

## Press Release

### ***Haryana reiterate position as the wrestling powerhouse at KIYG 2019***

**Pune, January 13:** Haryana once again reiterated their position as the premier wrestling powerhouse. Year after year they have been winning the honours at major events, and Khelo India Youth Games in Pune was no exception.

With 24 gold medals, 16 silver and 18 bronze, Haryana crossed the half century mark in wrestling alone leaving other states way behind. Maharashtra finished second. Such was Haryana's dominance that they won more gold medals than all other states put together.

Though Delhi boys showed impressive performance on the first day in the Greco Roman category, winning nine medals including five gold medals, they failed to maintain the momentum and the winning streak and added just one gold medal later on.

When asked about the success story of Haryana in wrestling their coach Rajveer says, "Wrestling has always been an integral part of Haryana. Almost every household in rural areas have atleast one wrestler, who gets enrolled in nearby akhara and after years of hardwork and training, starts earning money in cash prize tournaments. What the state did was that they identified the talent in rural area and gave them modern training, nutrition and exposure to various tournaments."

"We just moulded raw talent into medal winning champions. The training at state camps are quite strict and no player unless they have severe health issue, are allowed to take leave, even during vacations. They just have one job – to train and win medals. I think that has put us a set apart from other states," adds Rajveer.

From Maharashtra, U17 80kg freestyle wrestler Vetal Shelke was quite impressive. A ward of Arjuna awardee Kaka Pawar he grabbed the gold medal.

In the 71kg category, Kalicharan Solankar was praised for his efforts in beating Haryana's international wrestler Ankit 12-1 in the initial rounds. Though Kalicharan managed to win a bronze medal in his category, he certainly has raised expectations.

### **Haryana's dominance extends to women's section, too**

Haryana were the dominant force in the women's section, too. At these Games, Haryana bagged 12 out of 14 gold medals. This despite missing international stars like Anshu and Sonam.

Hanny Kumari in the 46kg category is another prodigy from the state. Winner of a gold medal at last year's Khelo India School Games, she came back from the jaws of defeat against Maharashtra's Kalyani Gadekar. She recovered from 2-3 to grabbed the winning point in the last 30 seconds and her fightback was quite impressive.

Similarly, in the 57kg category, Manju, was trailing 0-4 against Maharashtra's Bhagyashree Fand, in the final. She recovered from there and earned her straight 14 points.

Another striking player from girl's category was Karnataka's Pooja Dalvi. The 20-year-old stopped Haryana's steam roller in the 68kg category and won a lone gold medal for her state.