

FC Goa face uphill task after 2-0 loss to Bengaluru FC in semis first leg

AGENCIES, BENGALURU: FC Goa will need a heroic comeback at home to keep their ISL 2024-25 title hopes alive after a 2-0 defeat to Bengaluru FC in the semi-final first leg at the Sree Kanteerava Stadium, on Wednesday.

SEMI-FINAL FIXTURE

First Leg: Mohun Bagan SG vs Jamshedpur FC, JRD Tata Sports Complex Football Stadium, Jamshedpur, at 7.30 pm



FC Goa's Udanta Singh in action against BFC players during the ISL game at Sree Kanteerava Stadium, Bengaluru on Wednesday

An unfortunate own goal from Sandesh Jhingana and a second-half strike by Edgar Méndez handed the hosts the advantage. However, with the second leg set for Fatorda, on April 6, at 7.30 pm, the Gaurs remain in the fight.

Head coach Manolo Márquez fielded a strong lineup, with Iker Guartoxena leading the attack, supported by Borja Herrera, Brison Fernandes,

and Udanta Singh. Hrithik Tiwari took charge in goal, while captain Odei Onaindia anchored the defence alongside Jhingana, Boris Singh, and Aakash Sangwan.

FC Goa started confidently, passing with precision and testing the Bengaluru

defence. The first major scare came in the 8th minute when Pedro Capó's header was brilliantly saved by Tiwari.

The Gaurs responded in the 27th minute when a well-placed Herrera free-kick found Onaindia, who set up Udanta Singh, only

for the winger's shot to be blocked.

However, disaster struck just before half-time. Mendez whipped in a cross towards Ryan Williams, and as Jhingana attempted to intercept, the ball deflected off him and into his own net, giving Bengaluru a 1-0

lead at the break.

FC Goa returned with renewed intent, with Fernandes narrowly missing in the 48th minute and Guartoxena firing just over moments later. However, Bengaluru doubled their lead in the 51st minute when Namgyal Bhutia's precise cross found Méndez, who calmly slotted home.

Despite the setback, Goa pushed forward. In the 54th minute, Sangwan's cross set up Herrera, whose header went agonisingly wide. Guartoxena came close again in the 71st minute, heading just past the post after an excellent cross from Udanta.

In the dying moments, Goa piled on the pressure. A thunderous long-range strike from Guartoxena in the 81st minute was superbly saved, while Boris Singh's powerful effort two minutes later was also denied. Carl McHugh had a final chance in the 89th minute, but his shot whistled just wide of the post.

Dempo SC keep dreams alive with important win

AGENCIES, MUMBAI: Dempo SC and Classic FA registered crucial wins to keep Group B alive till the final matchday in the Reliance Foundation Development League (RFDL) 2024-25 National Group Stage at the Reliance Corporate Ground in Mumbai on Wednesday.

RFDL 2024-25 NAT GROUP STAGE

Before the game against Mohun Bagan Super Giant, Dempo SC direly needed the three points to stay in contention for the RFDL National Championship and left their all on the pitch to register a much-required win. In the 20th minute, Swavel Cristiano Furtado capitalised on a mistake from Mohun Bagan Super Giant skipper Aman-deep in the danger area. The midfielder went for a first-time shot and the ball took a deflection to beat the goalkeeper from the edge of the box.

The Golden Eagles showed more intent with their attacking moves and bore the fruit in the 50th

RESULTS

Mohun Bagan Super Giant 0 - Dempo SC 2 (20' Swavel Cristiano Furtado, 50' Rahul Peter Rodrigues); **Kickstart FC 1** (45' Bishwas Budha Chhetri) - **East Bengal FC 0**; **Mumbai City FC 0 - Classic FA 1** (37' Md. Arbash)

minute. Sairon Albuquerque delivered a pin-point cross from a free-kick near the half-way line. Rahul Peter Rodrigues was left unmarked in the box and headed it past Mohun Bagan Super Giant goalkeeper Priyanshu Dube to make it 2-0. The Goan side kept hold of the scoreline despite relentless attacking from the Mariners to get back into the game, and registered three crucial points.

On the other hand, Classic FA marked their third consecutive win by edging Mumbai City FC 1-0 in the afternoon kickoff. First half goal from Md. Arbash was enough for the Manipur based side to lock all three points. The midfielder expertly controlled the ball following a long throw-in and drove it in with his left foot to beat the goalkeeper from inside the box. With

the win, the competition in Group B will go down the wire till the final matchday on 5th April where two teams will progress to the RFDL National Championship.

Earlier on Tuesday, East Bengal FC suffered a narrow 1-0 defeat against Kickstart FC. Laikhuram Ricky Singh's 45th minute free-kick was headed backwards by Saikhom Borish Singh and Bishwas Budha Chhetri was in the right place at the right time to drive it in and make it 1-0. The Karnataka side held onto their lead till the end to secure the three points. The game also saw three players sent off right at the final whistle of the game. Kickstart's Paotimang Tuboi and East Bengal substitutes Andrews A and Muhammad Roshal all were shown a red card for misconduct.

local roundup

Navelim Villagers enter quarter-finals

RAIA: Navelim Villagers Union edged past CAC Cansaulim, 2-1, to reach the quarter-finals of United Trophy, at Rosary Church ground. Both sides played an attacking game, but Navelim capitalised on their chances, with Noah Luis scoring twice in the first half. CAC Cansaulim



Noah Luis receives man-of-the-match award from Padu Vardi

Varca SC storm into semi-final



Yunal Fernandes receives man-of-the-match award from Agnelo Fernandes

RAIA: Varca Sports Club secured a 5-2 tie-breaker victory over Chandor Club to advance to the semi-finals of the 17th London Trophy inter-village football tournament, organised by Goa Velha

Sports Club. Chandor Club took the lead in the 33rd minute through Louie Noronha, holding the advantage at half-time. However, Varca SC equalised in the 58th minute when Yunal Fernandes converted a penalty after a handball in the box. With the score level at 1-1 in regulation time, the match proceeded to a tie-breaker. Varca SC scored through Yunal Fernandes, Jobern Cardozo, Salim Sadekar, and Clavis Gonsalves, while Chandor Club managed only one goal via Alreach Peixoto. Referee Rakesh Vaka cautioned Salim Sadekar (Varca SC) and Akram Yadwad, Louie Noronha (Chandor Club). Aaron Bareto (Varca SC) and Moises D'Sa (Chandor Club) were sent off for violent conduct. Yunal Fernandes was awarded man-of-the-match trophy from Agnelo Fernandes, deputy sarpanch of St Andre Village Panchayat.

Carmel Curtorim advance into quarters

RAIA: Carmel Curtorim edged past St Sebastian Manora, 1-0, to progress to the quarter-finals of the 18th Rebello Pandall all-Goa football tournament, at St Rita Church ground, Maina, on Wednesday.



Dylan Sardinha receives man-of-the-match award from Joaquim Fernandes

Joe Cookies move into semis

RAIA: Joe Cookies Veterans defeated Bardez Veterans, 1-0, to reach the semi-finals of the 21st Flame of Unity Veterans Football Tournament at Mabai Ground, Per Seraulim, on Wednesday. Fulsabhat Naquelim scored the only goal, finishing from an assist by Angel.

Varca Veterans in quarters

PANJIM: Varca Veterans secured a quarter-final spot in the All Goa Panjim Veterans Soccer Tournament, defeating Anjuna Veterans 3-2 via sudden death at Taleigao ground. The teams were locked at 2-2 in regulation time. Anjuna took the lead in the 20th minute through Uday Pednekar, but Varca equalised via Benny Fernandes after a pass from Romuel De Souza. Pednekar restored Anjuna's lead in the second half, heading in his second goal. However, in the dying moments, Menino Fernandes fired in a stunning equaliser for Varca Veterans. In the shootout, Marcus Carvalho, Romeo Vaz, and Romuel De Souza scored for Varca, while Manoj Kesarkar and Domingos Fernandes converted for Anjuna. Uday Pednekar (Anjuna Veterans) was awarded man-of-the-match trophy from Denzil Xavier.

Albert Developers, Chapora YS secure wins

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MAPUSA: Albert Developers clinched a commanding 3-0 victory over Dempo Juniors in the GFA First Division League, at Duler stadium, on Wednesday.

Under coach Venancio Gonsalves, Albert Developers dominated early, with three strong goal attempts. In the 18th minute, a cross from Newton Azavedo was mishandled by U-21 Mohit Kankonkar, failing to find the net. Ranjit Tete's header struck the crossbar, while Sandesh Kaulekar's effort was parried away by Dempo keeper Harsha Vardhan.

The breakthrough came just before half-time when Ranjit Tete's low cross

GFA FIRST DIV LEAGUE

was expertly finished by Kankonkar. Dempo Juniors created chances after the break, but Albert Developers' goalkeeper Nihal Kunkalkar denied Yug Palyekar in a one-on-one situation, while Macan Pereira's powerful strike went wide.

In stoppage time, substitute Aniston D'Silva sealed the victory with two goals, both assisted by Sandesh Kaulekar. At Porjat ground, Chapora Yuvaq secured a comfortable 3-0 win over Sao Jose de Areal SC. Rohan Pednekar netted a goal in each half, with Cain Fernandes adding the third.

Bhumika XI tennis cricket champs



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MAPUSA: Bhumika XI Canca emerged victorious against Shetye Group Korgao in the finals of the Aandar Michael Lobo Chashak panchayat-level heavy tennis ball cricket tournament, organised by Kату XI Boys, Parra, at the Guirim grounds.

Winning the toss, Bhumika XI Canca opted to field

first. Shetye Group Korgao set a challenging target of 83 runs.

In response, opener Rajat Kudalkar delivered a stunning performance, smashing 65 runs off just 18 balls at a strike rate of 361, steering his team to a comfortable victory in just 4.2 overs. Dhanesh Aware contributed 15 runs off 6 balls, sealing an emphatic win.

Chief Guest Delilah Lobo, MLA of Siolim constituency

INDIVIDUAL AWARDS

- Man of the series: Rajat Kudalkar
- Man of the match: Rajat Kudalkar
- Best batsman of the tournament: Nitesh Kambl
- Best bowler of the tournament: Projyot Nirlikar
- Best catch for finals: Nehal Mandrekar

gave away the prizes in the presence of guest of honour Daniel Lobo (sarpanch, VP Parra), Shubham Rao Desai (advocate and sarpanch, VP Guirim), Chandanand

Harmalkar (ex-sarpanch, VP Parra), Prakash Naik (ex-ZP member and ex-Sarpanch, VP Guirim) and Shital Redkar (panch member, VP Parra).

Cuncolim Union down YC Manora

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RAIA: Cuncolim Union defeated Youth Club of Manora, 3-1, in a GFA First Division League match, at Raia panchayat ground, on Tuesday. Hanslum Furtado bagged a brace, while Velington Almeida added one for Cuncolim Union. Maximo D'Costa scored the lone goal for Manora.

Nuven, Ashvem Veterans secure quarterfinal berths

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SANTA CRUZ: Nuven Veterans and Ashvem Veterans booked their places in the quarterfinals of the Santa Cruz Village Panchayat Veterans Cup football tournament with contrasting victories at the Santa Cruz ground on Wednesday.

Nuven Veterans dominated their clash against Fatorda Veterans, securing a commanding 4-1 win. Josan Cardozo led the

charge with a brace, while Robin and Antonio also found the net. Fatorda managed a consolation goal through Lawrence. Nuven will now face St Anne Veterans in the quarterfinals.

In the second match of the day, Ashvem Veterans battled past Mitra Veterans in a hard-fought 1-0 victory. Johnny Fernandes netted the decisive goal in the first half, ensuring Ashvem's progression. They will now take on Ilhas Veterans in the next round.

Nottingham Forest beat Man Utd

Saka scores on return as Arsenal down Fulham

AFP, LONDON: Nottingham Forest beat Manchester United 1-0 to close in on Champions League football next season as Bukayo Saka scored in Arsenal's 2-1 win over Fulham on his return from injury on Tuesday.

Former United winger Anthony Elanga came back to haunt his former club with a stunning solo effort after just five minutes at the City Ground to earn all three points for Nuno Espirito Santo's side.

Third-placed Forest extend their lead over Newcastle in sixth to 10 points. Thanks to the strong performance of English sides in European competitions this season, the top five will almost certainly qualify for the Champions League.

Forest are two-time European champions but have not played in the continent's elite competition since they were holders in 1980.

Elanga was discarded by United in 2023 after a bright start to his career at Old Trafford, but is one of many Forest success stories fulfilling his potential

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS

Arsenal 2 (Merino 37, Saka 73) **Fulham 1** (Muniz 90+4); **Nottingham Forest 1** (Elanga 5) **Manchester United 0**; **Wolves 1** (Strand Larsen 21) **West Ham 0**

under Nuno.

The Swedish international collected possession deep inside his own half but showed blistering pace to burst into the United box before firing low past Andre Onana.

Just a year after battling to narrowly avoid relegation, Forest are enjoying an unexpected fairytale season that also includes progressing to the FA Cup semi-finals for the first time in 34 years.

They had been forced through 120 minutes and penalties to beat Brighton in Saturday's quarter-final and were also without top scorer Chris Wood due to injury.

Forest fatigued in the second half, but United were undone by a familiar lack of cutting edge going forward.

Amorim resorted to sending in centre-back Harry Maguire as a makeshift strik-

er in the closing stages and he nearly grabbed an equaliser in stoppage time when his shot was cleared off the line by Murillo.

United remain without two consecutive Premier League wins all season with the Red Devils languishing down in 13th.

Arsenal maintained some pressure on leaders Liverpool by cutting the gap at the top to nine points.

Saka stole the headlines by coming off the bench to head in on his first appearance since December 21.

Mikel Merino's deflected effort had given Arsenal a first-half lead.

However, victory came at a cost as key defender Gabriel Magalhaes limped off injured.

Rodrigo Muniz pulled a goal back in stoppage time, but defeat is a blow to Fulham's ambitions of European football next season.

Real Madrid in Copa Del Rey final

AFP, MADRID: Real Madrid edged into the Copa del Rey final with a thrilling 4-4 draw against Real Sociedad after extra time on Tuesday, securing a 5-4 aggregate semi-final victory.

Antonio Rudiger decided the pulsating tie with a header in the 115th minute, with Madrid to face Barcelona or Atletico Madrid in the final.

Real Sociedad, trailing 1-0 from the first leg, took the lead through Ander Barrenetxea, but Endrick's fine chip pulled the 20-time winners level.

A David Alaba own goal and Mikel Oyarzabal's deflected effort helped La Real open up a lead on the Spanish champions but Madrid battled back with goals from Jude Bellingham and Aurelien Tchouameni.

Oyarzabal grabbed his second in stoppage time to force extra-time but his side could not hold off Madrid until penalties, with Rudiger's header the final word.

TODAY'S SPORTS

18th all-Goa Rebello Pandall football tournament: Mandopa Boy's Navelim vs Friends Circle Curtorim, at St Rita Church ground, Curtorim, at 4.45 pm

All-Goa United Trophy football tournament: Sao Jose de Areal vs Curtorim Gymkhana, at Rosary Church ground, Navelim, at 4.30 pm

17th London Trophy inter-village football tournament 2025: Peddem Bomm Sports Club vs Sinquerim Sports Club, at Goa Velha Sports Club ground, at 4.30 pm

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