



FAIR PLAY

FOOTBALL PLAYERS ASSOCIATION OF INDIA'S MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

May 2011



PRESIDENT'S NOTE

It has been an eventful period for football in India. The I-League is in its final phase and the I-League 2nd division just finished. It was my first time playing in the I-League 2nd division and it seemed quite competitive. It was a very close finish with the qualifying teams being decided only in the final round. Congratulations to Shillong Lajong FC and Sporting Clube de Goa for making it back to the I-League. I wish them the very best in their future endeavours.

I have seldom seen such intense competition in the I-League as well. With one gameweek to go, it looks like Salgaocar have the upper hand over its compe-

OBITUARY



FPAI mourns the sudden demise of Arun Kumar. we would like to convey our deepest condolences lie with his family.

UNCERTAINTY OF SPORT

tititors - East Bengal, Churchill and Dempo. East Bengal's hopes of a title were severely dented after their loss against Churchill. The relegation battle is also tight with HAL, Air India, ONGC and JCT fighting for survival. It is also amazing to see how Odafa still manages to stay top of the goalscorers list, but he is closely followed by his fellow goan rivals - Ranty Martins and Ryuji Sueoka.

Indian football also had its lows during this period. Firstly I would like to express my deepest condolences to the family members of Arun Kumar. Arun's untimely death really shocked us all. The promising goalkeeper who represented HAL was only 24 when he suffered the cardiac arrest that put an end to a promising career as well as his life.

Bob Houghton's position as Head Coach was under heavy debate over the past few months and recently he announced his retirement from the position. His coaching stint that lasted for about 5 years saw quite a lot of success. He took us to the AFC Asian Cup after 27 years and we won several trophies under him. He was a great coach and a fantastic motivator. I would like to thank him, on behalf of all those who have been

under him, for all his efforts. All the Best Bob Houghton for your future endeavours! (You would also find an article written by him in this edition. Make sure you go through it.) I would also like to congratulate Armando Colaco for being appointed as the new head coach for the senior national team. Best of Luck in your endeavours!

The season is almost coming to an end for this year. I hope all of you had a good season. I would like to apprise you about few of our activities. We are going to host the annual IT Futsal at Kolkata in the first week of July. There will be attractive prizes for the participants (last year Deepak Mondal won a LCD T.V!). We hope that you'll will come out and participate. Please do contact the association if you are interested in doing so.

If you also interested to host football camps in your native areas, FPAI is more than willing to assist you in hosting the camp. Last year, we assisted Gouramangi in his camp at Manipur and we are hopefully that more of you would take up such initiatives.

Lastly, I would like to wish you'll a restful off-season. Do stay in touch with the game and keep fit.

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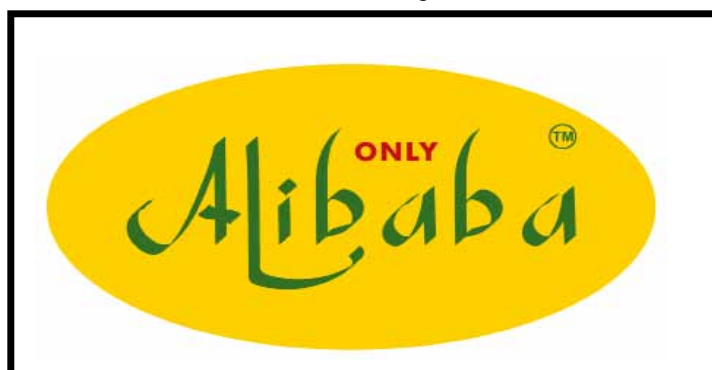
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FOOTBALL ACTION THIS MONTH:

- Congratulations to Shillong Lajong FC for winning the I-League 2nd division and getting promoted. Sporting Clube de Goa also managed to regain their position in next year's I-League
- Team India played in the Olympic qualifiers and beat Myanmar 2-1 to go through to the next stage.

NEXT ISSUE :

- Finals phase in the I-League
- I-League 2nd division report
- Santosh Trophy Updates
- Decisions from AIFF Executive Committee Meeting
- Asia Congress in Jakarta
- More interviews
- FPAI Launches new Merchandise



STARTED AS A STRIKER



SUBHASISH ROY CHOWDHURY

An enigmatic and ever improving goalkeeper who has had a successful stint with Mahindra United, winning several trophies. The current Dempo goalkeeper is hungry for more success. He speaks to FPAI about his life through football.

Q : What made you develop as a goalkeeper and not a striker or any other position?

Subhasish : I actually started playing football as a striker for my neighborhood coaching centers. It is quite a story how I became a goalkeeper. It was at a match when we had no goalkeeper and unfortunately I was made to be the guinea pig. Luckily for my team I performed pretty well in my new position. My coaches also said I could do well as a goalkeeper because of my height and physique and that was the end of my striking career and the beginning of my goalkeeping career.

Q : How did TFA shape you as a player?

Subhasish : One has to get selected for the TFA and it was not an easy feat considering the large number of goalkeepers, especially from West Bengal. I was chosen for my performance in the Subroto Cup where I had won the best goalkeeper award. I grew as a player while I moved up the ranks playing for the U-16, U-19 and U-23 team. It is probably a premier center

for aspiring footballers and one is guaranteed to get into a top club in India after coming out from there.

Q : They say that you rose to prominence when you first started playing for East Bengal, do you think it is true and why?

Subhasish : Well, I do not think so. I was not the first team goalkeeper and there were players like Sangram Mukherjee. I just kept doing my thing and tried to improve myself while I was at East Bengal.

Q : On a very neutral note who do you think is one of the best strikers, who in a game of football troubled you the most and why?

Subhasish : I think it is definitely Bhaichung Bhutia for me. He has an incredible presence in the box and his hunger for goals was something really difficult to suppress. He always managed to be at the right place at the right time. Bhaichung Bhai always made life hell for a goalie with his sharpness and keenness to be on the ball.

Q : You were very much a part of the Indian national team that won the AFC Challenge Cup in 2008, what were your feelings at that point of time?

Subhasish : The Indian team then was in very good shape. We were playing well and were confident of results. The team also at that point of time had developed an excellent sense of understanding with each other. This really helped our game and I feel proud of our achievements.

Q : After playing for Mahindra United for four years, how difficult was it for you to digest the fact that the club was dissolved?

Subhasish : The news of Mahindra United being disbanded came as a huge shock to us and we were distraught. It hurt

a lot, especially because I was there for five years and had won several trophies together. It was a very good club and had very good system in place. The management and the coaching staff were good and made every effort to keep the team together.

Q : Other than football, what are the other activities or hobbies that you have that keep you busy?

Subhasish : I really like to dance. That apart I generally follow a lot of sports but I have a soft corner for Badminton.

Q : What are your comments about the growth and development of Indian football?

Subhasish : Indian football has developed a lot in the recent past. The results speak are testimony to it. We were lucky to have a good coach to guide us. He motivated the players well and got the best out of us. The AIFF also helped us out as much as possible. They sent us

to places with excellent training facilities and tried to ensure that we receive the best facilities possible. No single person can be given credit but all this is a collective effort. Seeing the trends, Indian football can grow further.

Q : Which Goalkeeper do you admire and why?

Subhasish : I have been a big fan of Fabien Barthez. I really liked the way he used to act as another defender and was quite skillful with the ball at his feet. I am also a great admirer of Indian keeper, Sandip Nandy.

Q : What do you have to say about the FPAI?

Subhasish : FPAI has done good work in the past and the way it's going, it should really help Indian football improve. We trust Bhaichung Bhai to help Indian football through this association and I am sure he will not disappoint.



WILL NOT FORGET WINNING THE LG CUP



ABHISHEK YADAV

A footballer that also holds a post graduate diploma in Political Science, something rare in Indian football. Being a footballer was his destiny. Abhishek Yadav, Vice President of FPAI speaks to us about football and more.

Q : Coming from a good family background and being a graduate with other career options, how and why did you choose football?

Abhishek : It was very unplanned. I never thought of getting into professional football until much later in my life. I started playing football when I was in school. I had taken up Science and very few would have thought I could become a footballer. Though, I had taken up science and also got a post graduate degree in political science, I was never inclined to become a doctor or engineer. My father was also into sports and all of these pushed me into football.

Q : To you, how important is the role played by education in football?

Abhishek : I feel education is really important, not only in football but for any aspect. For football, it can make the players mind sharper and increase awareness. More importantly education can help a player to have a career after football. A player can choose to get into football administration. Education is also important nowadays even if some player wants to become a coach.

Q : With Mahindra United

you have won all the major trophies possible at the Club level, which one do you cherish the most and why?

Abhishek : It is really difficult to single one achievement out. But winning the I-League would be the most memorable. We were trying for a long time to win the league and when it came it was excellent for Mahindra United. We even qualified for the AFC Cup. I feel proud to be part of the Mahindra United team that achieved so much. I have fond memories of my time at Mahindra and it is sad that they are not involved with professional football anymore. They were a great club to be a part of.

Q : You scored the winning goal against Vietnam in the finals of the LG Cup which India's first victory in 28 years on foreign soil. How was the feeling?

Abhishek : The feeling is difficult to describe in words. As it is, I was very ecstatic to be part of the senior National team. This was my first time wearing the National Jersey as I had never played for India at the junior levels. A direct call up was more than I could dream off, let alone being in the Starting XI. Scoring the winning goal put me over the moon and at that time I had no idea, that I helped India win a trophy on foreign soil after 28 years.

Q : You are known for your aerial ability? Are you proud of it?

Abhishek : I feel that there are many players who are better than me. My height does give me an advantage. The fact that I have scored so many goals using my head may be the reason why people say so, but I really feel that I am not the best around

Q : Which coach would you credit the most for making the player you are today?

Abhishek : I have been lucky to be under good coaches all my playing career. My first coach was Adib Kenkre who introduced me into football. I have



also played under coaches like Harish Rao (Mahindra United) who has really motivated me. National team coaches Stephen Constantine and Bob Houghton have also positively influenced my game and has brought out the best in me.

Q : You have been part of quite a few National camps, which one has been the most memorable yet?

Abhishek : Again, it would be very difficult to single out any one camp. All of them have been very memorable and ones that will be cherished throughout my life. In the last 4 years we have become like a family and I really enjoyed playing football with them.

Q : People say you can play in almost all the positions on a football field. Where are you most comfortable playing?

Abhishek : Striking is my most preferred option. I feel most comfortable playing upfront.

Q : From the present crop of junior boys, who do you think can make a real impact on Indian football and why?

Abhishek : There are quite a few who have immense potential. Jeje and Raju Gaekwad, to name a few, have shown great ability to play good football. There is Anas in my team who has impressed and deserves a national team call up. The next generation is really talented and I hope they can do the country proud. I wish them luck for their endeavours.

Q : What suggestions do you have for the FPAI?

Abhishek : We are there to help the players in whichever way possible. I would like to remind the players that this association is for them. It is good to have Bhaichung to have as President as he is a very good role model. We are here for any sort of professional advice.

" I HAVE VERY **GOOD MEMORIES** "

ROBERT HOUGHTON



I am pleased to be permitted to use the FPAI newsletter to thank the members of this organisation who have played for me over the past 5 years. It has been an enjoyable experience for me thanks to the response from the players I have selected and the success we achieved.

I have very good memories to take with me from India: the Nehru Cup victory in 2007, the AFC Challenge Cup win in 2008, the Nehru Cup victory in 2009 and our appearance in the Asian Cup Finals in 2011. It would be unfair to single out individuals because football is a team game and the strength of our team was our TEAM. For this Bhaichung should take great credit for being such a professional and inspirational leader in the

group. But I would like to remember one or two special moments, starting with Ajayans goal against Syria in the 2007 Nehru Cup. We were down 1-3 at the Ambedkar Stadium and I was interested to see how much character the team had to fight it out in front of our home crowd. That goal reduced the deficit to 3-2 and for the next 15 minutes we totally dominated the game and came very close to equalising in the last minute through Steven Dias. This strong fight back laid the foundations for our Final victory against the same opponents 7 days later. NP Pradeep scored the winning goal after great play from Chhetri and Bhaichung to produce a victory that would give our players real confidence and belief for the next few years.

(I have a photo of Pradeeps goal on my office wall at home in Cape Town).

The second memory is of course our victory in the AFC Challenge Cup that qualified us to the finals of the Asian Cup for the first time in 24 years.

The semi final was played in Hyderabad in the monsoon of 2008. Chhetri scored a very brave header in the second half, again after great work from Bhaichung. Sunil was fretting at half time that he had not scored a goal in the competition and had missed a good chance in the first half, but he went out and scored the winner and then a hat trick in the final. This shows that goal scorers always score goals if you stick with them.

The final was switched to Delhi in and the first 30 minutes of the final, in front of a packed Ambedkar Stadium was probably the best we have played in my tenure. We lead 3-0 after 25 minutes, including a wonderful left foot volley by Bhaichung from Samir Naik's cross. After that first 30 minutes Tajikistan threw caution to the wind and played with only two back players. This meant that we knew we would score again but before Chhetri sealed the win with 15 minutes to go, we saw a wonderful display of goal-

keeping from Subrata Pal.

It was one of the many fine displays by Subrata for the Indian Team, which established him the reputation he has today. He really deserves this because of his attitude to his profession, and his consistent excellent training displays day in and day out.

The 20-09 Nehru Cup was also memorable for Subrata's penalty heroics in the final. But two other moments also stand out in my memory - Bhaichung's goal against Sri Lanka in the group game. A fine build up from Surkumar and Steven Dias on the right followed by a great cross on the run from Steven, and then a header as good as you would see anywhere in football from Baichung. It was truly wonderful!

The second memory was the free kick goal in extra time from Renedy Singh. We were all so pleased for Renedy, as he had come back after fighting a string of injuries that would have caused many to give up, but Renedy kept fighting on and then scored what proved to be the winning goal for us with a great strike.

Talking of injuries, so many of our players showed such character to fight back to fitness



after serious injury during these five years: Climax Lawrence who missed nearly the whole of my first year in India, Deepak, Clifford, Manju and Mahesh all came back to play in the National Team. Abhishek Yadav too made a good comeback to play for the National team. Sandip Nandy would also have come back to the squad for the Asian Cup if East Bengal had released him. Anthony Pereira has

had to do it twice, a cruciate ligament put him out for almost a year in 2007, but came back to become one of the star players in the country in 2009 and 2010, but then suffered another serious injury that put him out of the Asian Cup - a great loss for Anthony as well for our team. I know he will come back again.

Then 2011, the Asian Cup! Goals from Gouramangi,

Sunil and a great contribution towards goal against Bahrain from Renedy will stay in my memory. But more than this, the fighting spirit, the tactical discipline, and the willingness to stay together as a team, against all those odds in Doha, meant more to me than a victory would have done. This was the highlight of the five years.

But the Asian Cup was not my final act as National

Team Coach. We went to Malaysia in March and won our group in the qualification for the next Asian Cup in Australia. We also gave 10 players their debut in this competition, including 5 boys from Indian Arrows Team. This gives us good hope for the future.

So thanks very much to all the players that played for me, from the trip to Vancouver in July 2006, to the final trip to Malaysia in 2011, and all the games in between. I enjoyed it. I will always hold you in high esteem and follow your progress in the future.

Goodbye and good luck!

OFFICIAL PARTNERS



ISOTONIC SPORTS DRINK

WE PLAYED WELL IN THE ASIAN CUP



DERRICK PEREIRA

A coach that has been tried and tested. He has managed to mould Pune FC into a formidable force, considering it being a new team. He talks to FPAI about his footballing career :

Q : After you left playing professionally how did you get into professional coaching?

Derrick Pereira : In 1999, I was the coach of the U-19 squad of Salgaocara and from there I was given a proposal of coaching Vasco when they were in the second division of the national football league. In 2000, under my coaching Vasco F.C. was promoted to the top flight of the national league.

Q: Do you find any difference in today's I-league with respect to the National football league?

Derrick Pereira : The league has had changes and most of it has changed other than infra-

structure. The infrastructure at present is the same as what was there ten years back. It is good to see the participation of more clubs at this level. The league and the teams have become more professional and the clubs now have also got their licensing done.

Q : From here, if Indian football has to grow what changes should be made so that Indian football flourishes?

Derrick Pereira : If Indian football has to flourish, the only thing that should be changed is the infrastructure of football in this country.

Q : After Bob Houghton's retirement there was debate of having an Indian or Foreign Coach. Your take on this?

Derrick Pereira : The responsibility of head coach of the national side is given to a coach from India or not is completely

in the hands of the federation. Yes, the experience that all foreign coaches have is more vast than that of Indian coaches. Bob Houghton was an exceptional coach with a lot of experience. A lot of comparison is done between Indian and foreign coaches but before getting into any argument we should first see the positive side of Bob Houghton. We always tend to look at the negative side of every thing. We should see what Bob Houghton has actually done for the Indian national team. I personally feel we should also follow the same path as the Japanese federation. The Japanese Federation have experimented well with the grass roots that proved to be successful. We could take a leaf out of their book.

Q : What is your opinion on this edition of the I-league?

Derrick Pereira : This time the I-league has been very competitive. The race for the championship is very intense and many teams are competing for the championship. On the other hand many teams are also trying to escape the relegation zone. Nothing about the championship can be said as it might be decided on the very last day of the season.

Q : Like the discussion of foreign coach, the same way a lot is being said about the number of foreign players in the I-league?

Derrick Pereira : All I have to say is that Indian teams need to have a higher standard for foreign players. A few days back in the AFC cup, East Bengal played a team from Hong Kong in which Nicky Butt played! Indian teams need more Nicky Butt's to play in the I-League

Q : Is it true that because of the foreign players the Indian players are not getting enough chances?

Derrick Pereira : If you look closely all the I-league teams have foreign strikers. If the Indian players do not get a chance to play in the I-league then how are they supposed to

come up? In the whole country there should be fifteen to twenty football academy's. The federation itself should also open an academy. The basics of all aspiring players should be taught at the grass root level. If that be the case then foreign coaches should be hired and they should train our coaches as to how they should go about the situation. Until and unless the youth development program is in place, it will be very difficult for Indian players to rise in the league. Everything has to be done according to a system.

Q : After the Asian cup, a lot of has been discussed about the Indian team.

Derrick Pereira : I have been observing that people are just happy thinking about the past. Now it's he time to stop looking at the past and focus on the future. People are just looking at the negative parts, instead of taking the positives out of the games played. I personally felt that the performance of the Indian team was very good. The Indian team put up brilliant fights against teams like Australia and South Korea given the capabilities that the Indian team possesses with respect to the other teams. A lot of positives should be taken out from the Asian cup as the Indian team played against very tough opposition. After conceding so many goals against Australia, South Korea and Bahrain the shape and the spirit of the team did not change. This is the positive side that should be seen.

Q : What is your take on the Football Players Association of India?

Derrick Pereira : The footballers are doing a very good work with the association. FPAI is doing a very good job by educating the footballers of India. It is my belief that they will do everything to improve football in India.



Shillong players celebrating after their victory in the I-League 2nd division



Runners Up - Sporting Clube de Goa, who also qualify for the I-League 2nd division



The newly constituted United Sikkim FC takes the field before their match against Southern Samity



Royal Wahingdoh, click a group snap before their game in the I-League 2nd division



Shillong Lajong Vs Southern Samity

Shillong Lajong FC with their winners trophy of the I-League 2nd division



CONGRATULATIONS MR. ARMANDO COLACO



Mr. Armando Colaco takes charge of the National team as interim head coach. He will be with the team for its upcoming friendlies and World Cup qualifiers.



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