

Real Madrid march into quarters amid penalty controversy

Arsenal set up quarter-final against Real after 9-3 aggregate win, Asensio stars as Villa beat Brugge to book Paris Saint-Germain showdown

AFP, PARIS: Julian Alvarez had his penalty in the shoot-out controversially disallowed as Real Madrid beat rivals Atletico to reach the Champions League quarter-finals Wednesday while Arsenal, Aston Villa and Borussia Dortmund also advanced.



Failures from the spot defined the second leg of the Madrid derby last-16 tie including a remarkable decision to rule out Alvarez's kick for Atletico as Real won 4-2 on penalties after a 2-2 draw on aggregate.

Conor Gallagher's strike 27 seconds into the game at the Metropolitan stadium had levelled the scores on aggregate.

Gallagher's close-range finish cancelled out Real's 2-1 lead from the first leg last week, but the reigning champions could have progressed inside 90 minutes.

They won a spot-kick midway through the second half when Kylian Mbappe was hauled down by Clement Lenglet after accelerating into the box.

However, Vinicius Junior blazed his kick high over the bar, and the game went to extra time and then penalties with no



Arsenal's English striker Raheem Sterling (left) fights for the ball with PSV Eindhoven's American midfielder Richard Ledezma (right) during the last 16 second leg UEFA Champions League match at the Emirates Stadium in London

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RESULTS

Last 16, second legs

Lille 1 (David 5) Borussia Dortmund 2 (Can 54-pen, Beier 65). Borussia Dortmund win 3-2 on aggregate.

Arsenal 2 (Zinchenko 6, Rice 37) PSV Eindhoven 2 (Perisic 18, Driouech 70). Arsenal win 9-3 on aggregate.

Aston Villa 3 (Asensio 50, 61, Maatsen 57) Club Brugge 0. Aston Villa win 6-1 on aggregate.

Atletico Madrid 1 (Gallagher 1) Real Madrid 0 aet. 2-2 on aggregate; Real Madrid win 4-2 on penalties

QUARTER-FINAL LINE-UP

Paris Saint-Germain vs Aston Villa

Arsenal vs Real Madrid

Barcelona vs Borussia Dortmund

Bayern Munich vs Inter Milan

First legs to be played April 8/9

Second legs to be played April 15/16

further scoring.

The shoot-out hinged on Alvarez's second penalty for Atletico, which he converted. However, a VAR check indicated that he had touched the ball with his standing foot as he slipped before striking to score.

The penalty was disallowed and while Lucas Vazquez later missed for Real, Marcos Llorente hit the bar for Atletico, and it was Antonio Rudiger's effort which squirmed in that proved to be the winner.

The record 15-time European Cup winners have now played Atletico in five separate Champions League ties in the last 12 seasons, and come out on top every time, twice on penalties.

Carlo Ancelotti's side will face Arsenal in the last eight in what will be the first

meeting of the clubs since 2006.

The Gunners' progress

mier League clubs into the last eight, with Aston Villa beating Club Brugge 3-0 in Birmingham to secure a 6-1 aggregate triumph.

The Belgian side's hopes of a comeback were effectively doused when Kyriani Sabbe was shown a straight red card for denying a clear goal-scoring opportunity just 17 minutes in.

Marco Asensio was Villa's star as he came off the bench at half-time to score twice in the second half, taking his tally of goals to seven in eight games since signing on loan from Paris Saint-Germain in January.

All Villa's goals came in the space of 12 minutes early in the second half, with Asensio netting twice either side of an Ian Maatsen strike.

The 1982 European Cup winners face a quarter-final against Asensio's parent club PSG, which will mean Villa coach Unai Emery facing his former side.

Earlier, last season's beaten finalists Borussia Dortmund fought back to beat Lille 2-1 in France and win 3-2 on aggregate.

Jonathan David gave Lille an early lead, putting the French club ahead in the tie after last week's 1-1 draw.

Emre Can squared things by converting a penalty for Dortmund on 54 minutes and Maximilian Beier fired in a fine winner.

Dortmund will face Barcelona in the quarter-finals next month, having lost 3-2 at home to the Catalans during the league phase in December.

sportspopup

Brook banned from IPL for 2 seasons following last-minute pullout from 2025 edition

NEW DELHI: England batter Harry Brook has been banned from the Indian Premier League for two seasons following his last minute pullout from the 2025 edition. Earlier this week, Brook had made himself unavailable for the second straight season and apologised "unreservedly" to his franchise Delhi Capitals and their supporters. "There was a rule in place and that has been implemented. The ban covers the 2025 and 2026 edition," a BCCI official told PTI. Any foreign player who misses the IPL after getting picked at the auction faces a two-year ban from the IPL unless he is injured. "Any [overseas] player who registers for [an] auction and, after getting picked at the auction, makes himself unavailable before the start of the season will get banned from participating in the IPL/IPL auction for two seasons," as per the BCCI document shared with teams last year. Brook opted out of IPL 2025 to focus on his England career while in 2024, he withdrew following the death of his grandmother. "I have made the very difficult decision to pull out of the upcoming IPL. I apologise unreservedly to the Delhi Capitals and their supporters," Brook wrote on social media earlier this week. "It is a really important time for England cricket and I want to fully commit to preparing for the upcoming series."



Former Aussie spinner MacGill convicted in cocaine case

SYDNEY: Former Australian spinner Stuart MacGill was found guilty of involvement in a cocaine deal on Thursday, but cleared of participating in large-scale drug supply. A Sydney District Court jury acquitted the 54-year-old leg-spinner of facilitating a one-kg cocaine deal worth AUD 330,000 in April 2021. However, he was convicted of the charge of taking part in drug supply. MacGill, who played 44 Tests for Australia, "showed little emotion" as the verdict was read, according to a reports in Australian media. Hearing of his sentence was adjourned for eight weeks. The court heard that MacGill introduced his regular drug dealer to his brother-in-law, Marino Sotiropoulos, at a meeting under his restaurant on Sydney's north shore. While he denied knowledge of the transaction, prosecutors argued the deal could not have taken place without his involvement.



India tops medal tally in World Para Athletics Grand Prix

NEW DELHI: Three-time Paralympic champion long jumper Vanessa Low of Australia lived up to her top billing as she easily clinched gold in T61-64 class while India's Paris Games medalist Preethi Pal bagged a bronze in T35-38 class 200m race on the concluding day of the World Para Athletics Grand Prix, here, on Thursday. India finished on top of the medal tally with a total haul of 134 -- 45 gold, 40 silver, and 49 bronze. Around 150 Indians had competed in the Grand Prix while around 100 were from other 19 countries. Vanessa, one of the few top stars taking part in the three-day event, cleared a distance of 4.96m in her third attempt, to stand on the top of the podium. Zhanna Fekulina, a Neutral Paralympic Athlete, and India's Bhavani Munniyandi took home the silver and bronze respectively with efforts of 4.13m and 3.51m at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here. India has signed a four-year contract with the World Para Athletics to host the Grand Prix annually till 2028.

Sports Ministry releases Draft National Code Against Age Fraud in Sports for feedback

NEW DELHI: Uniform penalties, amnesty scheme, and a whistle-blower mechanism are some of the key features of the Draft National Code Against Age Fraud in Sports (NCAAFS) which was released for public consultation by the Sports Ministry on Thursday. The Draft NCAAFS 2025, which is a significant update to the existing framework, invites suggestions and comments from the general public till March 31. "The Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports has put in the public domain the Draft National Code Against Age Fraud in Sports (NCAAFS) 2025 for inviting comments/suggestions from the general public and stakeholders, as part of the consultation process," the ministry said in a statement. "This addresses age fraud comprehensively, aiming to protect genuine athletes and uphold the integrity of sports competitions nationwide." This revision has been undertaken almost after 15 years marking a significant update to the existing framework to ensure fair competition, ethical governance, and enhanced accountability in Indian sports.

Injured head coach Dravid attends Rajasthan Royals' pre-season camp on crutches

JAIPUR: Despite sustaining a leg injury while playing in a local league match, Indian stalwart and new Rajasthan Royals head coach Rahul Dravid attended the team's IPL pre-season training session, displaying his full commitment. In a video shared by the franchise in their official social media handle, Dravid was seen making his first appearance at the Royals' camp, arriving in a golf cart before switching to crutches for mobility. Although his left leg was secured in a medical walking boot, Dravid remained actively involved in the session despite his injury. He shook hands with players, before engaging in discussions with young talents like Riyan Parag, and shared a moment with Yashasvi Jaiswal as the young India opener was seen demonstrating shadow shots while seeking the legendary batter's advice. Seated with crutches in hand, Dravid closely observed the entire session on Wednesday. The Royals earlier confirmed that Dravid suffered the injury while playing.

Rohit has no reason to retire, will be among best ODI captains: AB de Villiers

NEW DELHI: Rohit Sharma has no reason to retire, says South African batting great AB de Villiers, who believes the India skipper could go down as one of the greatest ODI captains of all time. Speculations were rife about Rohit's retirement from ODIs after the Champions Trophy, but the 37-year-old put them to rest after leading India to an unprecedented third title. "Compared to other captains, look at Rohit's win percentage -- it's almost 74 per cent, which is substantially more than any other captain of the past," de Villiers said in his YouTube channel. "If he keeps going, he will go down as one of the best ODI captains of all time. Rohit has also said he is not retiring and has requested that rumours be stopped spreading." "Why would he retire? With that kind of record not only as captain but also as a batter."

Lakshya stuns Christie, in quarters

Malvika loses to Yamaguchi

PTI, BIRMINGHAM: India's Lakshya Sen stunned World No. 2 Jonathan Christie of Indonesia in straight games in a superlative display to enter the men's singles quarter-finals of the All England Championships, here, on Thursday.

Lakshya just took 36 minutes to beat Christie 21-13, 21-10 in a one-sided contest. The win reduced Lakshya's head-to-head record against Christie to 3-4.

This was the first time Lakshya played Christie, seeded third in this event, after the Paris Olympics. Lakshya dominated Christie from the word go in a fluent show of skills.

Even as Lakshya stormed into the quarterfinals, In-

dia's women's singles campaign ended with Malvika Bansod losing in straight games against two-time world champion Akane Yamaguchi of Japan in the pre-quarterfinals.

ALL ENGLAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

The World No. 3 Yamaguchi hardly broke a sweat to get the better of World No.28 Malvika 21-16, 21-13 in a contest that lasted just 33 minutes.

Yamaguchi has now extended her head-to-head record against Malvika to 4-0. Malvika struggled to adjust to the conditions, repeatedly hitting wide, long, and into the net to fall be-

hind early.

Satwik-Chirag concedes match

Seventh seed Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty conceded their pre-quarterfinal match against Hao Nan Xie and Wei Han Zeng of China midway after the Indian pair was trailing 16-21 2-2 due to a past back injury of Chirag that flared up.

India's campaign ends in mixed doubles

The Indian mixed doubles pair of Rohan Kapoor and Ruthvika Shivani Gadde also crashed out in the round of 16, losing to fifth seeded Chinese pair of Zhe FENG Yan and Xin WEI Ya 10-21 12-21.

Wood out for 4 months after latest injury blow

AFP, LONDON: England fast bowler Mark Wood has been ruled out for four months following an operation on his left knee, effectively ruling him out of an upcoming Test series at home to India.

But Thursday's announcement left open the possibility of the 35-year-old featuring on a 2025/26 tour of Australia where England will look to regain the Ashes.

Wood suffered the latest in a long line of injuries while bowling against Afghanistan last month during England's woeful Champions Trophy campaign in Pakistan where they lost all three of their group games.

Only recently returned to action following a lengthy lay-off with a stress problem in his elbow, Wood left the field in Lahore after bowling four overs but came back to bowl another spell despite his evident discomfort, amid fears he could have aggravated the injury.

Wood underwent surgery on Wednesday after scans confirmed medial ligament damage in his left knee, with the operation ruling him out until July at the earliest.

But with the final game of England's five-Test series with India starting at the Oval on July 31, Wood has next to no chance of being involved. He will also miss six white-ball games against the West Indies and a one-off Test with Zimbabwe in May.

At this stage, the England and Wales Cricket Board believe Wood will be fit to tour Australia.

Speaking at Lord's last week, ECB men's managing director Rob Key said England will "work back from the Ashes" regarding decisions concerning the Durham paceman's fitness.

"I'm gutted to be out for so long after representing



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England across all formats since the start of last year," said Wood in an ECB statement issued Thursday.

"But I've got every confidence that I'll be back firing on all cylinders now that I've been able to sort my knee out.

"I want to thank the surgeon, the doctors, staff, my England teammates and coaches for their support -- and, of course, our fans. I can't wait to get back and contribute to what is going to be a huge 2025 for us as a team."

Wood's absence adds to the fitness concerns surrounding England's fast bowlers, with Bry-

don Carse's encouraging 2024/25 tour campaign curtailed by a toe injury while doubts remain about express quick Jofra Archer's hopes of a return to Test action given injuries mean he has not played a first-class match since May 2021.

Wood has a fine recent record against Australia, having taken 17 wickets at 26.64 during England's 4-0 series loss during their last Ashes tour 'Down Under' in 2021/22.

He also took 14 wickets at 20.21 in the drawn 2023 home series, having joined that contest with Australia 2-0 ahead in a five-match campaign.

Matthews, Sciver-Brunt power Mumbai Indians into WPL final

Meet Delhi Capitals in summit clash on Saturday

PTI, MUMBAI: Nat Sciver-Brunt and Hayley Matthews carried Mumbai Indians to their second WPL final as their power-packed knocks laid the cornerstone for the team's 47-run win over Gujarat Giants in the Eliminator, here, on Thursday.

After a rather sedate powerplay, Sciver-Brunt (77 off 41) and Matthews (77 off 50) displayed brute force to fire Mumbai Indians to a daunting 213 for four.

Mumbai Indians skipper Harmanpreet Kaur (36 off 12) provided the finishing touches with a crisp cameo.

After an ordinary show in the field and with the ball, the Giants were on self-destructing mode in the chase with three run-outs being an indicator of that.

Their innings ended at 166 all out in 19.2 overs with

Matthews also chipping in with the ball, striking twice. It was Mumbai Indians' seventh straight win over the Giants in WPL history.

Mumbai Indians, who won the inaugural edition in 2023, will meet Delhi Capitals in the final on Saturday. Debutant Daniell Gibson (34 off 24) and Phoebe Litchfield (31 off 20) looked in threatening touch but regular fall of wickets kept pegging the Giants back. The highlight of Litchfield's effort was the switch hit of Matthews.

Skipper Ashleigh Gardner, who bailed her team out on multiple occasions, had an off day with the bat.

Indian batter Bharti Fulmali delayed the inevitable with an impressive 30 off 20 balls. Having finished last in the past two seasons, reaching the knock-out

stage was a welcome result for Gujarat Giants.

Earlier, Sciver-Brunt, who forms the backbone of Mumbai Indians batting, disdainfully smashed pacers and spinners, collecting 10 fours and two sixes in the process. Realising Mumbai had got only 37 in the powerplay, Matthews and Sciver-Brunt changed gears.

While the England batter took the attack to debutant pacer Danielle Gibson, Matthews hammered three consecutive boundaries off leg-spinner Priya Mishra.

Matthews, who began cautiously before cutting loose, got to her fifty with a six off a long hop from left-arm spinner Tanuja Kanwer. In the death overs, it was raining sixes from the bat of Harmanpreet who cleared the ropes four times in her sizzling effort.