

## **Jijau Kabaddi Chashak: From Competition to a People's Movement**

What began as an ambitious vision has now firmly taken shape as a people's movement. The recently concluded state-level Jijau Kabaddi Chashak, the name Jijau itself carries a significant weight of responsibility as it is the name of a mother whose son just didn't build a kingdom but laid down the idea of Swarajya, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj organized for the second consecutive year, on 18th to 20th March 2026. has once again proven that rural Maharashtra is rich in talent-awaiting the right platform to shine.

This prestigious competition was jointly organized by Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Samajik Karya Seva Bhavi Sanstha, Jalna and Rashtramata Indira Gandhi College, Jalna, under the leadership of its President Satsang Narayanrao Mundhe. What makes this initiative truly remarkable is not just its scale, but its vision-to make it a consistent, annual platform for rural youth across the state.

Over the course of three energetic days, the tournament witnessed participation from 28 district teams, supported by skilled coaches and referees, ensuring discipline, transparency, and competitive excellence. With day and night matches, the event transformed into a vibrant sporting festival, drawing attention and enthusiasm from across the region.

A defining highlight of this year's competition was its highest prize pool at the state level, setting a new benchmark for rural sports tournaments. The winning teams in both boys' and girls' categories were awarded ₹51,000 each, while the runner-up teams received ₹31,000 each, and ₹15,000 was awarded to the teams securing third and fourth positions. In addition, several individual awards and prizes were presented to recognize outstanding performances-further motivating young athletes to excel.

However, the true success of Jijau Kabaddi Chashak lies far beyond the matches played. Careful planning ensured quality accommodation and nutritious food for all participants, reflecting a commitment to athlete well-being. Referees and officials were given due respect, proper arrangements, and fair remuneration-setting a professional standard rarely seen in grassroots tournaments.

Even in the face of challenges such as weather uncertainties and logistical pressures, the organizers demonstrated resilience and efficiency, proving that rural Maharashtra can successfully host events of state-level excellence.

A defining feature of the tournament was the safe and separate arrangements for girls and boys, encouraging strong participation from young female athletes. This is a powerful step towards gender inclusion, breaking societal barriers and fostering confidence among girls in rural areas.

The impact of this initiative is already evident:

- Youth gaining confidence, discipline, and exposure
- Rural talent receiving a state-level platform
- Communities coming together, strengthening unity and pride
- Creation of new opportunities and sporting networks

For many young players, this was their first opportunity to compete at such a high level. For some, it could be the beginning of a promising sports career. But for all, it has instilled a belief that opportunities are not limited to cities they can be created in our own villages.

By committing to organize the Jijau Kabaddi Chashak every year, the organizers have taken a crucial step towards building a sustainable rural sports ecosystem. This is not just an event it is the foundation of a long-term movement that can shape the future of countless young athletes.

In the larger picture, such initiatives redefine development. They show that true progress lies not only in infrastructure or economy, but also in empowering youth, promoting equality, and nurturing talent at the grassroots.

The real victory of Jijau Kabaddi Chashak is not measured in trophies, but in the confidence, it has ignited, the dreams it has awakened, and the movement it has set in motion.

By - Pawan Mundhe