



Hockey Year Book 1998

Author : Shanthi K Arumugam
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Hockey has always been eventful, occupying prime place in the sports pages of newspapers and magazines for right or wrong reasons. But the game in India has received scant attention compared to cricket as far as literature on records accomplished in the sport is concerned. This is all the more depressing considering that the game has had a glorious record before the Partition, and till the sixties after the country attained Independence. Hardly anyone attempted to put all the things together for the benefit of the posterity. A few books were penned but they lacked adequate treatment—the last book on field hockey was written way back in 1978 by Aslam Sher Khan titled: **The Hell With Hockey**.

To that extent, the concept of a year book on hockey is timely, unique and a welcome step. It is refreshing to find the author, Shanti K Arumugam—a seasoned observer of the game—to come out with his second year book: **Hockey Year Book 1998**. The author had earlier gifted the connoisseurs of the game with a Year Book in 1995. The new concept chronicles all events of the game in a year—news, views, interviews, review of tournaments (domestic and international), statistics, analysis and anecdotes.

The Year Book provides a welcome relief to the ardent fans in dispensing with the efforts to obtain

information on the vital statistics of the game by going through different and sometimes obtuse sources. To that extent, the document gives significant and perceptive glimpses into competitive hockey as it was played during 1996. As for those who are grievd by the current state of the game and are left groping for solutions, the book provides significant clues as to why Indian hockey now is good only by fits and starts.

The author has taken pains to ensure that this time the treatise is way ahead in terms of quality as compared to the first year book. There is a distinct change in the format reflecting the innovative bent of mind of the author.

The second of the ten chapters in the book subtitled **Hollow Promise, Slow progress, Hello Hockey** is a carefully researched piece. The chapter deals with the administration (read maladministration) of the game by the much acclaimed K P S Gill. With the support of painstakingly collected data and interviews of various personalities, the author chronicles all the wrong steps taken by the regime under Gill in the last three years. One also gets a conceptual view as to how the game took a backseat due to the needless politicking in the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF). The author's countdown begins with non-conduct of the Senior National Championship for a record three years and ends with details on the manhandling of the IHF's treasurer by another set of Federation officials. In between, countless anecdotes corroborate his theory of how bad officialdom brought bad name to the sport on both the domestic and international fronts.

The anxiety of a man for whom hockey is dear to his heart is reflected when the author pleads for a thorough inquiry into the shoddy dealings of the IHF after exposing biased pool grouping and deputation of prejudiced umpires by the body to achieve malicious designs. According to him, probably that was the reason why

none of the companies—Kuber, Iodex, Sahara—who sponsored major tournaments in the recent past—didn't venture back the second time. The author cites misappropriation of funds, unprofessional approach by the persons at the echelons of hockey management in the country, disrespect to the sponsors and dishonouring of avowed commitments as the main causes for this dismal state of affairs.

The book also opens up new vistas. The novel chapter **Pick of the Year** identifies the 'player of the year-men' (Sarabjit Kumar of the Border Security Force), 'player of the year-women' (Sandeep Kaur), 'office of the year' (Surjit Memorial Tournament Society), 'official of the year' (K T S Tulsii), 'rising star of the year-men' Altaf-ur-Rehman and 'rising star of the year-women' Sumrai Tete.

However, the book has hit the stands six months late. The author attributes the delay to the marketing hassles. With an eye-catching cover design by Ajit Edwin, caricature by Madras-based cartoonist S S Maniam, the sleekly produced book could well be a buyer's delight. ♦

— By PRABIR BISWAS



Communalism in Indian Politics

Author : Rajni Kothari
Publisher : Rainbow
Pages : 224
Price : 125

The book on communalism by Rajni Kothari is a timely or an untimely (the way you look at it) one. It comes when BJP, 'the right-wing Hindu fundamentalist' party is all set to take the reins of the country which is