

HISTORY BEHIND THE SUCCESS

Like any other sports person I also have a **history behind my success**. The path has been difficult, but may be that is the reason that I have reached the zenith in the sport of Carrom.

I may be in 9th standard when on the pretext of summoning my brother I visited the Carrom club. Watching my brother play I gradually developed the liking for the game. My mother first noticed my inclination towards Carrom and she encouraged me by often providing money secretly for playing in the club. Our financial situation was not good and our only source of income was my father who worked as a daily laborer in the railways and did not support my interest in Carrom. When he was about to retire, he unfortunately passed away in January 2008. My mother is my role-model who in spite of enormous difficulties cared for us and supported our interests. I dedicate my success to her efforts.

As my game improved I started taking part in few district level competitions - my financial situation prevented me from taking part in all district level competitions. I did not have enough money to even pay for the entry fees for the competitions. I remember an instance where I had to sell my father's liquor bottles and a metal bucket to raise money to pay the entrance fee for a competition - I can still remember how many rupees those bottles fetched me then. The entrance to the competition was gained, but a grater issue still loomed, the problem of commuting to and fro from the venue. I stayed at Yerawada while the competition was organized at Nehru stadium near Swargate which is nearly 9-10 km. away. It was necessary to cover this distance everyday to participate in the competition. Even my pair of slipper did not support in that commute. The slippers would break every few meters and I had to mend it together with a metal string. This provided a temporary solution and had to be repeated often.

I was expected to reach the competition venue by 9 am therefore I had to start my journey by 7 am fueled by a meager cup of tea. On the first day after reaching the venue by 8:45 am the first thing bothering me was my empty stomach. If I had to have a good game then it would not have been possible on an empty stomach. Something had to be done about this and very soon. Just then I heard an announcement from the head referee inviting volunteers for refereeing. I immediately pounced on the opportunity and registered my name. Each referee received a refreshments coupon every day. I would act as a referee for 2 matches before participating in mine and a cup of tea and one cream roll would quench my hunger for the time being. That day I walked back all the way home mending my broken slippers.

That night I sensed the tension in the air at home and I quietly had a few morsels and went to sleep. In the morning I woke up early and while leaving my mother noticed the broken slippers and she give me my brother's slippers to

wear. I of course still had to walk that distance, but now it was much better. With my mother's blessings and God's grace I won that match and that evening Mr. Rajan Jharekar give me a ride home in his auto rickshaw. I told my mother of the **day's achievement and give her the prize money of Rs. 501**. Mother offered the money to God and prayed for my success and instead of congratulating me she asked "Son, for these past 2 days **how did you commute and what did you eat?**" I will never forget her tone filled with compassion and love, she unfortunately passed away in November 2010.

Every sport needs proper training, but in my case I never had any. I learnt my game by observing my opponents. I started painstakingly identify my mistakes and trying to correct them on my own. In this endeavor I received co-operation from **Mr. Rajan Jharekar and Mr. Nitin Bora**.

One of the reasons that I had to endure so much for Carrom was our poverty and the illiteracy which surrounded me. I was born in Subhash Nagar; a slum near Yerawada in Pune. I completed my education till 12th standard from corporation school (government aided school). Continuing for college education was out of the question and maybe that made be turn my attention towards the field of sports and I decided to carve a successful carrier out of it. I trained and practiced for nearly 8-10 hours a day learning and improving my game. These efforts resulted in my moving from district level to state level competitions. In **1997 I won the state level Carrom championship held at Ratnagiri** and for the **first time** moved the title from Mumbai to Pune. Then in 1998 I was selected in the Maharashtra state team for the national Carrom championship held at Akola and in 2000 I was part of the **Indian national team** which participated in the **3rd world Carrom championship held at New Delhi**. My ranking was 4 at the national level. In the world championship I helped the Indian team win the team championship, doubles championship and was runner up for the singles championship. Due to my achievement in the world championship, in March 2001 I was **offered a job in Indian Oil Corporation** as a clerk. Later in 2001 I represented India in the 1st Carrom world cup held at London in England and was runner up in doubles and secured the third place in the singles competition. Considering my consistent performance, Indian Oil Corporation according to its policy offered my first promotion as grade 'A' officer in January 2002.

Joining the Indian Oil Corporation solved my financial problems to a certain extent and now I could practice and concentrate on my game whole heartedly. I receive travel benefits from the company in the form of T.A. D.A. which along with the encouragement from the officials and my colleagues inspires me to work harder towards achieving my goals.

Armed with the blessings and encouragement of my family and supporters I became the World champion in the **2nd Carrom world cup held at New Delhi in 2006 & 5th World Carrom Championship at France {Cannes} in 2008** and retained the championship in the recently held **3rd Carrom world cup at**

America in 2010. Indian Oil Corporation promoted me to grade 'B' officer in 2011.

I give all the credit of my success to my **FAMILY and INDIAN OIL CORPORATION.** My company helped me become financially independent and concentrate on my game. In Carrom competitions cash prizes are rare and in those cases I consider the T.A. D.A. provided by my company as my cash prize. I would not have been successful without this support. To ensure that I can perform consistently I practice for 8-10 hours every day and along with this I perform Yoga and exercise in the gymnasium. This helps me remain fit and focused for my practice and matches.

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