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hockey

Nurturing talent at SAIL Academy

Rourkela, Feb. 18: Sanjeev Barla, a 19-year-old from a poor tribal family in Sundargarh, developed a passion for hockey at a very young age but his dream of playing for India took wings only after joining the SAIL Hockey Academy here. "I watched children play with bamboo sticks and wanted to play too. But it was only when I got selected to the academy that my dreams took wing," Sanjeev said.

For many like Sanjeev, hockey was a way of life in the district but the Steel Authority of India Hockey Academy (SHA) has over the years given them a chance to convert their passion into a career.

Located in the scenic Durgapur hill range, the SHA every year recruits kids — mostly in the 14 to 16 and 16 to 18 age-groups, primarily from the Sundargarh district.

Established in 1992 by the Rourkela Steel Plant, the academy is equipped with modern facilities, including an astro-turf that was installed in 2005.

— PTI