

Prabhsimran powers Punjab to handsome win over Lucknow

AFP, LUCKNOW: Wicketkeeper-batsman Prabhsimran Singh scored an explosive 69 off 34 balls as Punjab Kings cruised to an eight-wicket victory over Lucknow Super Giants on Tuesday for their second win this IPL.

Punjab chased down the target of 172 set by Lucknow with nearly four overs to spare, and captain Shreyas Iyer remained unbeaten on 52 off 30 balls.

Playing their first home game of the season, Lucknow Super Giants started poorly, losing in-form opener Mitchell Marsh for a golden duck in the first over of the match to Arshdeep Singh.

Marsh's opening partner Aiden Markram hit Arshdeep for three boundaries in his next over but fell for 28 off 18 soon after to New Zealand pacer Lockie Ferguson, who was playing his first match for the Kings.

Captain Rishabh Pant's stint at the crease was short-lived getting out for just two runs from five balls, leaving Lucknow reeling at 35-3 just prior to the end of the powerplay.

Nicholas Pooran and Ayush Badoni steadied the innings with a 54-run partnership for the fourth wicket, but Pooran eventually fell to spinner Yuzven-



TWISTS & TURNS

■ Punjab Kings' wicket-keeper-batsman Prabhsimran Singh played a match-winning innings, scoring 69 off just 34 balls, helping Punjab chase down 172 with ease.

■ Arshdeep Singh set the tone early by dismissing Mitchell Marsh for a golden duck in the first over and later claimed two wickets in the final over, restricting Lucknow Super Giants to 171-7.



Punjab Kings' Prabhsimran Singh watches the ball after playing a shot against Lucknow Super Giants, at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in Lucknow

dra Chahal in the 12th over after an entertaining 44 off 30 balls.

The attacking David Miller, who came in next, did not last long either, falling to fellow South African Marco Jansen for 19 off 18 deliveries.

Badoni (41) and Abdul Samad (27), both of whom were dismissed by Arshdeep

in the last over of the innings, provided some late momentum to Lucknow, propelling them to a total of 171-7.

In response, Punjab lost opener Priyansh Arya cheaply for eight runs off nine balls to spinner Digvesh Rathi in the third over.

But Lucknow's bowling attack only again tasted success in the 11th over

when Prabhsimran fell, courtesy of a spectacular catch at the fence by Ravi Bishnoi.

By then, Iyer and Prabhsimran's quickfire partnership of 84 -- powered largely by the latter -- had taken the match away from Lucknow.

Left-handed batter Nehal Wadhwa (43) then teamed up with Iyer to take Punjab over the line without any further setbacks.

Rathi (2-30) was the only Lucknow bowler to be among the wickets.

SCOREBOARD

Lucknow Super Giants:
Aiden Markram b Ferguson 28, Mitchell Marsh c Jansen b Singh 0, Nicholas Pooran c Maxwell b Chahal 44, Rishabh Pant c Chahal b Maxwell 2, Ayush Badoni c Maxwell b Singh 41, David Miller c Singh b Jansen 19, Abdul Samad c Arya b Singh 27, Shardul Thakur not out 3, Avesh Khan not out 0. **Extras:** 7. **Total:** 171 for 7. **FOW:** 1-1, 32-2, 35-3, 89-4, 119-5, 166-6, 167-7.

Bowling: Arshdeep Singh 4-0-43-3, Lockie Ferguson 3-0-26-1, Glenn Maxwell 3-0-22-1, Marco Jansen 4-0-28-1, Marcus Stoinis 2-0-15-0, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-36-1.

Punjab Kings: Priyansh Arya c Thakur b Rathi 8, Prabhsimran Singh c Bishnoi b Rathi 69, Shreyas Iyer not out 52, Nehal Wadhwa not out 43. **Extras:** 5. **Total:** 177 for 2. **FOW:** 26-1, 110-2.

Bowling: Shardul Thakur 3-0-39-0, Avesh Khan 3-0-30-0, Digvesh Rathi 4-0-30-2, Ravi Bishnoi 3-0-43-0, Manimaran Siddharth 3-0-28-0, Abdul Samad 0-2-0-6-0.

Man of the match: Prabhsimran Singh

Arshdeep credits success to self-criticism, consistency



PTI, LUCKNOW: Left-arm seamer Arshdeep Singh, who has evolved into a death-overs specialist since bursting on to the scene, has attributed his success to constructive self-criticism and steadily improving by half a percent after every game.

The 26-year-old Arshdeep, who plays for Punjab Kings in the IPL, picked up the important wickets of Sai Sudharsan and Sherfane Rutherford in his team's 11-run victory over Gujarat Titans in their only match so far this season.

On how he has evolved over the years, Arshdeep told JioHotstar: "The key is to improve by 1% to 1.5% after every game, every day — whether the

performance was good or bad. I've always believed that the biggest room in the world is the room for improvement.

"So whenever I get the chance, I engage in constructive self-criticism and strive to enhance my skill set, even if it's just by 1% or half a percent."

PBKs are currently being led by stylish batter Shreyas Iyer, and Arshdeep is optimistic of the team breaking its jinx of never winning the IPL title this time.

Asked about his bond with Shreyas and the new skipper's approach, Arshdeep said: "I have played with Iyer before, under his captaincy in the Duleep Trophy, and I really enjoyed it. He always backed his

players and gave them the freedom to express themselves.

"What I've noticed here is that his approach remains the same — he doesn't impose rigid instructions but encourages players to trust their skills and play for the team.

He promotes a selfless approach, assuring full backing to the players. I truly admire this mindset, and as players, we will do our best to support him and help the team win back-to-back titles."

Arshdeep, who has so far taken 78 wickets in the IPL from 66 matches besides grabbing 99 wickets from 63 T20 Internationals for India, said he always looks to deliver when the going gets tough.

'Ashwani is lot quicker than people recognise at first'

PTI, MUMBAI: Mumbai Indians' unheralded fast bowler Ashwani Kumar, who became the first Indian to take four wickets on IPL debut, is a "lot quicker than people recognise at first", says his teammate Ryan Rickelton.

The left-arm Punjab seamer took 4/24 on Monday to blow away Kolkata Knight Riders as Mumbai Indians recorded an eight-wicket win which took them to the sixth spot in the points table.

"He's a lot quicker than I think people recognise at first, that's a great attribute he has and he can swing the new ball," Rickelton told the media after the match here at the Wankhede Stadium.

"He's a lot quicker than you think and he rushes you a little bit lower as well. He's a great addition obviously to the group and the wicket can suit him."

"Looking forward to seeing if he gets an opportunity with the new ball to see that other set of skills come through. He's a nice find for MI and really looking forward to seeing how he goes," he added.

Rickelton said the Punjab seamer, who had only played four

senior T20 matches, four List A matches and two Ranji Trophy games before his IPL debut, executed his plans really well.

"I've played a few warm-up games with him, keeping (the wickets) to him and batting against him in the nets. He's a really nice bowler. He can swing the new ball and he executed his plan really, really well," he said.

"The group's really happy for him. But yeah, it's cool that he got an opportunity. The group's really chuffed that he managed to get out of the match performance," he added.

KKR's Ramandeep Singh, who is also from Punjab and trains in the same academy as Ashwani, termed him as a "talented cricketer".

"Ashwani is a very talented cricketer, he is from Punjab. This IPL is known for the fact that youngsters come and perform here and you can see their talent," he said.

Rickelton, meanwhile, said getting his maiden half-century was a massive relief. The left-handed South African wicketkeeper-batter hit 62 not out off 41 balls with five sixes and four fours.



Veteran woman hockey forward Vandana calls time on international career

PTI, NEW DELHI: Vandana Katariya, the most-capped Indian woman hockey player, brought curtains on her illustrious 15-year international career on Tuesday, saying the decision taken at her 'zenith' was both 'bittersweet and empowering'.

The 32-year-old veteran striker represented India in 320 international games, scoring 158 goals. She was also a part of the Indian team that cherished the historic fourth-place finish at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics.

"Today, with a heavy yet grateful heart, I announce my retirement from international hockey -- a decision that feels both bitter-sweet and empowering," Katariya wrote in an Instagram post.

"I'm not stepping away because the fire in me has dimmed or the hockey in my tank has run dry, but be-

cause I want to bow out at my zenith, while I'm still at my very best.

"This isn't a goodbye born out of exhaustion; it's a choice to leave the international stage on my terms, with my head held high and my stick still blazing. The roar of the crowd, the thrill of every goal, and the pride of wearing India's colors will forever echo in my soul," she added.

A pillar of Indian hockey since her senior debut in 2009, Katariya played a crucial role in defining moments for the sport. She became the first and only Indian woman to score a hat-trick at the Tokyo Games.

"I still get goosebumps thinking about Tokyo. The Olympics are special, and that match against South Africa was one of the most emotional games of my life. The hat-trick was special,

but more than that, it was about proving that we belonged on that stage," said Katariya, who competed in the 2016 Rio Games.

However, this isn't the end of her

hockey journey as she will continue to play in the women's Hockey India League.

"I'm not hanging up my stick. I'll keep playing, keep scoring, and keep inspiring in the Hockey India League and beyond. The turf will still feel my footsteps, and my passion for this game will never fade."

"Today, I retire from international hockey, but I carry forward every memory, every lesson, and every ounce of love you've given me. Thank you for being my family, my fuel, and my forever teammates in spirit," she concluded.

Hockey India President Dilip Tirkey called her the heartbeat of India's attack.

"Vandana was not just a goal scorer; she was the heartbeat of the Indian attack, a

tireless worker, and a leader by example," he said in a HI release.

"Her presence in the forward line provided India with an edge, especially in high-pressure situations and her contributions have been instrumental in the team's rise on the global stage. She has set a benchmark for future generations."

Her impact on Indian hockey earned Katariya the prestigious Padma Shri and Arjuna Awards. She played a pivotal role in securing gold medals at the 2016 and 2023 Women's Asian Champions Trophy and the FIH Hockey Women's Nations Cup in 2022.

She was also part of the silver-winning squads at the 2018 Asian Games and the 2013 and 2018 Asian Champions Trophy.

Additionally, she secured bronze medals at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, the 2014 and 2022 Asian Games, and the 2021-22 FIH Pro League.

"To my teammates, my sisters-in-arms, your camaraderie and trust have fueled my spirit. To my coaches and mentors, your wisdom and faith in me have shaped my path," Katariya wrote.

Hailing from Roshnabad, Haryana, Katariya played her last match for India during the Bhubaneswar leg of the FIH Pro League in February.

"And to my late father -- my rock, my guiding light -- without you, this dream would have remained out of reach. Your sacrifices and love have been my foundation. You've given me a platform to dream, to fight, and to win."

sportspopup

Bayern reportedly against giving club favourite Thomas Müller another season

BERLIN: Bayern Munich favorite Thomas Müller could be about to end his career as media reports suggest the club will not extend his contract at the end of the season. The 35-year-old Müller's current deal runs only through June and both SportBild and Kicker magazine were reporting that Bayern would prefer to save his considerable wage packet than offer him a new one. Müller made his Bayern debut under Jürgen Klinsmann in 2008 and his breakthrough came under Louis van Gaal the following season. He has since made more appearances than any other player at the club, 742 across all competitions (with 247 goals) including super cups and club world championships. He has gone on to win a record 12 Bundesliga titles and two Champions Leagues -- and he may win more because Bayern leads the former by six points with seven games remaining, and faces Inter Milan in the Champions League quarterfinals. Munich hosts the final in May.

Trophies are what count: Barca's Flick before Atletico cup clash

BARCELONA (Spain): Barcelona coach Hansi Flick said Tuesday his team will be judged on what silverware they win this season, regardless of how entertaining their football is. The Catalan giants are fighting for a potential quadruple, after winning the Spanish Super Cup in January and are playing with the flair and style they have lacked in recent seasons. Barcelona face Atletico Madrid on Wednesday in a Copa del Rey semi-final second leg clash, sitting first in La Liga and in the Champions League quarter-finals. "I think my team, the players, can be very proud about what they're doing," Flick told a news conference. "I think the team improved a lot, so this is also what I said to them, I appreciate that about (our path) until now. "But it's football, and you know in the end what counts is your position, the titles if they are possible."

Liverpool's Slot unfazed by Alexander-Arnold Real links

LIVERPOOL: Arne Slot says Liverpool remain laser-focused on their Premier League title challenge despite reports Trent Alexander-Arnold is closing in on a move to Real Madrid. The England defender has long been linked with a free transfer to the Bernabeu and talks between the 26-year-old and the Spanish giants are understood to be making progress. Alexander-Arnold is one of three marquee players out of contract at the end of the season, along with Mohamed Salah and Virgil van Dijk. All three have been able to discuss terms with overseas clubs since January. Slot's side, who are red-hot favourites to win the Premier League, host local rivals Everton on Wednesday following the international break. "His situation is, unfortunately, that he is injured, otherwise people would have probably spoken about him that he had one or two brilliant performances for the England team," the Liverpool boss said on Tuesday, referring to Alexander-Arnold.

Haaland ruled out for up to seven weeks: Man City boss Guardiola

LONDON: Erling Haaland will be out of action for up to seven weeks after suffering an ankle injury, Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola said on Tuesday. The prolific 24-year-old Norwegian was forced off in Sunday's 2-1 FA Cup quarter-final win at Bournemouth after scoring his 30th goal of the season. City said on Monday that the forward would see a specialist but anticipated he "will be fit to play a further part in the remainder of this season including this summer's FIFA Club World Cup". Guardiola gave an update on Tuesday, on the eve of his side's Premier League match against struggling Leicester at the Etihad. "The doctors told me between five and seven weeks," he said. "So hopefully for the end of season and FIFA Club World Cup he will be ready. "Sometimes there are years where these kinds of things happen. It's happened all season."

Fernandes 'not going anywhere', says Man Utd boss Amorim

LONDON: Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes was told by manager Ruben Amorim on Monday that he is "not going anywhere" despite reports of a possible move to Real Madrid. The 30-year-old Portuguese star, who has scored 95 goals in 277 appearances since joining from Sporting Lisbon in 2020, has a contract at Old Trafford until 2027. However, he has been linked in recent days with a €90 million (107.4 million euros) switch to Spanish giants Real. "No, it's not going to happen," insisted Amorim. "I want Bruno here because maybe in the lowest moments of our season (he impressed). We want to win the Premier League again, so we want the best players to continue with us." Amorim added: "He's 29, I think, but he's still so young because he plays 55 games every season. Between assists and goals, he's there for 30 at least so he's the type of player we want here so he's not going anywhere." "We are in control of the situation and I feel that he is really happy here."

South Africa's white ball coach resigns due to personal reasons

JOHANNESBURG: South Africa's white-ball head coach Rob Walter will step down from his role at the end of the month due to personal reasons. Walter has attributed his resignation to personal reasons, which Cricket South Africa has accepted. Walter, who has held the position since March 2023, has played an instrumental role in South Africa's recent successes on the global stage. Under his leadership, the Proteas made history by reaching their first-ever ICC Men's T20 World Cup final in 2024, where they finished as runners up to India in Barbados. A record run of eight consecutive wins underpinned the campaign. His tenure also saw the 50-over side reach the semi-finals of the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup 2023 in India. In his time at the helm, Walter oversaw the national side in 36 One-Day Internationals and 31 T20 Internationals, with series wins against Netherlands, Australia, Ireland and Pakistan.

Charlotte Edwards is the head coach of England's women's cricket team

LONDON: Former England captain Charlotte Edwards was appointed head coach of the country's women's national cricket team on Tuesday. Edwards played for England on more than 300 occasions during a 20-year career, winning the World Cup in both white-ball formats as well as five Ashes series against Australia. She was the captain for 10 years. "I am so delighted to once again be part of the leadership of the England Women's cricket team, and I cannot wait to take this team forward and drive us to success," the 45-year-old Edwards said in a statement published by the England and Wales Cricket Board. England was looking for a new coach after Jon Lewis left his post on March 21 following poor results at the T20 World Cup and in the Ashes series.