



BEST AMONG THE BEST

From the GS' Desk



The democratic process in which the AIFF Player-of-the-Year was selected was a novelty indeed. For the first time-ever, a voting procedure was implemented and it was on voting of the 14 I-League coaches that Sunil Chhetri was selected the winner. My heartiest congratulations to Sunil for his performance and I wish him all the best in the New Year, both at the International and Club level.

Sunil was at his best in the SAFF Championship where he spearheaded India to become the Champions. Bagging five consecutive Man-of-the-match awards in any sport is unheard off. We create a new record even there.

India have been drawn in the Group of Death in the AFC Challenge Cup and I expect the boys to rise to the occasion when we play in March, 2012.

The Challenge Cup stays an opportunity for young guns to grab centrestage, especially after Mahesh Gawli announced his retirement from International Football. I want to thank and commend Mahesh for his commitment and contribution to Indian football. May he continue playing club football and set an example for youngsters.

I also take this opportunity to wish all a Happy New Year. Your co-operation serves as an inspiration for us to do better. We expect the same support from all stake holders in 2012. Wishing you all the best.

Warm regards,

Kushal Das



Sunil Chhetri is AIFF Player-of-the-Year

Sunil Chhetri has been declared the AIFF Player of the Year 2011. Sunil was chosen the winner by I-League coaches who voted on a list of 5 players shortlisted for the Award. The criteria for selection stayed performance on the field primarily for India's International matches and general conduct, both on and off the field.

Sunil who has played 17

International Matches in this Calendar Year has scored 13 goals, the highest by any Indian footballer in 2011. Besides, he has scored 11 goals in 20 Club appearances in 2011. He also stays the recipient of the Arjuna Award and won the Man of the Championship in the recently concluded SAFF Championship in New Delhi. The Player-of-the-Year will receive a cash award of Rs. 2 lakh plus a silver plaque.

“ I have been among the goals. I feel, I'm hitting my peak form ”



EARLIER RECIPIENTS OF AWARD

- 1992: I.M.Vijayan
- 1993: V.P.Sathyan
- 1994: Jo Paul Ancheri
- 1995: Bhaichung Bhutia
- 1996: Bruno Coutinho
- 1997: I.M.Vijayan
- 2000: I.M.Vijayan
- 2001: Jo Paul Ancheri
- 2002: Deepak Mondal
- 2003: Tomba Singh
- 2004: S.Venkatesh
- 2005: Climax Lawrence
- 2006: Surkumar Singh
- 2007: Sunil Chhetri
- 2008: Bhaichung Bhutia
- 2009: Subrata Pal
- 2010: Gouramangi Singh

24 GOALS IN 2011

INTERNATIONAL: 13 goals in 17 matches

Breakup:

- Jan. 14, 2011: One goal vs Bahrain (Asian Cup, Doha).
- Jan. 18, 2011: One goal vs South Korea (Asian Cup, Doha).
- March 21, 2011: One goal vs Chinese Taipei (AFC Challenge Cup – Qualifiers, Kuala Lumpur).
- July 10, 2011: One goal vs Maldives (International Friendly, Male).
- Nov. 16, 2011: Two goals vs Malaysia (International Friendly, Kolkata).
- (SAFF Championship played in New Delhi from Dec 2-11).
- Dec. 3, 2011: One goal vs Afghanistan.
- Dec. 5, 2011: Two goals vs Bhutan.
- Dec. 7, 2011: One goal vs Sri Lanka.

Dec. 9, 2011: Two goals vs Maldives.

Dec. 11, 2011: One goal vs Afghanistan.

CLUB FOOTBALL:

- 7 goals in 10 matches for Chirag United (I-league 2010-11)
- Breakup:
- April 3, 2011: One goal vs Dempo.
- April 10, 2011: One goal vs Churchill Brothers.
- April 16, 2011: One goal vs Mohun Bagan.
- April 29, 2011: 2 goals vs ONGC.
- May 29, 2011: One goal vs Viva Kerala.
- June 1, 2011: One goal vs East Bengal.
- 4 goals in 10 matches for McDowell Mohun Bagan (2011-12)
- Breakup:
- Sept. 21, 2011: One goal vs Churchill Brothers.
- Nov. 6, 2011: Two goals vs Mumbai FC.
- Nov. 10, 2011: One goal vs Churchill Brothers.



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INDIA REIGN SUPREME



A clinical India retained the SAFF Championship when they defeated Afghanistan 4-0 in an one-sided final at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi. Star striker Sunil Chhetri, who opened the scoring for India in the final was adjudged the Man of the Tournament. In fact, Chhetri bagged the Man-of-the-Match awards in all the five matches India played – a record somewhat unheard of. This was the first event to be held at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium since the Commonwealth Games 2010.

Results

Group Stage:

India d/w Afghanistan 1-1

India beat Bhutan 5-0

India beat Sri Lanka 3-0

Semifinal:

India beat Maldives 3-1

FINAL:

India beat Afghanistan 4-0

AFC Challenge Cup: India drawn in Group of Death

India have been drawn in the Group of Death at the AFC Challenge Cup which kicks-off in Nepal from March 8, 2012.

India have been clubbed with DPR Korea, Tajikistan and Philippines while hosts Nepal have been drawn with Maldives, Turkmenistan and Palestine. The draw ceremony took place in Kathmandu on Thursday (December 1).

India play their first match against Tajikistan on March 9. They next play Philippines on March 11 and their last Group League match against DPR Korea on March 13.

Both the semifinals have been slated for March 16 while the final is on March 19.

AIFF condoles Varadraj's death

The All India Football Federation condoles the demise of former India player KV Varadraj. Varadraj who was represented India in the 1948 London Olympics, the 1951 Helsinki Olympics and



was a part of the gold-medal winning squad in the 1951 Asian Games, passed away at the Shanbhag Hospital in Basaveshwarnagar. He was 89 and survived by two sons and a daughter.

Varadraj, who was a goalkeeper played for India in two matches – the first against France in the 1948 London Olympics and against Afghanistan in 1951 Asian Games semifinal.

At the domestic level, represented Mysore in Santosh Trophy from 1947-52 and was a member of the triumphant squad in 1952. He also represented Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (Bangalore) and played for Mohun Bagan in 1953.

AIFF organises Camp for Potential Instructors

A 3-day camp for the Potential Instructor Evaluation for Retired FIFA/ National Referees was organised by the All India Football Federation. The camp was organised in Cochin from December 18 to 20. The camp was designed with an aim to inculcate and enhance the education and technical qualities of the Instructors in India to an International level. Altogether 33 participants took part in the three-day long event.

List of participants:

Debasish Mishra, Sunanda Kumar Bose, Arindam Bhattacharjee, Naba Kumar Das, P. Surendren, CT Abdul Gafoor, K Rajeevan, PS Sasi Kumar, KK Anil Kumar, Saifudeen, C Krishann, C Seby Joseph, Mathew Thomas, AM Ashraf, Kamlesh Kumar Pandey, Susant Chandra Mohanty, Bhaskar Nanda, Bharat Mani S, Murthy S, Sebastian D'Costa, Victor D'Souza, Dhanraj More, Rocky Fernandes, Rajesh Raut, Rizwan Ul Haq, SB Saha, P Baskar, T Pradeep Kumar, S Suresh, V Edwin Louis, V Stephen Charles, P Bagavathi Raj, Selva Regis, Rajesh Kumar, Anjulo P Fernandes, Jayendra S Nagvenkar, Egidio F D'Costa, Chudu Shirokar, Virender Kumar Dahiya, Shibjyoti Chakravorty.

20 attend AFC 'B' Certificate Course

The AFC 'B' Coaching certificate course was held from November 28 to December 18 in Imphal. Gabriel Joseph, the Director of Coaching, AIFF along with Dr. Birbal Singh, acted as Assistant Instructor conducted the 20 day long course. The participants had to undertake three theoretical examinations, two practical examinations and had presented one dissertation before the end of the course. Along with the exams, the participants had to analyse an -League match, which took place in Imphal on December 3, between McDowell Mohun Bagan and Shillong Lajong FC.

The list of the participants was as follow:

N. Tomba Singh, S. Amutombi Singh, K. Ratan Singh, T. Ibmocha Singh, H. Imo Singh Hawaibam, Kamei Joy Kabui, S. Somorjit Singh, S. Roshikumar Singh, N. Puthiba Meitei, N. Maimu Meetei, N. Lakshmichand Singh, KH. Surmani Singh, Ratan Elangbam, Oniam Jet Singh, N. Bitan Singh, H. Joykumar Singh, CH. Nabachandra Singh, N. Naresh Chetry, Keshav Dutt, Milton Antony.P.K, Sreekumar, Bobby Nongbet, Santanu Guha Thakurta.

FUTURE COURSES: Meanwhile, The following Coaching Courses are to be conducted on the following dates:

- AFC 'Futsal' Coaching course from December 28, 2011 to January 2, 2012 in Trivandrum.
- AFC 'C' Licence Coaching course from Jnauaray 6, 2012 to January 21, 2012 in Trivandrum.



END OF AN ERA



Mahesh Gawli retires from International Football

Team India defender Mahesh Gawli announced his International Retirement on Monday. Gawli, who represented India in 82 International Matches, informed his decision to the AIFF in a letter. He thanked the AIFF, his Coaches and Team-mates, his clubs and the fans who stood by him all throughout.

Gawli wrote: "It is delightful and so appropriate to have a perfect farewell to my International career on winning the SAFF Championship 2012 which is more heartening." Gawli, a registered Dempo FC footballer, added that he will continue to play club football for some "more years."



PERSONAL PROFILE

- Date of Birth** : 23.1.1980
- International Matches played** : 82
- International Debut** : vs Thailand in Pre-Olympic Qualifiers (July 24, 1999).
- Goals scored** : 1 (vs Bhutan in SAFF Cup in 2005 -- Karachi).
- Captained India in one match** : vs Malaysia in Guwahati (November 13, 2011).

PART OF WINNING SQUADS:

- Bristol Freedom Cup, 1998 (Colombo).
- LG Cup, (Vietnam).
- SAFF Cup, 2005 (Karachi).
- Nehru Cup, 2007 (New Delhi).
- AFC Challenge Cup, 2008 (Hyderabad/New Delhi).
- Nehru Cup, 2009 (New Delhi).
- SAFF Championship, 2011 (New Delhi).



Clubs played for:

- FC Kochin (1998-99).
- Churchill Brothers (2000-02).
- East Bengal (2003).
- Mahindra United (2004).
- Dempo SC (from 2005 onwards)

A lot has changed since my debut: Gawli

Immediately after announcing his retirement from International Football, Mahesh Gawli spoke to www.the-aiff.com about his exploits with Team India. He spoke at length about his tenure with the National squad, the memories, his teammates, the next 'big' defenders and what forced him to the decision. Excerpts:

Q What forces you to this decision?

Football is a demanding sport. I have played at the highest level for 14-15 years and once you play for your country, you need to achieve continuously. I feel I've had enough of International Football. From my personal side, I feel I've achieved quite a lot and it's time for me to stop now and focus entirely on club football. I have consulted my family and it's an unanimous decision.

Q What has been your best moment while playing for India?

For me each and every match which I played for India has been a cherished moment. After all, not all get a chance to represent your country. I've been a member of many winning squads but the triumph in the AFC Challenge Cup has to stay on the top of the list. Besides, representation in the 2011 Asian Cup is something which I will carry all throughout with me. I need to focus on club football and I want to be playing at the top level for another minimum five-six years.

Q Has there been any change in the state of Indian football when you first joined the National squad and now?

A lot! The football played nowadays is entirely different. The present lot is a more confident unit who understands the value of holding onto the ball. Earlier, the primary focus stayed in clearing the ball. Nowadays, there's more constructive play. The mind stays pre-dominant in the brand of football we play now. The attitude and the fitness of the players have improved leaps and bounds.

Off the field, I'd say at present there are a lot of sponsors which is a healthy sign. The players get better facilities to stay and eat – that wasn't the case earlier. Moreover, the amount of exposure tours has only added to our confidence.

Q Asked to take a pick, who would you pick as your best partner as a stopper-back. Also, who do you consider as the most dangerous Indian forward?

Robert Fernandes is one from whom I've learnt a lot. He stays one of my personal favourite as a partner in defence. And there's Deepak Mondal. We spent four years at the TFA and later on partnered each other in defence. The telepathy between us was amazing. He has always been a class act. Speaking of forwards, there's always a certain IM Vijayan and a Bhaichung Bhutia. They always made the task difficult for defenders.

Q A defender, despite all his versatility doesn't necessarily become a star. How do you explain that?

It's a trend world over. But within the team, a defender is looked up to the most even by the 'biggest star.' The sport is about 11 players – there's a star in every department. I have no regrets in what I have achieved. Over the years, my teammates and coaches have understood my value – that's one of my most prized possession.

Q Who are the next defenders in India who can make it big?

Prayag United's Arnab Mondal is playing well at the moment. He's tough yet confident. Then, there's Raju Gaikwad (Kingfisher East Bengal) and Dempo's Crescent Antao. Gourmangi Singh is a senior pro now and stays the guiding force for all. I'd love to see Anwar Ali make a comeback into the National squad. Besides, Ravanan (Churchill Brothers), Anas Edathodika (Pune FC) and Gurwinder Singh (Kingfisher East Bengal) are also talented youngsters.

UPCOMING

- Teams at the half-way stage of I-League
- All from Bhaichung's farewell-match
- More on Future Courses

(All In our next Edition)

