

**IN THE OFFICE OF OMBUDSMAN-CUM-ETHICS OFFICER
PUNJAB CRICKET ASSOCIATION, NEW CHANDIAGRH (MULLANPUR)**

**Complaint No. 02/2026
Institution on 04.04.2026
Decided on 07.07.2026**

Parminder Singh Lohat S/O Late Shri. Ulagar Singh father of Varinder Singh Lohat Resident of 199, New colony, Ram Tirath Road, Amritsar, Punjab.

Petitioner.....

Versus

1. PUNJAB CRICKET ASSOCIATION, MULLANPUR, DISTT. MOHALI
2. SHRI HARMEET BANSAL, CHIEF SELECTOR FOR STATE OF PUNJAB
3. SHRI MANISH BHATIA WHO IS SELECTOR OF PUNJAB CRICKET TEAM

Respondents.....

Subject: COMPLIANT AGAINST SHRI HARMEET BANSAL, CHIEF SELECTOR FOR STATE OF PUNJAB AND SHRI MANISH BHATIA, SELECTOR OF (16.19 AND 23 YEARS) PUNJAB CRICKET TEAM.

Present: Sh. Parminder Singh Lohat, Complainant in person
Sh. Sangam Garg, Advocate for Respondent No.1 – Punjab Cricket Association
Sh. Harmeet Bansal, Respondent No. 2 in person
Sh. Manish Bhatia, Respondent No. 3 in person

ORDER

1. Instant complaint has been preferred by Mr. Parminder Singh Lohat, Father of Cricketer Varinder Singh Lohat challenging the non-selection of his son in the Punjab U-23 Cricket Team for the season 2025-2026 alleging that his son was having a lot of good records in Cricket and played a number of Cricket matches at District, State and National Level. He also has outstanding performance record U-19 and U-23 tournaments, participation in National Cricket Academy and representation in North Zone in Vizzy Trophy as well as in Vinoo Mankad Trophy. He was adjudged to be one of the best players but ignoring his outstanding records as an all-rounder player i.e. as a batsman as well as bowler, some other players who possess inferior records to him were selected as the respondent no. 2 and 3 acted arbitrarily, intentionally ignored merits and discriminated. Allegations of bias and caste-based remarks were also raised by Respondent No. 3 against Varinder Singh Lohat. Since, the question of career and future of a talented cricket player is involved and his non-selection is arbitrary and against the available records, it deserves to be declared illegal and arbitrary.
2. Upon notice of the complaint, Respondent No. 1 – Punjab Cricket Association (PCA) appeared through Mr. Sangam Garg, Advocate whereas the Respondent No. 2 and 3 appeared in person. All the respondents resisted the complaint and filed their separate replies.

3. Respondent No. 1 – PCA filed its reply raising preliminary objections that it does not interfere, influence or participate in the Selection process of players for various state level Cricket Team. The Cricket Committees including the Selection Committees for the various age group are constituted strictly in accordance with Rule 34 of the Constitution of the PCA. Once such committees are constituted, they function independently and Respondent no. 1 – PCA has no administrative role or vote in their Selection matrix, evaluation or final squad choices. Moreover, selection of players is the exclusive and autonomous domain of the duly constituted authorities. Thus, no grievance regarding non-selection can be sustained against the Respondent No. 1.
4. On merits, it has been alleged that the compliant contains factual discrepancy regarding performance matrix and statistics of Varinder Singh Lohat. The player's performance records are a matter of objective verification from official match score cards which do not align with the inflated claims raised by the complainant and the complaint deserve to be dismissed in view of the factual position.
5. The Respondent No. 2 and 3 filed reply denying the allegations raised in the complaint and submitting that the Punjab U23 Team for the season 2025-26 was selected by a duly constituted Selection Committee comprising five members following a fair, transparent and well established process which included evaluation of practice match performance, participation and assessment in preparatory camps and consideration of fitness, discipline, attitude and team dynamics and all the decisions were taken collectively by full committee of five members but only Respondent No. 2 and 3 have been singled out and targeted while filing the instant complaint and other members namely Mr. Arun Bedi, Mr. Sanjeev Kapuria and Mr. Preet Kamal Rai were not impleaded in the instant complaint.
6. It has further been submitted by Respondent No. 2 and 3 that selection in Cricket is based on holistic and comparative assessment including match temperament, fitness and fielding standard, team balance as well as behavior and discipline and statistical performance alone is not a decisive factor. There are certain adverse reports regarding behavior and discipline of Varinder Singh Lohat as assessed by independent coaches namely Mr. Jaskaran Vir Singh Sohi, Mr. Tarun Gupta and Mr. Sumit Ohri in a practice camp at PCA Stadium Mohali.
7. It has also been urged that no representation was also made at the relevant time to any of the Selectors and instant complaint was filed in the month of April 2026 whereas the season 2025-26 concluded in November 2025 (U-23 One Day format) and Feb 2026 (U-23 multi-days format). Not only this, the player also participated in the entire selection process without any sort of protest. Even the complainant has also furnished incorrect and inflated statistics claims, relied on irrelevant comparison which depicts a misunderstanding of selection process and further that the instant complaint is nothing but a false and frivolous one just to create undue pressure on selectors, undermine independence of expert bodies and to discourage competent individuals from undertaking such roles of selectors.
8. Allegations with regard to the demand of illegal gratification for the selection and uttering derogatory caste-based remarks have been strongly denied. It has alleged that the same has been leveled just to tarnish image and reputation of Respondent

No. 3 and to cause harassment. Accordingly, Respondent No. 2 and 3 prayed for the dismissal of the complaint.

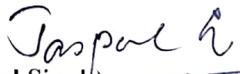
9. The Complainant filed rejoinder to the replies filed by Respondent No. 1 PCA and to the reply filed by Respondent No. 2 and 3. Since some new/fresh allegations i.e. demand of bribe and caste-based remarks were raised in the rejoinder, reply to the rejoinder has also been filed by the Respondent No. 2 and 3, denying those allegations.
10. The parties were afforded to adduce their evidence in support of their respective pleas and certain documents were produced which are part of file. I have heard the parties to the instant complaint as well as the Ld. Counsel appearing on behalf of PCA Respondent no.1 as well as the Complainant and have minutely scanned the pleadings and documents available on record.
11. From close scrutiny of pleadings, it emerges that undersigned is obliged to decide whether the selection process suffered from arbitrariness, personal bias of Respondent No. 2 and 3 and caste-discrimination and further that whether superior statistics alone create a legal right to selection.
12. At the very outset, it would be significant to mention that the Ombudsman is not an appellate selector though the selection process of Cricket players is subject to review, which is confined to examine illegalities, arbitrariness, malafide or violation of doctrine natural justice. The various documents placed on record by the complainant un-equivocal point out to show that Varinder Singh Lohat is one the talented players with good achievements but at the same time, selection at the state level is comparative and holistic. The Respondents have consistently explained that the camp performance, fitness, discipline, fielding standards, temperament and team requirements were also to be considered. The behavioral reports from coaches cannot be ignored and disbelieve for the simple reason that these were communicated through WhatsApp. Domestic sporting bodies are entitled to consider such feedback while assessing suitability.
13. The Complainant has mainly relied upon exceptionally cricketing record of his son and has submitted that his son scored more than 500 runs in previous season, over 1200 runs in U-19 and U-23 Cricket he represented the National Cricket Academy, played for North Zone in Vizzy Trophy and was among the leading all-rounders. Whereas, the selected players Taranveer Randhawa, Shivein Rakheja and Dev Amritpal Singh possessed inferior statistics. However, Respondent No. 2 and 3 have fully explained during course of arguments by referring to their reply to the complaint as well as the documents that statistics constitute only the first stage of consideration players were thereafter assessed in preparatory camps, practice matches, fielding drills, fitness session and behavioral evaluation. The Selection Committee was consisted of five selectors who collectively assessed comparative merit of players. A reliance in this regard has also been placed upon judgement of Hon'ble Punjab & Haryana High Court, Chandigarh delivered in case "Parth Kalia vs The Punjab Cricket Association and others" CWP 24561 of 2021 (O&M) decided on 20.12.2021.
14. A careful reading of the aforesaid judgment makes it crystal clear that selection to a representative state team is not a mathematical exercise. A player having superior

statistics may still not fit the combination required for a particular tournament as it involves qualitative assessment which cannot be reduced nearly to runs and wickets.

15. In the case in hand Respondents have also produced explanation regarding left-hand / right-hand combination, wicket-keeping requirement, role-balance and comparative camp performance, which cannot be termed as irrational merely because another view is possible. Moreover, sporting excellence does not by itself confer a legal right of selection. Accordingly, it is observed that the complainant has failed to establish arbitrariness in the selection process.
16. Now, coming to the allegations with regard to the alleged demand of illegal gratification and caste-based discrimination. Either of these allegations does not find figure in the original complaint and these allegations have been raised while filing the rejoinder to the written reply filed to the complaint by Respondent No. 2 and 3. Thus, it can safely be concluded that it can be termed to be an afterthought story just to strengthen his case. Moreover, there is no evidence in this regard except the bald assertions raised in the rejoinder. As such cannot be relied upon to make any observation against the Respondent No. 3. Otherwise also, there is nothing specific about the date, time and the amount allegedly demanded by Respondent No. 3. Similarly, no evidence with regard to the making of the casteist remarks and discrimination against Varinder Singh Lohat. These are required to be proved beyond doubt before the same are taken into consideration. As such allegations seriously affect the reputation and integrity of an individual. In the instant case no written complaint was moved immediately after the alleged demand of any amount as illegal gratification or uttering of any casteist remarks. Neither any audio or video recording has seen the light of the day, nor detailed affidavit of the concerned player has been furnished. Even no complaint under the relevant criminal law was lodged immediately after the alleged incident(s). Accordingly, it is held that allegations in this regard are absolutely unsubstantiated.
17. In the light of what has been discussed and observed above, the undersigned does not find any merits in the instant complaint. As such, the same is dismissed with no order as to cost.
18. A copy of the order be conveyed to the complainant through email/WhatsApp for information. And thereafter, file be consigned to record room.

Pronounced in open court.

Date: 07.07.2026


(Jaspal Singh)
Former Judge Punjab & Haryana High Court, Chandigarh
Ombudsman-cum-Ethics Officer, PCA

07/07/2026