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## On being better trainers



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A still from the clinic



Rob Van Nes

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*Damien van der Peet and Ewout Pahud de Mortanges from the Netherlands conducted a high performance coaches' clinic recently*

The Dutch approach to sports, says Rob van Nes, is to involve as many children as possible. "In the Netherlands, up to 80 to 85 percent of young people are members of a sports club," he says. "Our grassroots sports development is probably one of the best in the world. We have a very good structure and education." It is this approach and this idea that van Nes has brought to India through One Million Hockey Legs (OMHL).

The programme, the result of an MoU in 2014 between the Indian and Dutch governments to share expertise in grassroots sports development, seeks to have 500,000 children (a million legs) in the country playing hockey by the end of 2018, when the World Cup will be staged here.

Last week, the Jude Felix Hockey Academy, in conjunction with the Bovelander Hockey Academy (BHA), conducted a five-day high performance coaches' clinic at the Maria Niketan grounds here. Van Nes and the BHA, founded by the former Dutch drag-flick star Floris Jan Bovelander, are part of the OMHL programme, while Felix, the former India captain, is on the Advisory Board.

The clinic, conducted by Damien van der Peet and Ewout Pahud de Mortanges, two trainers from the Netherlands, drew 33 coaches from across India. "It is a coaches' programme, where we give them the skills to be better trainers," says van Nes. "We tell them about nutrition, safety, preparations, attitudes etc. A good coach is not answering his telephone during training. A coach has to be very

physical (on the sidelines) and participate in a game; he has to show he is serious and concentrating. If the coach is like this, the players will also be serious.”

The clinic also addressed the idea of making training fun. “You cannot ensure it, but when a coach makes it fun, practising a sport becomes fun,” says van Nes. “Some people consider it as something that has to be done. Nothing has to be done. You see here, children are playing and they have fun. When a coach makes hockey not fun, because they have to do the same exercise for two hours, you get bored. A good coach makes it a fun hour. You keep varying exercises, and keep it fun.”

Van Nes was a hockey player himself, although he never made the National team; he did, however, represent the Netherlands at skiing. “In Holland we want all kids in country to play sports — hockey, football, tennis, whatever,” he says. “It is good for their personal development.

You learn how to deal with winning and losing, teamwork. Life skills are important for children. We have been doing that for a long time in the Netherlands. We have that experience. We are trying to export that a little bit here.”

Cricket may appear to overshadow every other sport in India but van Nes finds, with some delight, that hockey is still quite popular. “The good thing is India is a hockey country,” he says. “There is so much passion for the sport here. People want to play hockey. They say, ‘It is our game and we don’t play it.’ If you go to another country, you have to start from the beginning and tell them: ‘This is hockey and see how nice it is?’ In India people know what hockey is; you have coverage on TV from the HIL. The way we do it, it only works in a country like India.”

Keywords: [Hockey](#), [coaching clinic](#), [Jude Felix Hockey Academy](#)

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