

Press Release

Hockey veterans blown away by KIYG performances

Pune, January 20: The hockey competition at the just-concluded Khelo India Youth Games 2019 here demonstrated that the dynamics of the sport in India have changed, and it is no longer remains confined to few States. Haryana teams, both girls and boys, and sides like Jharkhand, Odisha and Mizoram proved that with exposure, training and proper coaching they found results.

“Events like KIYG can be a windfall for the sport and its talented players,” said former India hockey coach Baldev Singh. The veteran was happy with the showing of Haryana girls, many of whom he has trained at Shahbad. He also praised the manner in which the Jharkhand and Odisha teams had performed here.

“These youngsters are hungry, they want to prove themselves. You just see their body language, their joy and sorrow when they win or lose. It tells you a lot. I have represented India and coached teams, but these youngsters amaze me. They just don’t want to play to get certificates. They want to excel. It is time for the concerned to take advantage of this pool of talent,” he said.

“I am happy with the girls, they come from conservative societies and backward areas and they want to do something bigger on their own. My experience with the Haryana girls has been an eye-opener,” he said. The girls from the North-Eastern States are no longer awe-struck on the big stage, and that itself us a big achievement, he felt.

“KIYG provides the players a good platform. They are being treated like stars, they are being looked after well, they have been provided great kits and transport by the authorities and though these things on the face of it, these things look small, they play an important role in boosting the self-esteem of a player,” Baldev said.

Former India captain and Olympian Zafar Iqbal, who was here as a Government observer, also lavished praise on the girls’ teams.

“I am very optimistic about the future of the game, provided the talent is spotted and given exposure like here. Players are treated the way they should be. I am impressed with Jharkhand and, Odisha girls.

Haryana, Punjab are developed States, so they were expected to do well. KIYG is laying the foundation of a bright and sporting India at the grass-root level. I am returning very impressed,” Zafar Iqbal said