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INSMA Jio Institute  
LEARNING FOR LIFE

# 2nd Indian Sport Management Conference

# EVENT REPORT

NAVI MUMBAI  
DECEMBER 18-19  
**#INSMA2025**



**NAVI MUMBAI 2025**  
INDIAN SPORT MANAGEMENT CONFERENCE

ORGANISED AND HOSTED BY

INSMA Jio Institute  
LEARNING FOR LIFE



# THEME

## OLYMPIC ASPIRATIONS: BUILDING INDIA'S CAPABILITIES AND COMPETENCIES FOR A GLOBAL SPORTING STAGE

The theme “Olympic Aspirations: Building India's Capabilities and Competencies for a Global Sporting Stage” encapsulated India's ambitious journey toward hosting and excelling at the 2036 Olympics by bringing together three critical pillars: human capital development (talent), digital innovation and sports science (technology) and unwavering determination backed by strategic policy frameworks (tenacity).

Performance and process focused on India's pursuit of global sporting excellence through early talent identification, world-class training, robust competition, scientific methods and blending global best practices with locally tailored development frameworks. Economy and sustainability explored monetising India's sporting potential through mega-events, sports tourism, sustainable business models, local sports goods manufacturing and fostering startups in sports technology, fan engagement and athlete-focused services.

Community engagement and recreation promoted democratising sports in India by fostering community-wide participation, affordable infrastructure, engaging programs and fitness tracking, while nurturing talent across ages to build a sustainable national sporting culture. Sociology and inclusivity highlighted sport's power to foster inclusion, empower marginalised groups, promote gender equality, preserve traditional games, enable dual-career pathways and engage the diaspora in advancing India's sporting growth.

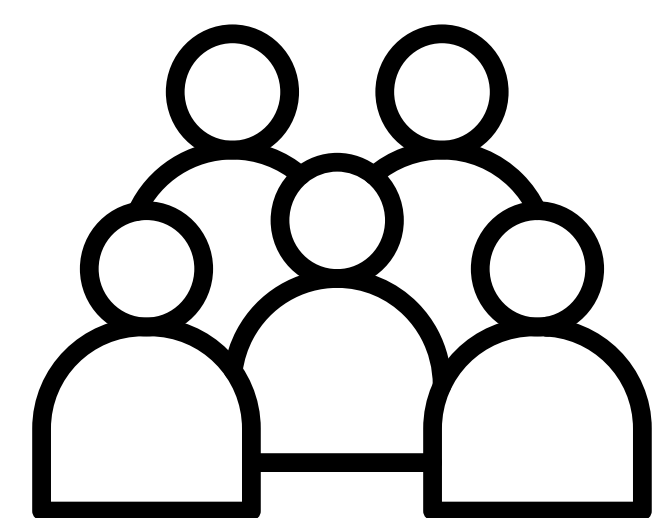
Across the event, INSMA 2025 united stakeholders in India to advance global excellence, economic growth, mass participation and social inclusion in sports, fostering innovative, sustainable and ethical solutions for India's sporting future.



**#INSMA2025**



# THE EVENT IN NUMBERS AND PICTURES



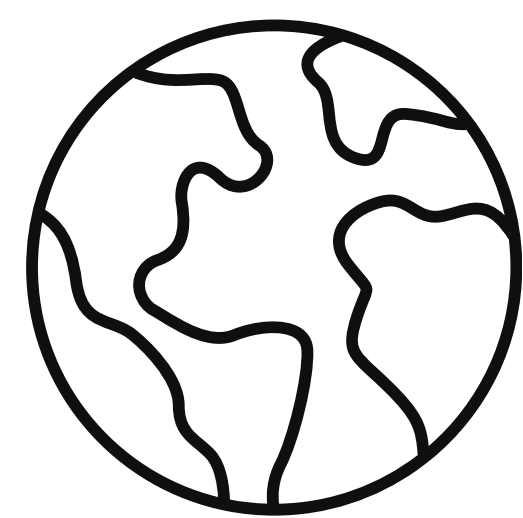
250+

Participants



80:20

Local : International Audience



15

Countries Represented



70+

Organisations Represented





# Opening Address by Dr. Sarthak Mondal, President, INSMA

Dr. Sarthak Mondal (President, INSMA) welcomed distinguished guests, colleagues, industry leaders, athletes, policy makers and students to the second edition of the Indian Sport Management Conference. He emphasised that INSMA's mission is driven by a commitment to action rather than complaint regarding the state of Indian sports. He stated that achieving India's sporting ambitions requires a robust ecosystem including world-class professionals, academic scholarship and evidence-driven policy.

Dr. Mondal acknowledged significant steps taken by the Government of India over the last decade, including the Khelo India games, the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), an updated national sports policy and the National Sports Governance Bill. He argued that the aim of the conference is to bring together various stakeholders to help the "Vision 2036" take a tangible form as India aspires to host the Olympic Games. This included critical questions facing the industry, such as building sustainable infrastructure, developing inclusive talent pathways and ensuring integrity and governance while fostering innovation.

Dr. Mondal argued that INSMA champions a research-driven approach and acts as a platform for collaboration. Since its founding 2 years ago, INSMA has established partnerships with organisations like Motorsport Access, Dream Sports Foundation and TERF to create industry-driven solutions. Key impact reports produced include a study on the economic impact of Moto GP Bharat (2023), an annual review of competitive balance in Indian sports (2024-2025), and a landmark white paper titled "India at the Starting Line: Turning Growth into Glory for Vision 2036". This white paper involved collaboration with numerous experts, gaining international recognition from figures such as Professor David Berri, World Athletics Vice President Dr. Adille Sumariwalla, and Olympic gold medalist Abhinav Bindra.

Dr. Mondal expressed gratitude to the Jio Institute and Dr. Palak for their support in advancing sport management education in India and hosting the Indian Sport Management Conference 2026. He also thanked Leeds Beckett University, INSMA's international knowledge partner, for their expertise. In closing, Dr. Mondal addressed students and emerging professionals, stating they are not just the future but are actively shaping the present of the Indian sporting ecosystem.





# Keynote Address by Dr. Kamilla Swart-Arries, Hamad Bin Khalifa University

In her address at INSMA 2025, Dr. Kamilla Swart-Arries draws on her extensive professional background in the Global South to reflect on her journey in the sports industry, which began with the Cape Town 2004 Olympic bid. She positions herself as the "voice of another," highlighting the ongoing struggle for authentic representation in a Western-dominated sporting world where perspectives from the Global South are often marginalised or misrepresented.

Dr. Swart-Arries utilises the 2010 FIFA World Cup as a primary case study to demonstrate how mega-events can be used to combat "Afropessimism" and shift international perceptions. While she notes that the IOC was not previously prepared for the socio-economic transformation goals of South Africa's 2004 bid, she believes India's current Olympic aspirations are better aligned with the modern IOC's vision. However, she cautions that nations must do more than just meet the technical compliance requirements of governing bodies like FIFA or the IOC; they must proactively leverage these opportunities to serve their own national interests.

A central theme of her speech is the necessity of establishing a comprehensive research and knowledge management agenda early in the process. Dr. Swart-Arries identifies a common failure where focus remains solely on infrastructure while the actual "return on investment" and long-term success go unmeasured. To avoid this, she urges India to utilise its lead time to build institutional capacity and develop a research legacy framework that measures outcomes against a clear baseline. She suggests that upcoming events, such as the Commonwealth Games, should be used as testing grounds for these frameworks.

Ultimately, Dr. Swart-Arries calls on the Indian Sport Management Association (INSMA) to bring partners together to drive this research agenda, fostering knowledge transfer across the Global South and BRICS nations to ensure sporting success translates into meaningful socio-economic development.





# Keynote Address by Smt. Vita Dani, CEO, Dani Foundation

In her address at the Indian Sport Management Conference, Smt. Vita Dani emphasises that sporting success is defined by the strength of the ecosystem rather than just medals. She observes a significant cultural shift where sport has evolved from a hobby into a movement that unites the nation. To address the lack of opportunity for rural talent, Smt. Dani outlines four key pillars driving her foundation's mission.

The first pillar focuses on democratising access to ensure every child has a safe environment to discover their potential. Through various flagship and community programs, the foundation has reached over 500,000 students and impacted more than one million young people via sports-driven education. The second pillar involves empowering coaches, whom Smt. Dani describes as the "invisible" force behind Olympic success. To this end, the foundation has trained over 20,000 teachers and collaborated with Loughborough University to implement international coaching standards.

The third pillar highlights the importance of sport science and high performance, arguing that athletes must "train smarter" using data-driven recovery systems. This system-driven approach at National Centres of Excellence has seen medal counts increase from 65 in 2017 to over 300. Finally, the fourth pillar focuses on strategic partnerships. Through initiatives like "Dream UTT," young athletes train alongside elite international stars, while football collaborations have allowed youth teams to compete against major global clubs like Chelsea and Liverpool.

Smt. Dani concludes by envisioning a future where sport is viewed as an essential part of identity and national pride. She calls for a shift from mere participation to global leadership, ensuring that the dreams of Indian athletes are supported by robust infrastructure and strategic roadmaps. This journey toward a system-driven sporting culture is only just beginning.





# Keynote Address by Col. NS Johal, CEO, Target Olympic Podium Scheme

In his address at INSMA 2025, Colonel NS Johal, the CEO of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), outlines a strategic vision for India's sporting future, drawing from his unique background as a 24-year army veteran and Olympic athlete. He emphasises that his transition into sport management was a conscious choice driven by a passion for creating a robust sporting ecosystem.

Col. Johal defines clear national objectives set by the Prime Minister of the country: for India to be in the top 10 by 2036 (aligned with a bid to host the Olympics) and to reach the top five by 2047, marking a century of independence. He describes TOPS as the government's flagship performance-based scheme (rather than a grant) that identifies, monitors and supports athletes based on their delivery of results, with the ultimate testimony being medals in upcoming games like LA 2028.

A central theme of the speech is the importance of the entire sporting ecosystem. Col. Johal notes that sport management professionals are essential "spokes in the wheel", working alongside federations, coaches, and support staff like psychologists, and strength and conditioning experts. He advocates for strategic partnerships, encouraging large corporate houses to "adopt" specific sports to fuel growth beyond cricket.

Col. Johal urges the next generation of sports professionals to prioritise hands-on fieldwork at the grassroots, district, and state levels rather than immediately pursuing office-based roles, as this fundamental experience is critical for long-term career success. He maintains that several years of such "on-the-ground" experience are necessary to develop the management expertise required to create practical and implementable policies later in their careers.

Col. Johal expressed as a call to action for the students and young professionals in the audience. He stated that for them to become "able competent and competent sports managers global sports managers and administrators" would be a "true tribute" to the work INSMA has initiated and the goals that India is trying to achieve.





# From Grassroots to Glory: Shaping India's 2036 Olympic Dream

The panel discussion, featuring leaders from the rugby federation (Ankush Arora), the university sector (Dr UV Sankar), performance sport (Padma Shri K. Y. Venkatesh), not-for-profit (Deepthi Bopaiah) and professional consulting (Somya Jain), focused on the systemic requirements for India to become a global sporting power. A primary theme was the need for cohesive governance and data-driven decision-making. Panelists emphasised that creating a robust ecosystem requires a seamless link between National Sports Federations (NSFs) and the government to track athletes throughout their "pathway," ensuring they do not "vanish" from the system during the transition from school to higher education.

Regarding infrastructure, the discussion highlighted the importance of mass access. Speakers advocated for a streamlined, scalable model similar to those used internationally, to build facilities in every district without bureaucratic delays. They also suggested opening this infrastructure to the public through affordable memberships to foster a broader sporting culture.

A significant portion of the dialogue addressed the educational and social challenges athletes face. Many talented individuals drop out after 12th grade to pursue "safe" careers like engineering or medicine. To counter this, the panel called for the education sector to be more compassionate, urging teachers and principals to support student-athletes who manage both rigorous studies and training. Furthermore, they stressed that high performance is a 15-year journey, yet many stakeholders expect "state championships" within three months.

Finally, the panel discussed the role of coaches and ethics. Given that many Indian athletes come from underprivileged backgrounds, coaches must act as mentors who provide guidance on both career security and integrity issues, such as anti-doping. By citing successes in sports like fencing and tennis, the panelists concluded that persistent support and intentional goal-setting, particularly for women's sports, are already beginning to deliver international results.





# Data, Technology & the Future of Sport Management in India

The panel discussion explored the intersection of data, technology and systemic growth in India's sports economy. A central theme was how technology demystifies elite performance, illustrated by Lionel Messi's data-driven intensity during matches. However, panellists noted that many Indian coaches still view data as separate from the coaching system.

For successful adoption, technology must be simple and seamlessly embedded into training programs. At high-performance centres, shifting to performance-based analysis has yielded results, such as syncing heart rate variability with training data to reduce injuries and identifying physical vulnerabilities like flat feet. Furthermore, data is being used to prevent early specialization and overtraining, which currently causes 98% of junior talent to drop out before reaching elite levels.

The discussion highlighted significant structural hurdles. Despite India's 6 million software programmers, the lack of an ecosystem where talent can flourish is a major concern. With only 5% engagement in sport in India compared to 70% in Japan, panellists argued for prioritising passion over early performance, insisting that elite talent will emerge naturally if the right grassroots structures exist.

Finally, the panel addressed funding and accountability. The national sports budget of roughly INR 4,500 crore is considered low given India's scale. To achieve Olympic ambitions by 2036, panellists called for shared responsibility among stakeholders and increased investment, noting that improved physical fitness could significantly lower national healthcare costs. The future vision includes scaling sports-tech startups and fostering a culture where technology is a core component of the sporting identity, exemplified by new educational initiatives like courses on AI in sports.





# Motorsports in India: Building Structures to go from Watching to Racing

The fireside chat focused on the unique challenges and vast opportunities within the booming Indian motorsport industry featuring Ativ Shah, Niharika Ghorpade and Aashi Hanspal. The panel identified several critical barriers to entry, primarily a lack of basic awareness and inadequate infrastructure.

Ms. Hanspal highlighted that sponsorship is difficult to secure because brands often fail to see the "return on investment" or the professional nature of the sport. Furthermore, a significant social barrier exists: parents often perceive motorsport as dangerously unsafe, conflating track racing with reckless road driving, despite the stringent safety regulations and equipment used in professional settings.

From an economic perspective, Mr. Shah noted that India is the third-largest automotive market globally, valued at over \$250 billion. He argued that large Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEMs) should view motorsport as a "low-hanging fruit" for investment, utilising CSR funds or R&D budgets to support the performance side of the industry.

Structurally, the speakers advocate for a more professionalised ecosystem that includes specialised PR, athlete management and high-performance medicine for motorsport athletes. They emphasise that the goal should not just be the 22 seats in Formula 1, but also endurance racing and GTs.

Looking toward 2030, the panelists envision a transformed motorsport landscape in India, beginning with the ambitious goal of identifying a pipeline of 1,000 grassroots drivers to enable a more strategic and future-ready approach to talent discovery. Furthermore, the speakers advocate for the development of regional training and strength-and-conditioning facilities to provide the necessary support for athletes once they are identified; this would alleviate the physical and financial "taxing" burden on drivers who currently must travel long distances, such as from Bombay to Chennai, to access specialized hubs.





# Paper presentations

- India's Mega Sporting Events Strategy: Leveraging the Road to 2036 Olympics for Economic and Cultural Capital by **Jyesth Parmar** and **Yashi Goyal**
- The Role of Sports in Promoting Social Inclusion and Cultural Identity among Youth in India by **D.S Srenethi**
- Multidimensional Assessment of Tokyo and Paris Olympics, to Present a National Blueprint for India by **Shiv Shukla** and **Anvita Mahajan**
- India's Olympic Trajectory: A Machine Learning and Econometric Analysis of Performance Drivers and Medal Forecasting by **Prabal Singh** and **Vivek Jati**
- Corporate Social Responsibility Contributions for the Growth of Paralympic Sports in India by **Gautami Deokar**, **Reena Mehta** and **Vandana Tripathi**
- Evaluating the Infrastructure Readiness of India as a Sports Tourism Destination: A Focus on Cricket, Football, Badminton, and Cycling by **Geona Charis** and **Prasanth G**
- Kreedakul Sports School: Grooming the Champions for and Beyond Olympics 2036 by **Swapna Belsare**
- Balancing the Five Pillars: A Comparative Study of Olympic Legacies and Implications for India's 2036 Bid by **Priyanka Acharya** and **Shubham Gurav**
- Innovation in High Performance Coaching: Effectiveness of Video Analysis Tools for Skill Development by **A.S. Adwaiyth Krishna**
- Legal Foundations for India's Olympic Ambitions: Advancing and Learning from previous Olympic host nations by **Tanner Wood**
- Sustainable Practices in Sports Facilities: Evaluating Energy, Waste, And Resource Management in Local Gyms and Stadiums by **Khush Bhavin Kumar**
- Grassroots Kreedakul: Showcasing a Rural Sports Pathway Towards India's Olympic Vision 2036 by **Sankalp Thorat** and **Anand Lunkad**
- Strengthening Grassroots Sports in India: Policy, Infrastructure, and Talent Identification for Olympic 2036 Aspirations by **Varad Sonavani** and **Aarushi Jain**
- Integrating Applied High-Performance Practices into Academic and Professional Development by **Rajmohan Sathiyar**
- Sports Talent: A Legacy of Movement Education by **Laishram Thambal Singh**
- Behind the Podium: The Silent Struggles of India's Emerging Olympic Hopefuls by **Krishnapriya SP**, **Akshita Deolal** and **Varsha Venugopal**
- Sport Tourism and Events: Opportunities and Challenges for Regional Development in India by **Akash Bobby John**
- The Impact of the Fantasy Gaming Ban on Changing the Consumption Habits of Avid Gamers in India by **Manas Sharma** and **Pratyank Sharma**
- Can data humour its way to fairness in wages? – A comparison of IPL, WPL and the Hundred by **Sarthak Mondal** and **David Berri**
- Harnessing Data Analytics for Sports Performance & Decision Making by **Siddhant Kankaria** and **Abhijit Zende**
- Measuring the Impact of Augmented Reality (AR) on Fan Engagement in Sports by **Manay Chawra**, **Rahul Malik** and **Sagar Surve**
- Fan Psychology & Marketing Effectiveness: How Emotional Connections Drive Sports Consumption by **Sanyum Datta**, **Shravan Samra** and **Siddhi Sethi**
- Public-Private Partnerships in Indian Sports Custodianship by **Hardwan Vyas** and **Vineesh Shetty**



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