

Shardul, Pooran take Giant(s) steps

Thakur continues his dream comeback with figures of 4/34 to help Lucknow Super Giants restrict a power-packed Sunrisers Hyderabad to 190 for 9 before Pooran (70 off 26; 6x4s, 6x6s) displays his 360 degree hitting skills

PTI, HYDERABAD: Shardul Thakur's four-wicket haul and a sensational display of power-hitting from Nicholas Pooran set up a five-wicket win for Lucknow Super Giants over Sunrisers Hyderabad in an IPL match, here, on Thursday.

Shardul continued his dream comeback returning with figures of 4/34 to help LSG restrict a power-packed SRH to 190 for 9 before Pooran (70 off 26; 6x4s, 6x6s) displayed his 360 degree hitting skills.

Pooran shared quick-fire match-winning 116 runs for the second wicket with Marsh (52 off 31) to help LSG chase down the target in 16.1 overs.

LSG didn't have the best start to their chase as they lost Aiden Markram early.

But thereafter, it was the effortless hitting from Mitchell Marsh and Nicholas Pooran that helped LSG surge ahead.

Pooran in particular was at his attacking best as he mostly dealt in sixes, clobbering Simarjeet and Abhishek Sharma for huge sixes during his knock, mostly towards the square boundary.

SRH just found it difficult to stop Pooran as he didn't even spare Cummins, hitting him for two fours in his first over to reach 77 for 1 in the powerplay.

Pooran brought up the fastest fifty of this season in just 18 balls with another huge six over square leg of Adam Zampa.

Pooran's magnificent knock was cut short by Cummins, trapped in

PTI PICS



Lucknow Super Giants' Nicholas Pooran (left) celebrates his half century with Mitchell Marsh during an Indian Premier League match against Sunrisers Hyderabad, at Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium, Uppal, in Hyderabad, on Thursday. (Right) Lucknow Super Giants' Shardul Thakur celebrates with teammates after taking the wicket of Sunrisers Hyderabad's Abhinav Manohar

SCOREBOARD

front of the wickets in the ninth over.

After Pooran's dismissal, Marsh took the onus on him and brought up his half-century of just 29 balls.

LSG skipper Rishabh Pant (15 off 15) could not do much but Abdul Samad played an entertaining cameo to get his side home.

Earlier opting bowl, Shardul (4/34) gave LSG a fiery start, removing Abhishek Sharma and last match centurion Ishan Kishan in consecutive balls in the third over.

Shardul sent packing Sharma with a short delivery before getting Ishan Kishan caught behind off an

Sunrisers Hyderabad: Travis Head b Yadav 47, Abhishek Sharma c Pooran b Thakur 6, Ishan Kishan c Pant b Thakur 0, Nitish Kumar Reddy b Bishnoi 32, Heinrich Klaasen run out (Yadav) 26, Aniket Verma c Miller b Rathi 36, Abhinav Manohar c Samad b Thakur 2, *Pat Cummins c Rathi b Khan 18, Harshal Patel not out 12, Mohammed Shami c Badoni b Thakur 1, Simarjeet Singh not out 5. **Extras:** 7. **Total:** 190-9. **Fall of wickets:** 15-1, 15-2, 76-3, 110-4, 128-5, 156-6, 156-7, 176-8, 181-9. **Bowling:** Shardul Thakur 4-0-34-4, Avesh Khan 4-0-45-1, Digvesh Rathi 4-0-40-1, Ravi Bishnoi 4-0-42-1, Prince Yadav 4-0-29-1.

Lucknow Super Giants: Mitchell Marsh c Reddy b Cummins 52, Aiden Markram c Cummins b Shami 1, Nicholas Pooran lbw b Cummins 70, *Rishabh Pant st Shami b Patel 15, Ayush Badoni c Patel b Zampa 22, David Miller not out 13, Abdul Samad not out 22. **Extras:** 14. **Total:** 193-5. **Fall of wickets:** 4-1, 119-2, 137-3, 153-4, 163-5. **Bowling:** Abhishek Sharma 2-0-20-0, Mohammed Shami 3-0-37-1, Simarjeet Singh 2-0-28-0, *Pat Cummins 3-0-29-2, Adam Zampa 4-0-46-1, Harshal Patel 2-0-28-1, Ishan Kishan 0-1-0-4-0.

Man-of-the-match: Shardul Thakur

innocuous delivery down the leg side.

Travis Head (47 off 28), however, looked in ominous form as he took the attack to the opposition and used his brute power to deal in boundaries and sixes.

Head was particularly brutal against Avesh Khan, who sprayed the ball on both sides, with the Australian hitting him for two sixes and one four to pick up 18 runs in the fourth over.

Head, however, was lucky as he got two reprieves.



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start to their chase as they lost Aiden Markram early. But thereafter, it was the effortless hitting from Mitchell Marsh and Nicholas Pooran that helped LSG surge ahead

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■ Bishnoi had another chance to claim the wicket of Head in the fifth ball of the sixth over but he failed to latch on to a difficult return catch. But Head's luck finally ran out when fast bowler Prince Yadav disturbed his timbers to pick up his first IPL wicket

Head skied Ravi Bishnoi's first ball down the ground, and Pooran stationed at long-on had all the time in the world to get under the ball and take a simple catch but the West Indian put it down.

TODAY'S IPL FIXTURE

Royal Challengers Bengaluru vs Chennai Super Kings, at the M A Chidambaram Stadium, Chennai, 7.30 pm

RCB need to adjust: Watson

PTI, CHENNAI: Former Australian all-rounder Shane Watson said Royal Challengers Bengaluru will have to tweak their team composition to suit the demands of the Chepauk pitch in their second IPL match against Chennai Super Kings here on Friday.

The Royal Challengers are coming off a fine win over Kolkata Knight Riders, but Watson believes that they will face a bigger challenge against Chennai.

"It's going to be a huge challenge for RCB to go to Chepauk, especially given the quality of bowlers CSK

have at their disposal. RCB will likely need to adjust their team composition to counter CSK's strengths. But make no mistake -- Chepauk is a fortress," said Watson, a JioStar expert.

Watson, who played for both CSK and RCB in his IPL career, cited the presence of quality spinners in Chennai's ranks as primary reason for their dominance at their home venue.

"CSK's entire setup is built around excelling in Chennai. Just look at the three spinners who bowled brilliantly in their opening game against MI -- Ashwin,

Jadeja, and Noor Ahmad. They are going to be a real handful on that surface.

"Seeing Noor Ahmad make such an impact in his first game for CSK will only boost the team's confidence, knowing they have another wicket-taking option," he added.

Watson, who was a part of Rajasthan Royals' title run in 2008, said his former club is thin on spin resources and it was revealed in the match against the Knight Riders.

The KKR scored an eight-wicket win over RR in Guwahati on Wednesday. "The Rajasthan Royals

batters struggled to find their timing and made a few execution errors, which prevented them from putting up a big total.

"A major difference was the calibre and quality of KKR's spin attack. Varun Chakravarty and Moeen Ali bowled exceptionally well, whereas Rajasthan's bowlers, particularly in the middle overs, lacked the potency we've seen from them in the past."

The lack of bite in RR bowling, Watson said, made things easier for Quinton de Kock, who slammed an unbeaten 97 off 61 balls.

Kohli is constantly looking to improve: Karthik

PTI, CHENNAI: Virat Kohli's exemplary work ethic continues to serve as a source of inspiration for his teammates and the Indian superstar remains committed to raising the bar for himself, said RCB batting coach Dinesh Karthik on Thursday.

Karthik, a former RCB player who retired after the last IPL edition, said Kohli remains as hungry as ever.

"Even today, just now as I came out, he wanted to work on one more shot. At this point in time, to work on one more shot tells you the hunger that he has in

his mindset," the former India wicketkeeper-batter said on the eve of RCB versus CSK clash. "He wants to just improve and keep raising the bar. So, he is a special player. And at this point in time, the way I see it, he is batting as confidently and as well as he has ever done in the IPL."

It's fine for now but all-rounders could lose out at some stage: Phillips on Impact Player

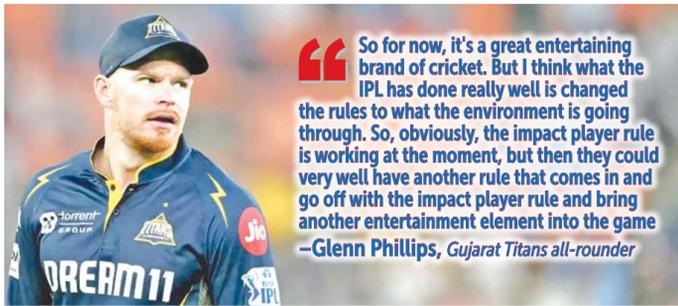
PTI, NEW DELHI: The Impact Player rule in the IPL is working at the moment but it could pose issues for the development of all-rounders at some stage, reckons New Zealand and Gujarat Titans all-rounder Glenn Phillips.

The rule has divided opinions but the BCCI has extended it to at least the 2027 edition.

It essentially gives teams the license to go hard from ball one with the cushion of an extra batter in the form of an Impact Player. Similarly, teams can also bring in a specialist bowler instead of an all-rounder.

"I'm neither here nor there for it. It definitely allows a lineup to do different things. But I do feel like there could be an issue at some stage with all-rounders losing out and not being so prevalent, which then obviously has an impact on international game, international T20s, international one days," the Blackcaps cricketer told PTI.

"So for now, it's a great entertaining brand of cricket. But I think what the IPL has done really well is changed the rules to what the environment is going



“So for now, it's a great entertaining brand of cricket. But I think what the IPL has done really well is changed the rules to what the environment is going through. So, obviously, the impact player rule is working at the moment, but then they could very well have another rule that comes in and go off with the impact player rule and bring another entertainment element into the game” — Glenn Phillips, Gujarat Titans all-rounder

through.

"So, obviously, the impact player rule is working at the moment, but then they could very well have another rule that comes in and go off with the impact player rule and bring another entertainment element into the game," said Phillips, arguably the best fielder in the modern game.

Last season, Rohit Sharma said he was not a fan of the impact player as it hinders the growth of Indian all-rounders. Ahead of the 2025 edition, Hardik Pandya said it is difficult to draft a developing all-rounder in the starting eleven unless one is a pure all-rounder like him.

Phillips also backed the lifting of saliva ban ahead of

the IPL 2025.

"You know, we've brought saliva back this year, which obviously will potentially enhance reverse swing as well. The bowlers need to be able to have something going for them if there's an extra batter going around."

"So I think that's what the IPL has done really well. So not necessarily the impact player per se, but the rules that they changed to keep it fresh and new," he added.

Now, the bowlers can use saliva to polish the ball in the league, to try and get some reverse swing going at least in the business end of an innings.

On the two-year ban imposed by the BCCI for last minute pullouts of foreign

players from the IPL, Phillips said it was fair enough.

"At the end of the day, they warned people, if you come in and you decide to go, that they knew about the rules to start. If the rules weren't there, I think it would be a bit harsh, but the rule is there."

Harry Brook was banned from the IPL for the current and next season following his late withdrawal.

It would be unfortunate if I don't use Shubman's knowledge

Phillips surprisingly did not make Gujarat Titans debut in the team's opening game against Punjab Kings but considering the form he is in, he might get to play against Mumbai Indians on Saturday.

sportspopup

India to play Thailand, Mongolia, Timor Leste, Iraq in AFC Women's Asian Cup Qualifiers

NEW DELHI: The India senior women's team were on Thursday drawn alongside Thailand, Mongolia, Timor Leste, and Iraq in Group B of the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026 Qualifiers. The draw was conducted at the AFC House in Kuala Lumpur. Thailand will host Group B of the Qualifiers between June 23 to July 5 in a centralised single round-robin format. The group winners will qualify for the final tournament, scheduled to be staged across three host cities in Australia from March 1 to 26, 2026. Teams were divided into five pots as per seedings based on the FIFA women's world ranking published on March 6. The top six teams at the AFC Women's Asian Cup Australia 2026 will qualify for the FIFA Women's World Cup Brazil 2027.

Silver for Reetika Hooda at Asian Ch'ship gold, Mansi and Muskan win bronze

AMMAN (Jordan): Young Indian wrestler Reetika Hooda blew away a 6-2 lead, conceding four points in the last 10 seconds of the women's 76kg final, to settle for a silver medal at the Asian Championship, while Mansi Lather and Muskan won bronze, here on Thursday. The 22-year-old Reetika, who became first Indian female wrestler to be crowned U23 World Champion and youngest to qualify for Olympics, outclassed Japan's Nodoka Yamamoto and Korea's Seoyeon Jeong on her way to the gold medal bout. The summit clash was a repeat of Paris Olympics quarterfinal against Kyrgyzstan's Aiperi Medet Kzy. Reetika employed an aggressive strategy, going for double leg attacks.

Former England bowler Lever dies aged 84

LONDON: Former England fast bowler Peter Lever, who helped his country win the 1970-71 Ashes series in Australia, has died aged 84. Lever took 41 wickets in 17 Tests and also featured in 10 one-day internationals, including the historic inaugural match in the format against Australia in 1971. Lever, who also starred for English county Lancashire, made his Test debut for Raymond Illingworth's England team during the 1970-71 tour to Australia. He impressed in Australia again in 1975, taking his career-best Test figures of six for 38 in Melbourne. In the pre-helmet era, Lever famously struck New Zealand's Ewen Chatfield on the head with a bouncer during a 1975 Test in Auckland, with emergency medical treatment saving the tail-ender's life after his heart briefly stopped.

Fils upsets Zverev, Dimitrov into Miami semis

MIAMI GARDENS (United States): France's Arthur Fils upset top-seed Alexander Zverev with an outstanding display earning him a 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 win over the German in the fourth round of the Miami Open on Wednesday. The 20-year-old Frenchman will face 19-year-old Czech Jakub Mensik in the quarter-finals with both players chasing their first Masters 1000 semi-final spot. In the opening quarter-final, Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov battled back from a set down to beat Argentine Francisco Cerundolo 6-7 (6/8), 6-4, 7-6 (7/3) in a riveting duel. World No. 1 Aryna Sabalenka battled back in the second set to blast her way into the semi-finals of the Miami Open with a 6-2, 7-5 win over China's Zheng Qinwen on Tuesday. Earlier, Paolini moved into the semi-finals with a 6-3, 6-2 win over Poland's Magda Linette.

Karmakar's suspension will be discussed: NRAI

NEW DELHI: The suspension of Arjuna Award recipient Joydeep Karmakar from all shooting activities in West Bengal by the State body will be discussed at the "appropriate level", the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) said on Thursday. The West Bengal Rifle Association's (WBRA) move to bar Karmakar, currently a rifle coach, from activities related to shooting in the state came after the Olympian questioned selections for the 2025 National Games held in Uttarakhand early this year. "That will be discussed at appropriate level. It (Karmakar's letter) came yesterday. It will go the NRAI president," said NRAI secretary Rajiv Bhatia. Karmakar represented India in rifle prone events in various international tournaments and narrowly missed a medal at the Rio Olympics in 2016.

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