



"Atmosphere & energy you get from fans is what we all play for," states Indian Men's Hockey Team Defender Harmanpreet Singh

~ On the three year anniversary of the Odisha Men's Hockey World League Final Bhubaneswar 2017, the 24-year-old drag-flicker recalled fond memories of his team's Bronze Medal win at the tournament which was played under the electric atmosphere of the Kalinga Stadium ~

Bengaluru, 01 December 2020: Three years ago, on this same day, the Indian Men's Hockey Team took to the field at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar for their opening match of the Odisha Men's Hockey World League Final 2017 against eventual winners Australia in a match which ended all square at 1-1. It was a tournament which saw Indian Defender Harmanpreet Singh stake his claim in the team, with some fine performances as India claimed a Bronze Medal in front of their home support.

"It was definitely one of the biggest tournaments for me, and especially with the Senior Team. Having won the FIH Junior Men's World Cup in 2016, the Odisha Men's Hockey World League Final 2017 gave me the chance to experience the thrills of playing the highest form of hockey at the grandest of stages," expressed Harmanpreet.

"We did not have the best of starts in our Pool matches, but I think we finished the tournament really strongly. However, what I really learned from that tournament was the fact that if you keep pushing hard, you'll eventually achieve your goals, regardless of which or how big an opponent you're facing,"

added the drag-flicker, whose team lost 2-3 to England, 0-2 to Germany after their first Pool match against Australia.

The 24-year-old was India's joint highest scorer in the tournament along with fellow drag-flicker Rupinder Pal Singh with two goals each, and believes playing with the veteran has helped him immensely in his career. "I've always looked up to Rupinder because when I was a Junior boy, he was always putting in exceptional performances on the field. So to have had the chance to practice, play and share the same room with him, has been an honour for me. I've learned a lot from my interactions with him, and I hope we can both continue to play well for the team going forward," said Harmanpreet.

Harmanpreet also scored the winner in the Bronze Medal match against Germany as he struck from a Penalty Corner after Mark Appel had equalized for the Germans, cancelling out SV Sunil's opener. The Defender recalls the moment, "I think it was a great moment because the entire Kalinga Stadium erupted and was on their feet with joy. There are moments in your career you always remember and recall very fondly, and it is definitely one of my best moments in the Indian shirt - and it meant more because it was my first major Medal with the Senior Team," stated Harmanpreet.

"I believe having that home crowd at the Kalinga Stadium really gave us a boost, and it has always carried on - even at all the tournaments we've played there since then, it has to be my favourite stadium to play in. I hope we can get back on the field as soon as possible, and welcome back fans inside the stadium. That atmosphere and the energy you get from your fans is what we all play for," signed off Harmanpreet.

Disclaimer: All images were taken before March 2020.

For more images of the Indian Hockey Teams, click: <https://drive.google.com/open?id=1bDB03H2nf6CtdueE8HHEMTCYII2-ufiC>

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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 also the FIH Men's Series Finals Bhubaneswar Odisha 2019. 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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