

Kalinga Lancers crowned new HIL champs

Team Rides On Hendrickx Brace To Beat Ranchi Royals

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Bhubaneswar: In front of a partisan Kalinga Hockey Stadium, Vedanta Kalinga Lancers rode on Alexander Hendrickx's penalty-corner double to beat Ranchi Royals 3-2 and lift the Men's Hero Hockey India League title on Monday.

The crowd turned up in numbers and the fervent, vocal support for the Odisha-based side was a sight to see. To the de-



STAR OF THE SHOW: Hendrickx

light of the fans, Lancers did not disappoint. The Belgian drag-flicker struck in the 4th and 27th minutes to finish the season with 12 goals.

Dilpreet Singh added the other Lancers goal in the 25th. Arajjeet Singh Hundal (9') and Tom Boon (59') replied for the

Royals, who fell short despite winning seven penalty corners. Boon finished with 19 goals – the highest in the tournament.

Lancers drew first blood from a retaken penalty corner when Angad Bir Singh won the set-piece and Hendrickx powered his drag-flick low to the goalkeeper's left. Suraj Karkera got a stick on it but could not keep it out. The Royals hit back within five minutes. Yashdeep Siwach's aerial from the left found Hundal inside the circle; the forward brought it down under pressure and squeezed a finish past Krishan Bahadur Pathak at the near post.

But the second quarter be-

longed to the hosts. Karkera's initial save off Hendrickx spilled into danger and Dilpreet reacted quickest to stab home the rebound. Two minutes later, Hendrickx unleashed another fierce drag-flick, threading it beyond the right-post runner to restore the two-goal cushion. The Lancers' defence held firm until the final two minutes.

Hyderabad Toofans beat HIL GC 4-3 for bronze medal

Earlier, Hyderabad Toofans secured third place with a 4-3 win over HIL GC. Amandeep Lakra scored twice, with Nilakanta Sharma and Jacob Anderson also on target.