

# Right shot

Footballer Robin Singh says adrenaline rush and excitement is what drew him to the sport. He also shares his fitness and sports mantra

BY BINDU GOPAL RAO

Strength doesn't come from what you can do. It comes from overcoming the things you once thought you couldn't"—reads a tweet from Robin Singh. This is something that the striker, who most recently played for Real Kashmir FC, on loan from Hyderabad FC, has practiced in life. It has seen him rise to be who he is.

## Flash back

Robin's early days of schooling was at Somerville School Noida where he passionately participated in most of the sports events that the school offered and later moved to St Stephens School, Chandigarh, where he got selected to go to the Chandigarh Football Academy run by the Union territory's sports department. "I started playing at the age of nine. I began my sporting career playing both cricket and football, but, ultimately ended up in football. Sport has always been my calling. During my school days I have earnestly participated in all the major sports activities," he says. However, it was football that always fascinated him. "The adrenaline rush and the excitement were the reasons I was attracted to football. Sports has always been a part of my family since the very beginning with my grandfather also being a footballer and



being the organiser of the Durand cup and the Subroto cup till his last breath," Robin says.

## Football matters

For someone who was good at both cricket and football, Robin made the choice of football early, which he believes has been his first achievement. "My second achievement was when I began my club career in 2009 with East Bengal of the I-League and helped them in winning small trophies like the Jubilee Cup. I may not have performed well in every match that I played but I have definitely learned a lot from each one. There is still so much more to achieve and I guess I am striving hard for it." The 30-year-old has played both in the I-League and the Indian Super League (ISL). "Playing in the ISL is a great honour as it is the highest club-level football our country has to offer. Also, with the inclusion of foreign recruits in each team, it is a great opportunity to put yourself to the test against them day in and day out be it at training or matches. It is a great feeling to get such tremendous exposure in the country itself," he says.

## Fit and fine

Playing at a professional level has several fitness demands and he admits that each day of training varies from the previous one. "Apart from my fitness schedule, I also prefer extra training under the guidance of the coaches where I focus on my shooting drills and re-modelling my movements in and around the box. After which I spend some time with the strength and conditioning coach working on my flexibility," he says. He also ensures he follows a good diet that usually consists of lots of greens, minimal to zero milk and meat. "I avoid eating anything oily or fried and prefer eating lots of fibre and protein. I try maintaining the balance between the amount of calories consumed and the calories burnt," Robin says. Like with any sportsperson, injuries are inevitable but he admits that with proper strength training, recovery, hydration and diet, you can shorten your time out injured. "Whenever there is an injury, I try avoiding practice sessions if recommended by the doctor and I also get back to task only when fully recovered," he says.

## Personality matters

Robin has faced a lot of challenges both mental and physical, but believes that as an athlete you have to stay focused and be ready for any hurdle.



"For example in the match against Sri Lanka during SAFF Championship 2015, I scored twice and helped the team to win the title, but on the other hand in the 2016 Indian Super League season, I played for FC Goa and made 10 appearances, scoring just once. So there are ups and downs but you have to have faith and believe in your abilities and in your skills and what you bring to the game." Naturally, his advice to aspiring footballers is to believe in themselves and their abilities no matter what and always dream big. "Never ever stop dreaming or give up even when it seems impossible. Set your goals and work hard to achieve them," he says. In his free time, he likes to listen to music and is also into DJing and mixing music. "I also enjoy watching my wife paint custom-made denim jackets; it is more just a hobby for her. It makes her super happy and I love to see her happy. When I am not playing, my wife and I go for a drive and try to find little nooks in cities that I'm based in and grab a cup of coffee or a meal. If the place is pet friendly then it is even better as we both are dog lovers. We always keep a box of biscuits in our car and whenever we see a hungry dog, we feed it," he says. □