

Asian quota in Jr World Cup should go up: PHF

Facing a possible elimination from next year's Junior World Cup, Pakistani hockey officials Thursday urged the International Hockey Federation (FIH) to increase the number qualifiers from Asia.

Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) secretary Asif Bajwa told IANS that hockey was a major sport in Asia and the continent should be given the biggest quota for the Junior World Cup to be jointly hoisted by Malaysia and Singapore.

Pakistan failed to qualify for the final of the Junior Asia Cup underway in [Hyderabad](#) after falling to India in the semifinals. The result means that Pakistan will have to wait and see if the FIH is going to increase the number.

Earlier, the FIH had announced that the top six teams from the Junior Asia Cup would qualify for the World Cup. Subsequently, four of the 12 entrants pulled out and the FIH said in view of reduced number of teams it would have to review the number of qualifiers.

The two finalists Korea and India are certain to qualify along with the two host nations Malaysia and Singapore, but the fate of the two losing semi-finalists, Pakistan and Japan, hangs in balance till the final decision is taken at the FIH meeting during the Olympic Games in Beijing next month.

'No doubt it's a big blow for Pakistan hockey,' said Bajwa, 'but as far as Asian hockey is concerned Pakistan, if it fails to make to the World Cup, will serve a mortal blow to the region where hockey is already struggling. As it is, India's ouster from the Olympics has pushed the game into an abyss and if Pakistan doesn't make it to the Junior World Cup, international hockey also will suffer.'

'Therefore, I would like to ask the FIH to take stock of the situation and increase the number of qualifiers from the Junior Asia Cup.'

(© IANS / India eNews)