

Press Release

Haryana beat Jharkhand to win Gold in U-21 Girls hockey; Punjab third at Khelo India Youth Games

Pune, 20 January: Playing to a plan, fast and furious Haryana outplayed Jharkhand 3-0 to win the U-21 Girls Hockey title and Gold in the Khelo India Youth Games at the NDA complex here on Sunday. Earlier Punjab beat Odisha 2-1 for the third place.

Haryana, who made all four hockey finals and won three of them - Girls U-21, U-17 and Boys U-17, while finishing runner-up in Boys U-21. The Boys' events were held in Mumbai, while the Girls played in Pune.

Haryana, who led 2-0 at half time, attacked well and defended their citadel efficiently giving Jharkhand no chance to create any serious problem from them. Yet, Jharkhand fought till the end of the final.

Haryana's wingers and mid-fielders combined well and their strikers always looked dangerous.

The winners took the lead in the 10th minute when Mahima Chowdhary broke the defensive cordon to get a shot that gave no chance to goal keeper Anjali Binjhia (1-0).

Seven minutes before the second half, Haryana struck again and this time Amandeep Kaur made a solo run from the left and with a super reverse shot beat the onrushing goalkeeper to send the ball into the cave (2-0).

Haryana raised their tally in the fifth minute of the second half with Amrinder Kaur scoring the third goal to virtually seal the final in her team's favour.

Jharkhand had their chances but Anima Tiru Sushma Kumari and Pramila Soreng were found wanting and at the end the deserving team won the title.

Earlier for the third place match, riding on striker Kajal's twin strike Punjab staged a fine comeback to beat Odisha 2-1 to win the bronze and in the process took revenge of their team's defeat in the Under-17 section. Odisha had beaten Punjab in the third place match of U-17 competition a day earlier.

This morning it looked as if Odisha girls would repeat their younger team's effort as they took the lead in the 18th minute through Rojita Kujur, who intercepted a cross and dribbled past couple of defenders to shot home (1-0).

The lead lasted barely ten minutes as Punjab mounted a counter attack and put the Odisha defence under pressure. Taking advantage of the panic in the rival ranks, Kajal latched on to a loose ball and cut through few defenders to drive home the equaliser (1-1).

Nine minutes before the final whistle, Punjab midfielders created an opening and unmarked Kajal took advantage of that to push the ball home and that turned out to be the winner (2-1).

Results:

Girls U-21: Final: Haryana beat Jharkhand 3-0 (Mahima Chowdhary, Amandeep Kaur, Amrinder Kaur)

Bronze medal play-off: Punjab beat Odisha 2-1 Kajal (2) for Punjab, Rojita Kujur (one) for Odisha