation?

8. NIS Coaching program is generating salaried coaches with inadequate skills and competencies in relation to modern hockey? Please discuss
9. Retired players not being developed to be Coaches or administrators could be the cause of the downfall of the sport?
10. How can the sport be brought back in India to the winning ways in the Olympics?
11. Foreign Coaches deployment at the grass root level to improve the standards is a viable option?
12. Can the government play a role in bringing the sport back in to mainstream?
13. Is it fair for India to insist in going back in time and revisit the changes in the eco-system and revise the format and the rules of the game?
14. Should India organise international tournaments in Natural surfaces and bring the game back to its roots?
15. Who do you think should administer the sport in India, Professionals, the players or politicians/businessmen?

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