

game. Mr Prior's umpire coaching role is a first at a hockey tournament, which he described as a "major step forward".

Also for the first time, the World Cup has offered computer review facilities for umpires. Within 10 minutes of a match finishing, umpires

with other events.

So how long does it take for a traditionally-accredited umpire to get up to speed?

"It can be as quick as ten days," Mr Prior said. "We've got better people and — if they're fast-track their training."



**Man on a mission:** Indian journalist and author K. Arumugam.

## *Writer focuses on players*

WITH six books and a hockey website to his name, Indian freelance sports journalist K. Arumugam is in Australia on a mission — to gather information and profile leading players for his next hockey year-book.

His journey so far has been productive. "I have made a strange observation," he said.

"The players who wear the number eight, most of them are playing very well — Japan's Sakae Morimoto and Ukraine's Tetyana Kobzenko and Luciana Aymar from Argentina.

"The most important person here is Tracey Fuchs from the USA. She's playing her fourth World Cup and has a lot of determination and spirit — the US is here in the World Cup only because of her."

Mr Arumugam said stamina was

an important element in this tournament. Teams that were not used to playing a lot of games in a short space of time, such as Ireland, had fallen behind after a strong start.

He predicted Australia and Argentina would face each other in the semi-finals.

He said the Netherlands had surprised many because it had not performed well for the past few years, and was beginning to catch up to claim its spot in the top four.

"Women's hockey has always thrown up surprises," he said.

"In the 1992 Barcelona Olympics, Spain won the gold and no-one would ever have thought of it so you can never be sure what will happen."

— YANINA BOSCHINI



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