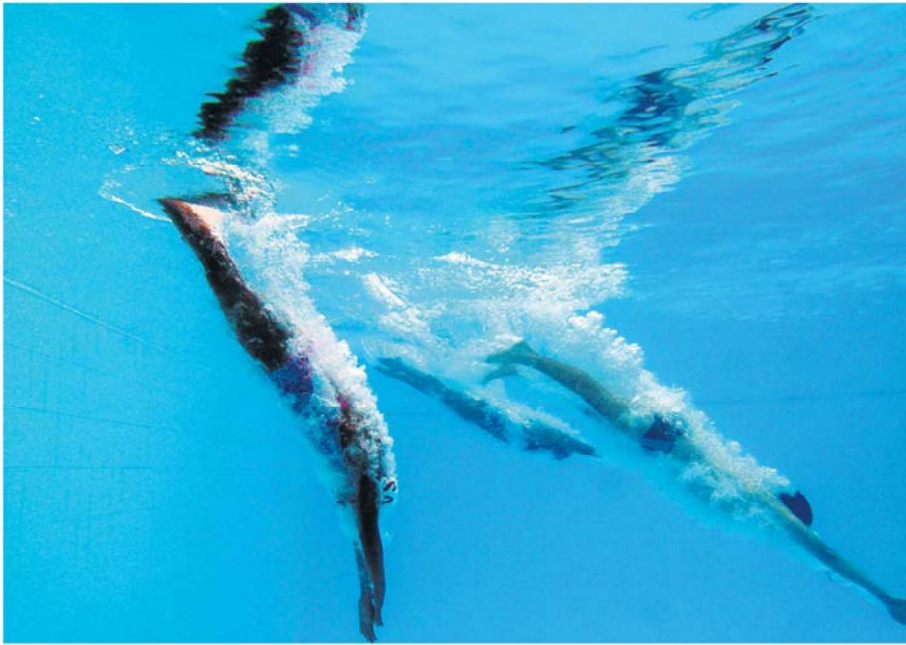


Sunday, August 1st, 2010

Here, sport is a way of life

Sports forms part of the curriculum for students of JIRS, and they have access to world-class infrastructure in a spacious campus

pic: Sevakprakash L



Swimmers from the Jain International School take a plunge in the pool; (right) a rider clears an obstacle on the school's equestrian circuit; (below) bowlers practice at the four-lane alley at the campus

Nandini Kumar BANGALORE

Often, international residential schools invest large chunks of money to develop sporting infrastructure but fail to put any of it to use. To make matters worse, the education system in India does not facilitate a module that melds sports with education, which could build a strong sporting culture, much like Australia, USA or China.

However, since the dawn of this century, some of the top schools are waking up to the idea of introducing sports as a major subject in their curriculum and even grade their students based on their performance in sporting events. One such school is the Jain International Residential School (JIRS).

Situated in the rural ambience of Kanakapura on the outskirts of Bangalore, JIRS is a sports lover's paradise. Spread across 25,000 sq feet, the school features a state-of-the-art indoor sports complex for disciplines as varied as bowling, cue sports, squash, badminton, basketball, taekwondo and a cardio centre for fitness. The complex also has a six-hole golf course, an equestrian centre, and facilities

for cricket, tennis and hockey.

The school includes an international standard swimming complex, which alone cost over Rs 15 crore, with a 10-lane 50m swimming pool, a diving pool and a short course pool, an arena that is unmatched in the state if not the country. "Having a world class sporting infrastructure no doubt attracts parents during admissions but that's not the end of it. There are a lot of parents who take keen interest in their children pursuing sports and at our institute, sport is a major part of our curriculum," says Rudra Kumar Sharma, the Chief Operating Officer (COO).

Getting such a mammoth structure into shape with every possible space converted to good use amounts to big budgets and lots of planning and that's what one notices stepping into the vastness of the JIRS property. "It was a very challenging venture in terms of getting government clearance and funds for the project. Sports is an ideal way for overall development for children and it helps them develop competitive spirit, which is essential in today's world and it also enhances their

SPORTING SCHOOLS JAIN INTERNATIONAL RESIDENTIAL



grasping power in class rooms and makes them self-disciplined," says Dr Chenraj Jain, chairman of Jain Group of Institutions and founder of JIRS, who is a sports enthusiast.

Here, at the start of the academic year, fresh students are asked to choose a sport of their choice after a two-week exposure of various sporting disciplines on

campus. With over 700 students, every child plays the selected game from Monday to Friday in two sessions of an hour and a half hour each, and on weekends they are allowed to play any other sport apart from what they have chosen. "At residential schools children feel homesick and playing a sport was one way to keep the children occupied. Sport acts as a great

stress buster. The students start their day with sports at 5.45 am and stay on till about 7.30am. They come back at 3pm for the second session. Every single student has to practice their particular sport. Only if there is a medical emergency is the student exempted from playing," says Sharma.

The school has also introduced programmes like Jain Academy for Sporting Excellence (JASE) and Jain Centre of Sports Talent Transformation (JCSTT), where students who are exceptional at their respective sport are given quality training and backed by substantial support to pursue their sporting career future. While JASE is meant for students from the residential school, JCSTT is an initiative to identify potential athletes from rural areas. "There are about 50 students who come under the JCSTT initiative which was started last year," says Shyam Prasad Rai, a sports co-ordinator. "The students under this programme are provided free schooling, food and accommodation. All they need to do is concentrate on their sports career. There are a lot of talented play-

ers in the rural areas who don't find the right support. We also have exchange programmes with top sports clubs in the country and they also get some international exposure."

Apart from world class infrastructure that cost the JGI a whopping Rs100 crores, the school has hired 30 coaching staff who design the training modules. Visiting coaches include Brad Murphy (cricket), Enrico Piperno (tennis), GK Vishwanath (table tennis), Greg Brown (football), JD Walsh (basketball), Kyoshi Praveen Rana (martial arts), Mekhala Srivastava (Squash), Peter Tramacchi (tennis) as visiting coaches. They also have a full-fledged programme in golf training in collaboration with Taylor Made, USA. "The kind of backing we get for sports here is tremendous and all the teachers co-operate with our training module. Our sports performance is monitored through out with our chairman taking note of our performance," says Brindala M, a national medalist in athletics.

(This is the first article of a series exploring schools with the best infrastructure for sports)

FAST FACTS

Where is JIRS: Jakkasandra Post, Kanakapura Taluk, Karnataka: 562112; ph: 0880-27577050



Top sports people: Abhishek Jha (golfer), Harsh Devang Shah of Class VIII (Equestrian), Nithyasree (athletics), MG Balaji (Equestrian),

Nisith Kedia (tennis), Vishak Eswara Prasad (cricket), Ronak Bucha (cricket), Harshith Gowda (cricket), Aman Agarwal (tennis)

Facilities at JIRS: The state-of-the-art multi-purpose indoor stadium with a seating capacity for 2000 spectators; it has:

- 4 badminton courts with Gerflo synthetic flooring
- One basketball court with wooden flooring
- Table Tennis hall with 15 tables
- 2 Squash courts with viewer's gallery
- Billiards and Snooker hall with six tables
- Four-lane Bowling Alley
- Air Conditioned Gyms with most modern equipment
- Cardio Fitness Centre
- Taekwondo / Karate hall
- Aerobic Centre

Aqua: A 25m eight-lane short course swimming pool, a 50m 10-lane competition pool with water-polo facilities and a separate diving pool with standard spring diving boards. It also has a covered gallery to seat 1000 spectators on the either side of the pools.

The Oval: A 2 lakh sq feet well-designed international standard cricket ground with five strips of turf wicket in the centre. A modern pavilion with complete facilities of dressing rooms, massage rooms, umpire's cabins, dining hall and viewer's gallery. Ten practice pitches (seven turfs & three cement) are also available for the practice purpose.

Tennis courts: The School has six plexi-cushioned tennis courts.

Basketball: four Basketball courts, two indoor courts

Volleyball: Five courts

Golf Course: An international class Golf driving range has been developed at the Academy. A double tier spacious driving range fitted with ultramodern Golf training and analysis equipment has been designed. The PDR with 20 hitting bays is supplemented by a well laid out practice range having a huge putting green, chipping area and a bunker shot practice. It is a six-hole course.

Football: Two lush green international standard turf football ground that is fitted with pop-up sprinklers.

Hockey: A natural turf Hockey ground of international standard fitted with pop-up sprinklers.

Athletics: A 400 meters natural track, athletic arena and a covered stand with a capacity for more than 5000 seating spectators.