

Birendra Lakra to replace injured Varun Kumar in the Indian Men's Hockey Team for FIH Olympic Qualifiers

Bhubaneswar, 30 October 2019: Ahead of the Indian Men's Team crucial FIH Olympic Qualifier matches against Russia on 1 and 2 November 2019 here at the Kalinga Hockey Stadium, Hockey India announced the replacement of defender-dragflicker Varun Kumar who sustained an injury on his shoulder and right bicep.

He will now be replaced by experienced defender Birender Lakra. "Varun Kumar injured his shoulder and right bicep on Monday while training. He has been receiving treatment since then but unfortunately it has not shown enough signs of improvement," explained Graham Reid, Chief Coach, Indian Men's Hockey Team.

He further added, "Following the advice from our medical staff who have suggested that he requires rest for a few weeks before he returns to action. Hence, we have decided to replace him with Birendra Lakra, a class defender with over 170 International Caps. He is very experienced and knows well the conditions in Bhubaneswar and is ready to play."

Indian Men's Team will take on Russia at 2000 hours at the Kalinga Stadium on 1 November and 2 November while the Indian Women's Team will take on USA at 1800 hours.

The matches will be telecast live on Star Sports 1 and Star Sports 1 HD.

For more images of the Indian Hockey Teams, click:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=1bDB03H2nf6CtduE8HHEMTCYII2-ufiC>

HOCKEY INDIA TEAM PARTNERS

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About HOCKEY INDIA

HOCKEY INDIA (HI) is the governing body with exclusive mandate to direct and conduct all activities for both men and women's hockey in India. It is recognized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, Govt. of India as the sole body responsible towards promoting Hockey in India.

Headquartered in New Delhi, Hockey India was established on 20th May, 2009 and is affiliated to the International Hockey Federation (FIH), the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) and Asian Hockey Federation (AHF).

Committed to the development of Hockey in the country, Hockey India with the assistance of Sports Authority of India and Department of Sports, Government of India, trains players at sub-junior, junior and senior level. The governing body engages in Coaching the coaches with International Standard certification programs, educates and equips technical officials and umpires to find a foothold in international arena, provides world-class infrastructure and International exposure for the players besides regular international competition. Hockey India has also pioneered in bringing top International hockey events to India such as the FIH Men's World Cup in 2010 and 2018, FIH Champions Trophy in 2014, FIH Junior Men's World Cup in 2016, FIH Hockey World League Final in 2017. With its vision to popularize the game and constantly promote it, Hockey India is dedicated to getting our national team(both men and women) into the top three in the world.

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About ODISHA

Odisha - the Eastern State of India - is known for its love for Hockey. The State successfully hosted the Odisha Hockey Men's World Cup Bhubaneswar 2018 and hosted the FIH Men's Series Finals Bhubaneswar Odisha 2019 in June. Odisha has previously hosted the Champions Trophy 2014 and the Odisha Men's Hockey World League Final Bhubaneswar 2017. Kalinga Lancers, the team owned by the State, is the winners in the Hockey India League 2017. Taking a step further towards realising the dream of restoring the glory of Indian Hockey at the global level, the State is sponsoring the Indian Hockey Teams till 2023

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