



Press Release

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SK Mohanty guides his team SAI 'B' to second-place finish at the Khelo India Women's Hockey League Under-21

New Delhi, December 20: Simanta Krushna Mohanty is not only the most experienced person sitting in the dugout during his team's matches but also one of the most vigilant eyes spotting the best of the players at the ongoing Khelo India Women's Hockey League Under-21. The head coach of the Sports Authority of India B team, who ended their campaign in the first phase of the tournament at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium on Monday, is all praise for the competition.

The SAI 'B' team finished their campaign in the second position from Pool A with a total of 13 points. They registered a defeat in just their opening game of the competition. However, Mohanty's team came back strongly, remaining undefeated in the following five games. The team finished only two points away from the group-toppers the India junior women's hockey team.

Mohanty has been a hockey coach since 1991, starting his coaching assignment with the Maharashtra State team. Speaking about the evolution of the grassroots level scouting, he said, "Previously, during the Special Area Games (SAG) Scheme of the SAI, scouts used to go to the deepest interiors of villages like Jharkhand and Odisha to spot talents. There wasn't much promotion of talents during that time and there were no hostels or academies back then. However now, there are so many centres and a lot of talent scouts. Not only facilities have improved but diet, strength and conditioning and all other aspects are taken care of now. I haven't seen this kind of facilities like equipment and manpower support and exposure in my last 30 years of coaching career. Having said that, our focus should continuously be on developing the fundamentals and grassroots feeding centres and work systematically along with experienced coaches. This will help in the long term development of the players."

After his team's initial matches at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium, Mohanty stressed on finding the right combination in his team and getting the best out of the girls in terms of attack and finding the best of teamwork. "The girls in the SAI 'B' team belong from various SAI centres and my priority is to get the right combination and make them play as a unit," Mohanty, who has been a part of SAI Gandhinagar, Kolkata and Mumbai centres, said. Commenting on the Khelo India Under 21 league, he mentioned, "This league will immensely help these kids. This is a brilliant opportunity for them to



showcase their talents. They are getting a chance to showcase their talents against the best of academies and teams. It cannot get better for them.”

Prabal Pandey, the assistant coach of the side, mentioned he has learnt a lot from Mohanty in his little stint as a coach of the SAI ‘B’ girls’ team. “I am lucky to be under the guidance of Mohanty sir. He is very helpful and a very good human being. He keeps motivating the players in different ways and the biggest thing I’ve learnt from him is never to demoralize the players even if the team has lost by a big margin. I want to take his knowledge as much as possible and be a better coach,” said Prabal, who has been a part of the SAI National Centre of Excellence in Bhopal since November 2019.

With long-term development of the players in mind and to be prepared for the second phase of the tournament at SAI Lucknow, the SAI ‘B’ U-21 girls’ team will regroup for a camp in the first week of January. “We are trying to select talented kids and send them to the top National Centres of Excellence for training. This will help them to get that big opportunity to play in the Olympics in future,” said Prabal.

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