

Rajesh Singh to train with pace legend Akram

S S Shreekumar | ENS
Bangalore, July 10

IT'S a 'dream come true' for 20-year-old Rajesh Singh, a Bangalore resident. He was one of the eight winners in the Gatorade Pacers Hunt 2009 finals, and is to be trained under former Pakistan fast bowler Wasim Akram at Gatorade Centre for Pace Excellence, New Delhi, from July 15 to 29.

"If it was not for this contest, I would have still been bowling away at rival batsmen, and leaving Gorakhpur to stay at Bengaluru for the sake of cricket would have been futile. Selection at the finals has made me confident of my bowling abilities. The inputs from Wasim Akram further will take my bowling to the next level. It is a great privilege for me that I am getting patronage from the academy," Rajesh said.

Wasim Akram, the chief coach, said: "India never had a dearth of pace bowlers, but due to lack of proper training in terms of technique and fitness, the country was not able to produce many fast blowers who

could play for long in the international circuit. There is always some niggles or other with today's fast bowlers because of too much of cricket at every level. In this situation, the pacers need to take a scientific approach to their fitness and bowling. This centre will really produce a battery of next generation fit pace bowlers by providing them the right hydration strategy along with the right bowling techniques."

"Rajesh is a great promise for India's fast bowling future. With the busy international cricket schedule, it is most likely that the bowlers will develop injury, so there has to be a bench strength for the team with equal talent.

"The centre will help the country to create that bench strength in the form of bowlers like Rajesh," he added.

"Not only will the centre provide budding pacemen the best training support but also it will inculcate the culture of sports science in the players at a young age which, I believe, is critical if one were to consistently deliver at one's best over a long period

of time. Optimal Hydration is a strong performance differentiator once you have similar skill and fitness levels. We learnt this the hard way, I am happy initiatives like this are exposing young students, coaches and administrators to the importance of optimal hydration," Akram said.

The sports drink is popular amongst sportspersons worldwide, so it is only appropriate that the brand plays a catalyst role in identifying the next fast bowling sensation in our country.

The sweating and the need for recovery is very significant in fast bowlers. There are three major aspects in this which are skill, fitness and body preparedness. The sweat formed in each players' body, composition of sweat and other parameters get measured. Based on this, a personal hydration strategy will be chalked out at the centre for every player.

"Optimal hydration is a strong performance differentiator once you have similar skill and fitness levels," said, Sandeep Walunj, vice president, Innovation, PepsiCo India, the sponsors.