

# THE GLORY THAT COULD HAVE BEEN

BY R PATHMARAJAH

Reflecting on my World Cup performance, I want to go back to when I first joined the Malaysian team in 1972 for the Munich Olympics. At that time, I was one of the fittest players on the team. We performed exceptionally well in Germany, but unfortunately, we missed the semifinals by just one point.

**PATMARAJAH:**  
**I HOPE**  
**THEY**  
**WILL LET**  
**ME**  
**WINGER R. Pathma-**  
**rajah has been fight-**  
**ing time to get himsel-**  
**fit for today's semi-final**  
**reports IAN PEREIRA.**

**Home crowd**  
But to **ANDRZEJ ZO-**  
**LADKOWSKI**, the Poland  
manager, India are clear cut  
favourites. "Technically, the  
Indians play better. We have  
played both teams and  
we feel the Indians are bet-  
ter."  
"The battle will be a test  
between India's attack and  
Malaysia's defence, but you  
can never know what the  
home crowd will do for the  
Malaysians."

Most of the players from the 1972 team later competed in the 1973 World Cup, the 1974 Asian Games, and the 1975 World Cup. Our training was excellent. We were highly motivated, and everything was going well. Although I faced injury and financial struggles, they weren't severe enough to hold me back.

By the time the 1975 World Cup started, our team was fully prepared and ready to compete. We drew our first match against New Zealand, beat Spain in the second, and then defeated Poland in the third.

However, during the Poland match, I suffered a knee injury. That moment shattered my dreams for the 1975 World Cup. I could no longer contribute to the team, and my absence forced changes in our forward line, with a half-line player stepping into an attacking role.

It was heartbreaking not to be able to help my team. Still, we made it to the semifinals. I hoped to recover in time, but my injury was too severe – I could barely move.

Looking back, my teammates and I believe that if we had been at full strength, we might have reached the final. But fate had other plans.

The core of our team remained together from 1972 until 1976. After the Montreal Olympics, I underwent surgery for my meniscus injury. Although I had retired from active national duty, I continued playing hockey for the Malaysian Veterans team.

However, to this day, my injuries still haunt me. While I continue to play hockey and cricket and maintain my daily jogging and exercise routine, I can't do so without strapping my knees to ease the pain.

My love for the game remains strong, but the physical toll is a constant reminder of the sacrifices made and the glory that could have been.



**Semi-final**  
**poll:**  
**Betting**  
**pretty**  
**even**  
**By IAN PEREIRA**  
**and P'NG**  
**HONG KWANG**

**HOLLAND**, the dethroned  
World Cup champions,  
consider Malaysia as having  
"more than an outside  
chance" of beating India in  
the semi-final today.  
"The Malaysian defence is  
the best aspect of the team.  
It is sound, their power  
of recovery is fast as  
one says  
CF... Dr 'ca

**Very close**  
**ISLAHUDDIN**, the Pakis-  
tan captain, says: "With the  
support from the crowd, I  
expect Malaysia to do well."  
**FERNANDO CALP**, the  
Argentina captain, is rooting  
for India. "They are  
superior. They play open,  
fast and attractive hockey.  
We are happy to be the only  
team to have beaten them  
so far but we think they are  
worth the goals



From left: June Yogeswaran, R Pathamarajah, R Yogeswaran (Assistant Coach) and Franco D'Cruz