

It'll be good if I-League and ISL join forces, says Brown

Englishman Phil Brown will coach Hyderabad FC in their debut season in the Indian Super League (ISL). The 60-year-old had led Hull City to their first ever Premier League season in 2008 and is eager to make his mark with the new outfit after FC Pune City were disbanded. Brown had joined Pune City in December of the 2018-19 season and took them to seventh position with three wins from six games. He spoke to TOI ahead of the new season. Excerpts.



Aditya.Singh@timesgroup.com

You have coached teams in English leagues, led Hull City to Premier League and are now coaching teams in India. What's the difference between the leagues there and here?

Indian clubs have foreign players and Indian players with different strengths. Indian players are hard workers who will run through the wall, foreign players rely more on technique. At Hyderabad FC, we are aiming to teach the best qualities of Indian players to foreign players and vice-versa. I am here to try and create something. I have been given a platform to do it in the form of the Hyderabad FC team rising like a phoenix from the ashes of FC Pune City.

What are your targets in the debut season?

If I can get a full stadium, it means I am doing something right. The team needs to perform better than FC Pune City last year. We need to win more than half of our games. If we achieve that, we will be near the top of the division. The ultimate aim is to be competitive and win something, whether it is the ISL title or the Super Cup.

What tactical philosophy do you want the team to follow?

I want the team to play possession-based football, but that will depend upon the type of opposition we face. Sometimes, you have to be cleverer than the other coach, especially coaches you've not met before. Though I have met English coaches like Steve Coppel and John Gregory here, I have not met coaches from Spain or other countries. The Hyderabad FC

players are tactically aware. For instance, Marcelinho has been reading a book on Pep Guardiola, which shows how his mentality is going into coaching and management. He knows Indian football better than I do. Guys like Marcelinho and Robin [Singh], I've been relying on them for information.

What formation are you going to employ with the team?

During the last season with FC Pune City, I played with three centre-backs. It was a 3-4-1-2 formation, but we drifted to the 3-5-2 when Marcelinho was not in the team. On a couple of occasions, we switched to a back four in a 4-3-3. You need a total buy-in and understanding from the players, only then a change in system can work. At the moment, I am favouring a three centre-back for-

mation, though I might go for four at the back at any stage.

Having experienced Indian football, what steps need to be taken to improve the standards?

I am in communication with Igor Stimac [India's national coach] because we have three players representing the country. I want to try and make it more, if I possibly can. I have seen the Indian team under Stephen Constantine and have followed the change in management. There has not been a complete change of mentality and attitude. The system in India should result in ISL and I-League joining forces one day. That has to be the way forward, because we play Super Cup at the end of the season with teams from ISL and I-League. If teams are capable of doing that on a weekly basis, then they are capable of competing in a league. Last year, some clubs pulled out of the Indian Super Cup. For an outsider, it does not look good. You have to be joint in your thinking, and if that means ISL and I-League joining forces, then so be it. If we can have a 20-22 team tournament, it will be a great competition and the national team will benefit from it.

Attractive football tops HFC agenda

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad FC, the latest entrant to Indian Super League (ISL), have been preparing hard ahead of their debut in the league. With four games lined up in the first 11 days of the league, HFC have their task cut out. A good start and a winning momentum is high on manager Phil Brown's agenda.

"It is important to get a winning start," Brown said here on Wednesday. "The pre-season of 6-7 weeks has been tough on the players. The temperature has been high. We have to keep players out of the medical room. We are going to play a brand of football that is going to win games and entertain viewers."

Brown hoped the team will respond to the challenge of playing matches in quick succession. "We have four games in our first 11 days. If we can get positive results in the first few matches, it will help us reach a good position in the points table. Hopefully, we can respond well to the challenge. The pressure of football management is something close to my heart and I really enjoy doing it," Brown added.



GUNGG HO: Marcelinho, Robin Singh, Phil Brown, Gurtej Singh and Rafa Lopez Gomez (from left) at the HFC media interaction on Wednesday

Forward Robin Singh was excited. "We may play in different teams in ISL but when it comes to the national team, teammates from different clubs work together for the win," he said.

Brazilian forward Marcelinho said, "It is my fourth year playing in India. In all my seasons here, I have achieved something important. I won the ISL Golden Boot in 2016 while playing for

Delhi Dynamos. In the 2017-18 season, I reached the semifinals while playing for FC Pune City. Now at Hyderabad FC, we can start from zero as a family. It is the beginning of a big project and I am proud to be a part of it.

The 2019-20 season of ISL will begin on October 20. Hyderabad FC will take on ATK at the Salt Lake Stadium, Kolkata in their opener on October 25.

Praggnanandhaa joins Aryan at the top

Mumbai: India's hopes in the U-18 Open brightened as R Praggnanandhaa outclassed compatriot P Iniyan in the highly-anticipated battle between two Indian Grand Masters in the World youth chess

WORLD YOUTH CHESS

Championship here on Wednesday. Playing black, Iniyan opted for the Pirc Defence, which was easily countered by Praggnanandhaa, forcing him into inaccuracies in the opening itself. Praggnanandhaa kept increasing his advantage with every move and duly emerged victorious on move 38.

With this crucial win, Praggnanand-

haa joined Iran's IM Aryan Gholami in the lead after the latter was made to settle for a draw by Indian IM Mitrabraha Guha in 38 moves. Top seed GM Sargys Shant of Armenia kept himself in the hunt by crushing George Stoleriu of Romania in 37 moves.

Meanwhile, untitled R Abinandhan's dream run continued in the Under-14 Open, storming into the lead with 7 points. The 55th seed outwitted compatriot FM LR Srihari in a Queen's Gambit game to coast to a 40-move win.

Aydin Suleymanli (Armenia) had moved to the second place with 6.5 points, after settling for a draw against

Marc Morgunov of Austria. Top seed S Maralakshikari was in the next lot after one more draw.

In the girls U-14s, WIM Rakshitta Ravi (6.5 points) held on to her lead by forcing a draw on Russia's Ekaterina Nasyrova. In the U-16 Open, USAs IM Moke Hans Niemann held on to his lead, overcoming Miguel Soto (Colombia).

CM Mohan Kushagra moved up the ladder, beating compatriot Moksh Doshi to be in the third lot with 6 points. Sixth seed WIM Vantika Agrawal split the point with Polina Shuvalova (Russia) to hold on to the second position in the leaderboard. PTI

Thrilling win for Titans

Greater Noida: UP Yoddha on Wednesday lost their first match of the home leg 36-41 against Telugu Titans in the Pro Kabaddi League Season 7 here. The standout performances for UP Yoddha's came from Shrikant Jadhav and Rishank Devadiga, who scored eight points each. Rishank Devadiga also achieved the milestone of scoring 650 points in the league overall, accompanied by Shrikant Jadhav, who achieved the milestone of scoring 300 touch points overall.

In spite of the valiant efforts by UP Yoddha in the end, Titans came out victorious. UP Yoddha now stand at 69 points from 21 matches with 12 wins, seven losses and two draws. PTI

Debutant Punia powers India to big win

Vadodara: Debutant Priya Punia starred with the bat to follow up a fine performance by the bowlers to help India women to an emphatic eight-wicket win over South Africa in the first ODI here on Wednesday. South Africa women struggled with the bat after winning the toss, bowled out for 164 in 45.1 overs.

It was an all-round bowling effort from India with Jhulan Goswami (3/33), Shikha Pandey (2/38), Ekta Bisht (2/8) and Poonam Yadav (2/33) sharing the bulk of the wickets.

India cantered to victory in 41.4 overs with openers Punia (75 not out off 124) and Jemimah Rodrigues (55 off 65) laying the foundation for a resounding win.

The three-match series is not part of the Women's ODI



BIG HIT: Priya Punia

Championship. Punia, who has played three T20 Internationals, got the chance to play her maiden ODI after star opener Mandhana was ruled out on the eve of the game due to a fracture on her right toe. The 23-year-old from Jaipur hit eight boundaries.

Mithali completes 20 years of international cricket

India captain Mithali Raj, on Wednesday became the first female player to last more than 20 years in international cricket. Mithali, who made her ODI debut against Ireland on June 26, 1999, completed 20 years and 105 days in the 50-over format.

She, thus, became the only female cricketer to have played ODI cricket for over two decades. The right-handed batswoman has played 204 ODIs till now, the most by a female, followed by England's Charlotte Edwards (191), Jhulan Goswami (178), Alex Blackwell (144) of Australia.

Mithali, 36, has also played 10 Tests and 89 T20Is for India. She retired from T20 cricket last month. AGENCIES



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My Opinion for feature

Mysore: B Suresh-trained My Opinion, to be ridden by Imran Khan, appeals most among for the Governor's Cup over 2000 metres, the feature event at the races here on Thursday. First race starts at 2 pm.

- SELECTIONS**
1. J Tyrell Memorial Plate (Div II) 1400M: Scarlet Princess 1, Duxton 2
2. Belur Plate (Div II) 1200M: Spanish Beauty 1, Tokyo Rose 2
3. Maj. Sardar L Mahadevaiah Memorial Trophy 1400M: Reanna 1, Halloween's Way 2
4. Sardar K B Ramachandraraj Urs Memorial Trophy 1200M: Air Command 1, Noali's Ark 2
5. Governor's Cup 2000M: My Opinion 1, Psychic Force 2
6. J Tyrell Memorial Plate (Div I) 1400M: Fotogenic 1, Black Whizz 2
7. Belur Plate (Div I) 1200M: Colonel Hartly 1, Angel Kiss 3
Day's best: Spanish Beauty
Jackpot: 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7
1st Treble: 2, 3 & 4; 2nd Treble: 5, 6 & 7

CITY SPORT

Chess tournaments

The second All India below 1400 Fide rating chess tournament will be held at LB Stadium from Oct 11 to 13. Last date for registration is Oct 10. For details contact Rajsekhar (9959738948) or Chandra Mouli R (9885466590). The 161st Brilliant Trophy Open chess will be held at Brilliant Grammar High School, Dilshuknagar on Oct 12 & 13. Interested should register before 1 pm on Oct 12. For details, contact J Subrahmanyam (9247399717).

Referees seminar begins





The four-day AIFF referees seminar was inaugurated by KT Mahi, chairman, Telangana Football Association (TFA) at Sreenidhi International School campus on Wednesday. The seminar is being conducted by AIFF instructors G Murthy and R Mukherjee.

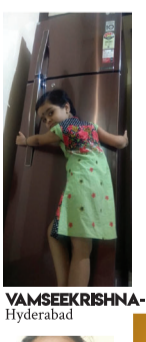
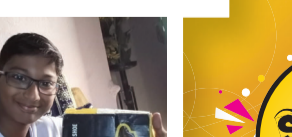
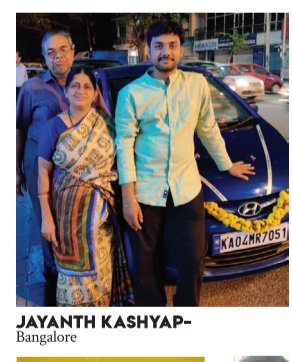
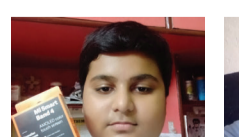
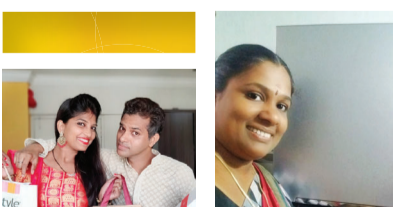
OU teams selections

Selections for Osmania University teams for various disciplines will be held from Oct 11 to 15.
Schedule: Shooting: Oct 11: Gachibowli Range (Jagan Mohan 94900 44477). **Softball:** Oct 14 & 15: PG College, Secunderabad (Dr Krishna 9985355500). **Cricket:** Oct 23 & 24: Gymkhana (Dr R Harinarayan Rao). **Gymnastics:** Oct 22 & 23: 8 am, LB Stadium (Prof K Deepa, OU). **Handball:** St Francis College for Women, Begumpet (Amrita Daniel). **Tennis:** Oct 11: 8 am, Bhavani's College, Sainikpuri (Dr. Kondel Reddy or Zabiuddin 939924880/ 900033321). **Wrestling:** Oct 15: 8 am, OU velodrome (Jaipal 9963576965).

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