

# Hockey World Cup 2010

WILL GERMANY RETAIN ITS WORLD CUP TITLE, OR WILL IT BE SOME OTHER NATION SPRINGING UP A SURPRISE? THE HOCKEY WORLD CUP 2010 PROMISES TO BE A BREATHTAKING THRILLER ALL THE WAY, SAYS **NOEL FERNANDES**

The stage is set! New Delhi's Dyan Chand Stadium will be at the center of the most elite hockey event in the world. Officially named 'Hero Honda FIH World Cup 2010', the twelfth edition of the Men's Hockey World Cup will be held between February 28 and March 13. The first day of the tournament will see one of the most eagerly awaited matches when hosts India take on rival Pakistan. Other Pool B clashes on the first day are South Africa v Spain and Australia v England. Olympic and World Champion Germany will commence the defence of its title on 1st March against Korea.

## Project 'Indian Hockey'

The 2010 World Cup will be a joint venture between the FIH and the Indian Hockey Confederation (IHC) and is a result of the 'Project Promoting Indian hockey', a new initiative between the FIH and the IHC, aimed to return Indian hockey, men and women, to the world's highest level.

The FIH hopes that hosting the 2010 World Cup will give a tremendous boost to Indian hockey. India has a cherished hockey history and a glorious tradition and hosting the World Cup in India will rejuvenate hockey and rekindle the passion for it. In fact the Hockey World Cup will serve as an ideal preparatory platform for the Commonwealth Games, to be held in India in the month of October.

## Hockey Hitch

India chief coach Jose Brasa has sounded-off that it would be unrealistic to expect anything extraordinary from the eight-time Olympic champions in the Hockey World Cup. There is no doubt that Indian hockey; especially its players are at a low! Their fee demand was resolved only after the team's sponsor Sahara India stepped in and released Rs 1 crore

Pool A	Pool B
Germany	Australia
Netherlands	Spain
Korea	England
New Zealand	Pakistan
Canada	India
Argentina	South Africa

for the players. While the players got Rs 4 lakh each, the remaining Rs 12 lakh was distributed among the support staff, including coach Romeo James who received a cheque of Rs 2 lakh, while a token amount was also given to chief coach Jose Brasa and trainer David Perez.

Interestingly, Hockey India has asked sponsors to give cash awards or bonus to the players if India manages a podium finish at the World Cup. Many companies such as the Central Bank have already announced to give Rs 1 crore if the players manage to win gold.

## Reclaiming Past Glory

Given its home advantage, the present Indian hockey team will be looking to reclaim its past glory in this World Cup. Only five countries have won the World Cup. Pakistan has been the most successful team having won the tournament four times, while Netherlands has won it three times. Germany, who won the last edition in 2006, have emerged champions twice. Australia has won it once. At the last edition in Monchengladbach, Germany beat Australia 4-3 in the final to clinch the title. As far as India is concerned, India has won the World Cup only once in 1975. Thereafter it won the bronze in 1971 and the silver in 1973, without any further medals since then.

Hope the Indian hockey players this time around prove its coach and critics wrong and emerge winners playing on its own turf!



## Match Schedule

- India vs. Pakistan: 28th February 2010
- India vs. Australia: 2nd March 2010
- Spain vs. India: 4th March 2010
- England vs. India: 6th March 2010
- South Africa vs. India: 8th March 2010
- Semi-finals: 11th March 2010.
- Final: 13th March 2010.

\*Indian matches are scheduled at 8:30 pm