

Starc is Capital attraction in super over

PTI, NEW DELHI: Mitchell Starc bowled couple of incredible overs under pressure as Delhi Capitals pulled off a heist by stealing a thrilling Super Over win from Rajasthan Royals in their IPL showdown on Wednesday.

The ice-cold Starc (1/36 in 4 overs) held his nerve during a tense final over to defend nine runs as DC forced the game into a Super Over when it seemed Royals had all but won it. The Australian left-arm pacer then bowled a tremendous Super Over, conceding just two boundaries. He was backed by two razor-sharp run-outs as RR managed only 11 runs.

KL Rahul and Tristan Stubbs then kept their nerves in check slamming a four and a six respectively to take the hosts to their first win at the Feroz Shah Kotla. Chasing 189, Yashasvi Jaiswal (51 off 37) and 'local lad' Nitish Rana (51 off 28) had the Royals cruising, but DC's bowlers turned the tide with a roaring late surge, eventually tying the game at 188/4.

The late drama followed a solid batting effort by DC, built on Abishek Porel's composed 49 and explosive cameos from skipper Axar Patel (34 off 14) and Tristan Stubbs (34 not out off 18), lifting them to a competitive 188/5 after being asked to bat.

Desperate for a win to reignite their campaign, Jaiswal came out all guns blazing as he clobbered two sixes off Mukesh Kumar before dismantling Mitchell Starc with two boundaries and a towering maximum, making his intent clear.

Sanju Samson joined the party even as Ashutosh

Sharma spilled a regulation catch. The Royals' captain eventually retired hurt, after pulling his side.

With the chase humming

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■ But Rana was in no mood to let up. The southpaw batted with precision, sending anything in his arc to the fence with ease. His calculated aggression and clean ball-striking kept Royals firmly on course. But once Rana was trapped led before by Starc the script changed

TWISTS & TURNS

SCOREBOARD

Delhi Capitals: Jake Fraser-McGurk c Jaiswal b Archer 9, Abishek Porel c Parag b Hasaranga 46, Karun Nair run out (Sharma) 0, KL Rahul c Hetmyer b Archer 38, Tristan Stubbs not out 34, *Axar Patel c Jurel b Theekshana 34, Ashutosh Sharma not out 15. **Extras:** 9. **Total:** 188-5. **Fall of wickets:** 34-1, 34-2, 97-3, 105-4, 146-5. **Bowling:** Jofra Archer 4-0-32-0, Tushar Deshpande 3-0-38-0, Sandeep Sharma 4-0-33-0, Maheesh Theekshana 4-0-40-1, Wanindu Hasaranga 4-0-38-1, Riyan Parag 1-0-6-0.

Rajasthan Royals: Yashasvi Jaiswal c Starc b Yadav 51, *Sanju Samson retired hurt 31, Riyan Parag b Patel 8, Nitish Rana lbw b Starc 51, Dhruv Jurel run out (Rahul) 26, Shimron Hetmyer not out 15. **Extras:** 6. **Total:** 188-4. **Fall of wickets:** 76-1, 112-2, 161-3, 188-4. **Bowling:** Mitchell Starc 4-0-36-1, Mukesh Kumar 3-0-31-0, Mohit Sharma 4-0-38-0, Vipraj Nigam 1-0-13-0, *Axar Patel 3-0-23-1, Kuldeep Yadav 4-0-33-1, Tristan Stubbs 1-0-12-0.

Man-of-the-match: Mitchell Starc

TODAY'S IPL FIXTURE

Mumbai Indians vs Sunrisers Hyderabad, at the Wankhede Cricket stadium, at 7.30 pm

PSG, Barca book semis berth

AFP, BIRMINGHAM: Paris Saint-Germain survived a second half onslaught to beat Aston Villa 5-4 on aggregate and reach the Champions League semi-finals despite a 3-2 defeat.

The French champions were cruising towards the last four when full-backs Achraf Hakimi and Nuno Mendes struck in the first 27 minutes to add to their 3-1 first leg lead.

Youri Tielemans pulled a goal back for the English side before half-time and two goals in two minutes from John McGinn and Ezri Konsa transformed the tie early in the second period.

PSG were thankful to goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma for keeping Unai Emery's men at bay and preventing another famous collapse in the Champions League knockout stages.

Barcelona are through to the Champions League semi-finals with a 5-3 aggregate win, despite losing 3-1 at Borussia Dortmund with Serhou Guirassy hitting a hat-trick.

Holding a 4-0 lead after a dominant performance in Catalonia, the visitors were made to sweat as Dortmund and Guirassy nearly pulled off a stunning turnaround. Guirassy put Dortmund in front with a Panenka from the spot with 11 minutes gone and headed them two



Paris Saint-Germain's defender Nuno Mendes (left) fights for the ball with Aston Villa's Belgian midfielder #08 Youri Tielemans during the UEFA Champions League quarter-final second-leg match at the Villa Park in Birmingham, England

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE RESULTS

Quarter-finals, second legs

Borussia Dortmund 3 (Guirassy 11-pen, 49, 76) **Barcelona 1** (Bensebaini 54-og). **Barcelona win 5-3 on aggregate.** **Aston Villa 3** (Tielemans 34, McGinn 55, Konsa 57) **Paris Saint-Germain 2** (Hakimi 11, Mendes 27). **Paris Saint-Germain win 5-4 on aggregate**



goals clear early in the second half. Dortmund sensed a sensation but Barcelona hit back, Fermin Lopez forcing Ramy Bensebaini into an own goal with just over

half an hour remaining. Guirassy reignited Dortmund's belief with a third on the 76th-minute mark and the final stages may have been different had Ju-

lian Brandt not been offside before scoring with 11 minutes remaining.

Despite losing their first competitive game in 2025, Barcelona are through to the semis, keeping their dream of a remarkable treble alive, 10 years after last completing the feat by winning the Champions League in Berlin. Barcelona, considered title favourites, will face either Inter Milan or Bayern Munich in the final four.

Bat size check doesn't make any difference: Vettori

PTI, MUMBAI: Sunrisers Hyderabad head coach Daniel Vettori on Wednesday said umpires checking for the bat sizes with a gauge in the IPL doesn't make any difference and wished the same parameters were in place during his playing days.

Umpires have been checking the bats with a gauge through which the willow must pass in order to eradicate the use of oversized bats.

The checks are being carried out by on-field umpires this season and in the latest instance, Kolkata Knight Riders' Anrich Nortje's bat did not pass the test on Tuesday and he had to change

it in the game against Punjab Kings.

"I wish they'd checked the bats when I was playing," Vettori quipped during SRH's press conference here at the Wankhede Stadium.

"No, I don't think it makes any difference. The guys get tested regularly. The umpires go through the dressing rooms a lot of the time, so (the) guys know that their bats are compliant, so it's just a quick one second, and everyone moves on."

"It'll reset anyone trying to have a bigger bat, but it's pretty easy to get your bat through that gauge," he added. Vettori said this hasn't been a topic

of discussion among the SRH batters and added that he doesn't think a reduction in bat size is on the cards.

"Not really. I suppose the way that bats have been able to get bigger without an increase in weight, that's a skill (to be credited) to the bat manufacturers and a demand for what batting groups or batters want these days," he said.

"It's just part of the game, part of the evolution. Everyone seems to enjoy sixes and fours, so I don't think we're going to get a reduction in bat size and it doesn't really worry me," he added.

MARUTI SUZUKI

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