

HFL MAG

SEASON 2019-20

MUHAMMED ZAIDH

The hottest property in 5-a-side football



eHFL

Football even during the lockdown

HYDERABAD FC

the latest partners of HFL

HFL - WOMEN'S

the game belongs to everyone now

SEASON IV

Invincibles FC emerge as the champions of HFL

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SEASON IV

INVINCIBLES FC - THE DESERVED CHAMPIONS

Invincibles FC lived up to their name with a great run in HFL - IV / p3



HYDERABAD FC

THE NEWEST PARTNERS OF HFL

Hyderabad FC and HFL partnered for developing the grassroots with Rookies Cup & HFL - Women's / p9



HFL - WOMEN'S

THE GAME BELONGS TO EVERYONE

The introduction of the first ever women's league in the city / p14



ROOKIES CUP III

FK7 FC WERE CROWNED THE CHAMPIONS

The grassroot talent was on display during the 3rd edition of Rookies / p11

Director's Note

Hyderabad Football League was born out of the vision to make football accessible to everyone in the city and this magazine is aimed at highlighting the achievements of Hyderabad's footballing talent.



We are very proud of what we've achieved so far with the HFL. To be so popularly recognised as the best league in the city is what we set out to do and thankfully we've been able to do that. There's still a lot of scope for improvement and once the lockdown opens the wheels will be in motion for us to get to the next step.

But our effort and endeavour will always be to improve the football culture, footballing skills and give recognition to the talent in the city.

MURAD JASANI
Managing Director



Football is our first love and we at HFL share the same passion as everyone of you involved in this beautiful game. We want to thank you for being part of HFL and we are as committed as ever to make football accessible to all in Hyderabad and other cities going forward. HFL has ensured that everyone of you gets a platform, be it a semi-pro, a rookie, a woman, even a gamer in these testing times, and this is just the start of the long journey.

2019-20 was an eventful season with all our flagship events including Mini-HFL, Rookies Cup, eHFL with the addition of HFL - Women's and our exciting partnership with Hyderabad FC. We have a lot more in store for you, keep supporting us the way you all have done for the past 5 years and we will keep contributing to the football ecosystem.

As we all ride out the storm, we would request you to take care of yourself and your families, by ensuring that you follow all protocols of safety. We can't wait to get the ball rolling and get back to living football!

ADIL MISTRY
Technical Director

Season IV





The stage was set for the fourth edition of Hyderabad Football League in the summer of 2019, wherein for the first time ever, the players would get paid to play. HFL restructured itself, to a 5-a-side format after the valuable inputs of Bhaichung Bhutia, the ex-league mentor of HFL.

120 of the best players from Hyderabad were shortlisted from a pool of 300+ players who attended the trials, which was conducted by Mr. Alphonso Santiago (ex-Technical Director, Churchill Brothers). Mr. Alphonso who flew in from Mumbai, was impressed by the talent at show during the trials and spoke about how the shorter format of the game requires higher fitness levels and skill levels.

9 teams were drafted through an auction by their respective managers, who were also getting paid along with the players and were looking forward to the tactical battle on-field.

Invincibles FC dominated the tournament throughout with an unbeaten run of 13 games which ensured they finished first in the league stage and onto the play-offs stage.

Sports Village FC, Rampagers FC and Zodiac FC were the other three teams who qualified for the play-offs. The finals was contested between Invincibles FC and Sports Village FC wherein Invincibles FC won the game with the scoreline of 4-1.

A jubilant Mohd. Wasif, the manager of Invincibles FC was all praise for his team after the season ended, "Regardless of the scoreboard, you're going to be successful because of all the efforts, all the hardwork. Don't ever give up, When you're part of a team, you stand up for your teammates. Your loyalty is to them and thats what drove us to success. My team made me a proud manager and we stood up to the name 'Invincibles'.

Above
Invincibles FC after being crowned the Champions of HFL - Season IV.

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THE BEST PERFORMERS OF SEASON IV

➔ GOLDEN BALL



Muhammed Zaidh of Invincibles FC was the glue that held the entire team together and was influential in the team's success. He scored 22 goals and bagged 10 assists. He was declared the MVP 5 times during the season, including in the finals. His off-the-ball antics and game management was also a big contributor to his team's success.

RISING STAR ⬅

Syed Yousuf of Invincibles FC was awarded the Rising Star award. He was absolutely unstoppable during the first part of the season. He later picked an injury which resulted in him missing the second half but he made a comeback in the play-offs stage. He has 12 goals and 5 assists to his name, along with 4 MVP performances which was a testament to the strong Invincibles FC lineup.



➔ GOLDEN BOOT



Ahtesham Ali of Friends United was a goal machine for the team. He scored 27 goals for his team and didn't even play the full season. He managed to have these numbers inspite of being sidelined due to injury. When he played, a goal riot was guaranteed, for all we know, had he played the full season, Friends United might have even qualified for the play-offs.

BEST DEFENDER ⬅

Nitesh Sharma of Sports Village FC was the power house of the team. A strong defender who was an absolute rock for the team also chipped in during the counter attacks. He had some phenomenal numbers against his name, being part of 4 clean sheets, 14 goals & 6 assists, which are impeccable numbers for a defender. He was awarded the MVP award for 7 games during the season.



➔ GOLDEN GLOVE



Ibad Ullah Khan of Invincibles FC is arguably the best keeper of the lot. His reflexes and agility make him a hard target to beat. He conceded the least goals in the tournament (19) and had 4 clean sheets. He was awarded the MVP for 1 match during the season.

BEST MIDFIELDER ⬅

Shaik Umair of Team Zodiac was the stand-out performer for his team, acting as a link between the defence and the attack. Although this did not stop him from scoring goals. He scored 26 goals & had 12 assists. He was also awarded the MVP award 5 times for his team. His influential performances were the key reason his team qualified for the play-offs.



Muhammed Zaidh





Tell us something about your footballing journey.

It's been quite a journey Alhamdulillah. From playing football in the streets, to playing in Brazil, Alhamdulillah I couldn't have asked for more.

How was your experience during HFL - Season IV?

Fantastic, we stayed unbeaten for so long despite our best defender and top scorer in league going out of the tournament so early on. I think we showed our depth and true power of what 'Believe in your ability' defines.

The boys deserve the credit. Every one on the team was a unit right from the 1st day of the tournament to when we almost got knocked out and till we celebrated the Cup in the end, we stuck together no matter what.

How does it feel to win the Golden Ball award in back-to-back seasons?

Wish there was another bike 🏍️. Although, Alhamdulillah great. Can't thank HFL enough to provide this platform consistently over the past 3-4 years.

Do you prefer 5-a-side football or 11-a-side football?

Personally, I prefer every single format of the 'Beautiful Game'. 5-11 a side, everything requires different set of qualities and I enjoy each and every format as much. While 11 v 11 requires stamina, strength, conditioning, 5 v 5 requires quick reactions, reflexes and spontaneous strategies. With 11v11 fading in Hyderabad, would again give credit to the team of HFL for providing the football players in Hyderabad with the 5v5 format on a regular basis. Hope a lot of HFL tournaments happen in the future as well.



What is your advice to budding footballers of the city?

I would advise the youngsters to work as hard as they can knowing that ISL is just around the corner as there's our team (HFC) in it. I feel soon our players will be getting a lot of opportunities. So train yourselves in every format physically and mentally if you want to do something in football. We didn't have that chance and our age is a barrier now, rooting to see Hyderabad talent on television.

Tell us about your footballing idol/role model.

There are various football players that I admire. But Cristiano has to be the number 1 inspiration for me. His never give up attitude, his will to win every single match even if he's won that tournament repeatedly, I have only learnt so much from him and he's my no. 1 inspiration.

How are you staying in touch with football during this pandemic?

Thankfully, I live in an apartment. So I have my 2 younger brothers who play football. So we're in touch with football doing fun activities like 1v1's, 1v1v1 and a lot of creative stuff. Hope the world is safe from the pandemic soon and we can resume our matches as early as we can.

I FEEL SOON OUR PLAYERS WILL BE GETTING A LOT OF OPPORTUNITIES. SO TRAIN YOURSELVES IN EVERY FORMAT PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY IF YOU WANT TO DO SOMETHING IN FOOTBALL.





Hyderabad FC



Asish Rai, Hyderabad FC player being presented a jersey by Murad Jasani, MD - HFL

HYDERABAD FC PARTNERS WITH HFL

Hyderabad FC joins hands with Hyderabad Football League (HFL) to promote grass-root football in the city.

Hyderabad FC, the ISL franchise from Hyderabad, which had their first ever season in 2019-20 entered into a partnership with HFL to promote football in the city during the HFL - Rookies Cup III and HFL - Women's.

The partnership expanded Hyderabad's long footballing tradition to women as well. Varun Tripuraneni, co-owner HFC, "We are excited to collaborate with HFL and

support them for this novel initiative. Hyderabad has lots of talent and enthusiasm towards football, and we were especially surprised with the response from the women. HFL is giving them a good platform to explore the game and its dynamics."

Murad Jasani, MD - HFL said "It feels great to finally have an ISL club in the city and one that actually cares about the development of football in Hyderabad. We are hopeful that over the coming years, together we will be able to change the footballing landscape in our city."

Asish Rai, India U-23 and Hyderabad FC player preceded over the finals of HFL - Rookies Cup III and HFL - Women's

"We are hopeful that over the coming years, together we will be able to change the footballing landscape in our city"



Rookies Cup



ROOKIES CUP III

The best rookie talent at display

in association with Hyderabad FC

HFL Rookies Cup is aimed at unearthing the grass-root talent of the city. The league's main version is aimed at semi-professional athletes and Rookies Cup gives a platform to everyone else who does not fall in that category.

This tournament is a pay & play model where individuals register themselves and are drafted into different teams by pre-appointed managers/coaches through a virtual auction. Every team has a mix of marquee, A-pool & B-pool players with rules ensuring each player plays for a certain amount of time in every game.

All 60 players went through a virtual auction held at OctoSpaces, Banjara Hills. The month long tournament saw great talent at display and was played at FoodBall Arena, Jubilee Hills. Onslaught FC topped the table, with FK7 FC coming second. The finals was played between the top 2 teams, and FK7 emerged as Champions after Onslaught were reduced to 4-men.

Asish Rai said, "Playing matches is instrumental in shaping how we play and this football tournament would definitely work as a confidence booster for all the participants. We should organise more tournaments like this."

THE BEST PERFORMERS OF ROOKIES CUP III



GOLDEN BALL

Taher Uddin
(FK7 FC)



GOLDEN BOOT

Syed Mohammed
(Indios FC)



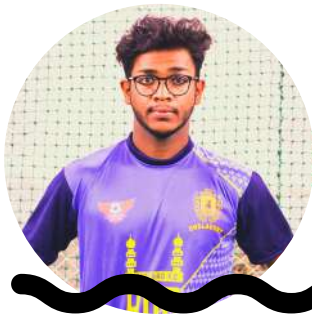
GOLDEN GOLVE

Mohd. Faisal
(FK7 FC)



BEST DEFENDER

Gurdain Singh
(FK7 FC)



BEST MIDFIELDER

Mohd. Ali
(Onslaught FC)

HFL - Women's



The first ever women-exclusive football tournament in the city saw 4 teams battling it for the inaugural HFL - Women's. The talent on display was phenomenal and it reinforces the organisers belief that the beautiful game belongs to everyone and more conscious efforts need to be put in for women's category.

Champions Football Academy won the tournament after defeating Team HFL in the finals 3-1.

THE BEST PERFORMERS OF HFL - WOMEN'S



Golden Ball: Simran Katyal
Golden Boot: Simran Katyal
Golden Glove: Sowmya

Best Defender: Nida Adeel
Best Midfielder: Asha KR
Best Attacker: Anjali





How long have you been playing football? How did it all start?

I started playing football when I was in my 9th grade. We had a thing called the 'Team Games' and could choose a sport to our liking. That's when I chose football. Amongst the first girls from my school to do so.

Tell us something about your most memorable football story.

My most memorable football story is after graduating school. Having very little support from my parents, I finally managed to find my way to practice sessions in the mornings at the Gymkhana grounds. Stepping in there for the first time with much anticipation, excitement and curiosity had its own element of fun to it.

How was your experience during HFL - Women's?

HFL Women's gave me the break I much needed. The stress of my everyday life, and the monotonous tone to it had started to consume me. Being there in those practice sessions and playing the matches, I'd connect with myself. It may sound like exaggeration but it most definitely is not.

Also my experience with HFL would be incomplete if I do not mention the amazing players I met there, the beautiful bonds that were made with my fellow teammates and opponents.



Tell us about your footballing idol/role model.

Aditi Chauhan, Goalkeeper of the Indian National Team and the founder of a football academy, she ticks all the boxes in connecting with the younger generations and developing a football culture among the women of the country.

What would be your advice to all women footballers in the city?

You will all hear a lot about practicing hard and smart and everything, sure it's important but it will all go down the drain if you do not have the confidence or the desire to win. Giving up is in itself a battle lost. Being a tough opponent is as important as winning the game. You may not always be remembered for the matches you won but you will definitely be remembered for giving your opponents a hard a** time. Strive for such savageness.

How are you staying in touch with football during this pandemic?

I play around in the house with my younger brother and practice tricks whenever I can. I'd like to thank HFL for their interest and work to engage more women with the sport in the city and being one of their kind in the industry! Kudos to the team!

YOU WILL ALL HEAR A LOT ABOUT PRACTICING HARD AND SMART AND EVERYTHING, SURE IT'S IMPORTANT BUT IT WILL ALL GO DOWN THE DRAIN IF YOU DO NOT HAVE THE CONFIDENCE OR THE DESIRE TO WIN.



SEASON 1

SYED AYAAN YOUSUF WINS THE INAUGURAL eHFL

After the lockdown was announced, and sports completely missing from our lives, HFL thought of having an eSports League to keep everybody connected with the sport. Just like how La Liga and Premier League started conducting FIFA tournaments, HFL launched eHFL.

The first season saw 14 gamers divided into two groups and the toppers of each group would compete in the finals. eHFL: Season 1 finale was contested between Syed Ayaan Yousuf (PSG) and Darshak (Barcelona), and Syed Ayaan Yousuf won the inaugural version of eHFL.

Syed Ayaan Yousuf is just 13 years old and plays for a local UAE club, and has roots in Hyderabad. He donated his entire cash prize of eHFL to CM Relief Fund for the fight against Coronavirus.



eHFL

Football even during lockdown



SEASON 2

GAMERS FROM 3 COUNTRIES COMPETED FOR THE eHFL TITLE

After a successful inaugural season of eHFL and the lockdown being extended, the second season of eHFL was launched. This time, gamers from 3 different countries participated, which included India, UAE, Canada. Even from India, players were from different cities such as Hyderabad, Mumbai, Kolkata.

The second season was Champions League format where 2 groups were formed and the top 2 placed gamers in each group would compete on home & away basis. Vivek Jonnalagadda (Liverpool) won against Faizaan Yousuf Syed (Barcelona) in the finals.

Vivek Jonnalagadda, has played various HFL tournaments in the past and is also a football coach.



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