

# S.K.Sharma



Article contributed by our Guest Columnist.

### S. K. SHARMA

- Secretary General  
International Carrom Federation
- Treasurer  
Asian Carrom Confederation
- Executive President  
All India Carrom Federation
- General Secretary  
Haryana Carrom Association

S. K. Sharma has completed a long journey of 41 years in carrom. At present he is the Secretary General of the International Carrom Federation, Treasurer of the Asian Carrom Confederation, Executive President of the All India Carrom Federation and the General Secretary of the Haryana Carrom Association.

S.K. Sharma started playing carrom at a competitive level in 1972 while studying in Delhi University. Within two years he won two Doubles tournaments in Delhi. He continued to participate in competitions for about 18 years and won laurels for his organization, MMTC Limited.

He was elected Assistant Treasurer of the Delhi Carrom Association, his first position in carrom administration. In 1986, he got his first official appointment as Manager of Delhi State Team for the Senior National & Inter-State Carrom Championship held in Solapur, Maharashtra.

On shifting his residence from Delhi to Faridabad in Haryana, S.K. Sharma joined the Haryana Carrom Association in 1990 and became General Secretary of the Faridabad District Carrom Association. In February 1992 he organized biggest Indian national championship in Faridabad as the Organizing Secretary. In fact, that Championship was declared the best national championship ever organized in India. Later he was elected as Joint Secretary of the Haryana Carrom Association. In the meantime, he continued playing carrom as a member of the Haryana State team and

S.K. Sharma with the victorious Indian Squad at the 6<sup>th</sup> World Cup in Colombo, Sri Lanka (2013)



represented Haryana in many national championships and other national level tournaments. He dedicated himself to carrom by offering his services as official and umpire besides being a player. He qualified as a National Umpire in 1990. He then became International Umpire in 1996. He was also elected General Secretary of the Haryana Carrom Association.

S.K. Sharma got the pleasant surprise of his life when he was appointed General Secretary of the All India Carrom Federation on 15<sup>th</sup> January 1995 at the General Council meeting of the Federation held in Guntur, Andhra Pradesh. It happened so when he was not a contestant.

He accepted the challenge to complete three national championships and three Indo-German Test Matches within 75 days of his election without any sponsor in hand and fulfilled his impossible looking obligation with great success. From there onwards he never looked back and continued as General Secretary of the All India Carrom Federation for more than 17 years. He was elected General Secretary of AICF unopposed four times but had to leave his position because of Government rules. In the last elections held in July 2012 he was elected Executive President of the AICF unanimously.

In 1995 he was elected Vice-President of the Asian Carrom Confederation as founding member and served as Treasurer and ex-officio member of A.C.C. He was elected as Assistant Treasurer of the International Carrom Federation in 1997 and in 2001 he became the Secretary General of the International Carrom Federation. During his tenure he organized himself 10 national events in his home town Faridabad and one in Gurgaon with big success. He himself organized World Championship 2000, World Cup 2006 and SAARC Championship 2003 in five star hotels with grand success.

During his tenure as General Secretary of the All India Carrom Federation, he introduced a separate national championship for institutions, which have employed maximum top players of India. To unearth young talent and to groom them for future, he introduced annual national championships for under 12 years of age boys and girls and also for under 21 years besides conducting national championships for boys and girls under 14 years, under 18 years of age, senior and veterans above 50 years of age every year.

To propagate carrom in every part of India he organized national level carrom events in about 30 new cities and towns. He introduced a new Constitution of the Federation and regularly updated. He introduced new rules and policies for the conduct of carrom tournaments in India covering various technical and administrative matters, which proved to be a great help to players and organizers both. Brought complete transparency in the accounting system. Undertook refresher clinics and workshops for national and international umpires. Introduced 'Training for Trainers' courses for empanelling coaches in all parts of India. To create a panel of



S.K. Sharma with the Maldives squad at the 6<sup>th</sup> World Cup in Colombo, Sri Lanka (2013)

technical officials and well qualified referees, introduced regular 'National Referees Examination' in addition to 'National Umpires Examination'.

Introduced yoga and sports psychology subjects for national players in their coaching camps and training courses. Made special emphasis on physical fitness for national players. Made carrom specific studies on mind and body relationship, enhancement of concentration of carrom players which helped them in getting good marks in their studies, whether age has a bearing while playing in big competitions, etc. To bring glamour in carrom started inviting celebrities from different walks of life in various carrom events. To increase awareness and popularity organized national events in Shopping Malls. To bring awareness publicized carrom events through 200,000 emails and sms each. Organize 10 national events every year in India besides cash prizes events. He has supervised thousands of carrom tournaments at different levels from Inter-School competition, Inter-office competitions, District tournaments, State tournaments, National Tournaments and International tournaments. With his innovative ideas, many new systems have been introduced. To make the game spectator and media friendly, playing rules were experimented at national level.

Now reporting time has been changed to five minutes before the scheduled time, reduced rest time from 10 minutes to 2 minutes between 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> game, playing time reduced to 10 seconds and matches of all rounds have been restricted to 8 boards. For junior and sub-junior players, number of boards have been restricted to six till finals and instead of 25 points the game is completed at 21 points. Colours of boards and c/m have been experimented which have preferred and linked by electronic media. We played some small tournaments without board light which has always been preferred by electronic media.

Was able to get recognition from the Indian Olympic Association. Succeeded in introducing carrom in about 10,000 schools through

recognition by Central Board of Secondary Education. CBSE is organizing separate national championship every year for school children. Besides, School Games Federation of India also recognized carrom and started organizing national championships. Getting financial grant in aid from the Government of India of about Rupees two million every year for organizing national championships and for the salary of one staff employed in the Federation.

Succeeded in getting a prestigious National Sports Award for a carrom player, A. Maria Irudayam. Carrom players could also get Pension from the Government of India. Meritorious carrom players are regularly getting employment under sports quota. Many talented and meritorious carrom players under the age of 18 years are getting monthly scholarships. Carrom players employed under sports quota are able to get time to practice during office working hours, get special leave for participating in carrom events, get all their traveling and hospitality expenses reimbursed, get special increments in salary and cash awards for achieving excellence. Maria Irudayam got a house on achieving excellence as a gift from the Government. Players are getting State Sports Awards and honours. Recently, few carrom players received cash awards of more than Rupees four million.

Was instrumental in designing and conceptualizing 'King of Carrom' (trial version) and 'World Series of Carrom' which was shot in Delhi region immediately after the 2006 World Cup and 15 episodes were telecast on ESPN/Star Sports channels with 30 shows in English and 30 shows in Hindi. Sixteen players from 11 countries in the World Series of Carrom having a cash prize of about Rupees one million. Colours of the equipments and the rules of the Series and title of the Series were all suggested by me in various personal meetings.

Introduced carrom for blinds and organized two tournaments for blinds in Haryana at Faridabad and Gurgaon. After a lot of study, developed new carrom boards with different size and more pockets for blinds and presented them sets of equipments free of cost to them for their regular use.

Was able to get the Indian carrom team felicitated by the President of India in Rashtrapati Bhavan after winning 2008 World Championship. Indian carrom players were felicitated along with cricketer Sachin Tendulkar in Lok Sabha (Indian Parliament House) by the Honourable Speaker of the House in the presence of Prime Minister of India and other Ministers/Members. Indian players were also felicitated in Parliament House.

After retiring from his job, he wishes to do voluntary service to entertain blinds and other physically challenged people with the game of carrom. He wishes to train them and play carrom with them. Besides, he intends to propagate this carrom in schools and colleges through the intensive training campaign at his personal level through audio video aides.



S.K.Sharma with members of the world cup tournament committee in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Sitting 4<sup>th</sup> from left is Arif Navqi, President I.C.F. (2013). Tournament Secretary Rohini Mathiasz sitting 2<sup>nd</sup> from left.