

Deccan Herald - Metrolife

FOOTBALL

Shorter game, bigger thrill

There are hardly any efforts done in this cricket centric nation to uplift other sports and if done, few of them prove to be successful. This Sunday, Capital witnessed one more such attempt to bring another sport into the mainstream, as the Delhi hosted its city finale for T20 football league.

"We are taking forward the philosophy of Change the Game by taking football outside the conventional domain and giving it a refreshing twist. It's a unique grassroots level initiative mounted at a never before scale in India that aims to take the excitement around the sport to the next level. We are delighted with the spectacular response for the sport here in Delhi." Homi Battiwalla, Category Director - Colas, Hydration and Mango Based Beverages, PepsiCo India told *Metrolife*.

"The game is very different from classic foot ball, it is quick and action oriented. Youth of today is watching international football leagues all the time and this is our effort to bring the football fans together and give them a platform," he added.

The revolutionary format of this old football game is expected to bring the thrill and

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RAHUL

excitement, for the game, back into the hearts of young enthusiasts. The contest was played inside a unique metallic cage where 224 amateur players showcased their moves. The game was reduced to 20 minutes where 32 teams, comprising of 7 players each, competed in a knock out format.

A lot of enthusiasm was seen among the player playing the knock out matches. More than the competition, the spirit of the game was being celebrated by the players of all the teams. All kinds of teams whether college teams or society groups, footballer starting from 14yrs of age were seen playing at the venue.

Rahul, Captain, SPG Team said, "We are thrilled to win the city finale of Pepsi T20 Football and that gives us a chance to represent our city



BALL GAME A player juggles a football.



PLAY IT The match was played inside a metal cage in a time span of just 20 minutes.

in the national finals. We are glad that this initiative is being taken to popularize the sport in our country. We are looking forward to exciting and challenging national finals, scheduled to take place in June this year"

Keeping in mind the enormous talent that we have in our country, such tournaments must be encouraged. As this is the high time now, we should realize that a whole country cannot be raised on just one sport. We need to

have more such events uplifting various other sports, they not only motivate current game players but also give a moral boost to other potential players who have not stepped into sports yet. The city finale was a huge success as it saw an overwhelming response from all the teams as well as the audience. Teams from far places, who didn't get registered into their own cities, were also present in the competition.

Raghav Jaitly