

Bowlers sparkle in Punjab Kings' win

PTI, BENGALURU: Punjab Kings produced an inch-perfect bowling effort, the cornerstone of their five-wicket victory over Royal Challengers Bengaluru in a truncated Indian Premier League match, here, on Friday.

Tim David (50 not out, 26 balls) scored well over 50 per cent of RCB's woefully inadequate 95 for nine after an evening round of rain forced the match to start at 9.45 pm in a 14 overs per side avatar.

Punjab Kings had to go through mild scares initially but went past the line in 12.1 overs with a score of 98 for five, also prolonging RCB's wait for their first win at home this season.

Punjab Kings' hard-hitting openers Priyansh Arya, the latest IPL sensation, and Prabhsimran Singh were not precisely comfortable on a pitch that offered considerable bounce to the pacers.

Arya, whose hit through the line technique might work well on a flatter surface, understood the perils of playing on the up here as he skied a mistimed swipe off Josh Hazlewood (3/14) to David.

Prabhsimran fell to Bhuvneshwar Kumar, but the Kings might have been jolted a bit when in-form captain Shreyas Iyer walked back.

Iyer tried to cut a delivery from Hazlewood but the ball was too close to



Punjab Kings' Nehal Wadhera plays a shot during the Indian Premier League match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at M Chinnaswamy Stadium, in Bengaluru, Karnataka, on Friday

his body and he could only edge it to stumper Jitesh Sharma.

Josh Inglis' departure reduced Punjab to 53 for four, and were slipping to a dangerous territory but they found a calm soldier in Nehal Wadhera.

The left-handed Wadhera (33 not out, 19 balls), who pummelled leg-spinner Suyash Sharma for a couple of sixes, allayed his team's worries.

A composed Wadhera

played a big hand as Punjab Kings eventually crossed the line, swelling their tally to 10 points to move up to second place on the points table behind leaders Delhi Capitals.

Earlier, clever bowling by

the Kings restricted RCB to a disappointing total after Shreyas opted to bowl first.

The decision proved right as his bowlers plucked three wickets in the power play segment.

Phil Salt perished in the

first over itself, trying to hammer Arshdeep Singh (2/23) out of the park and stumper Inglis completed a good catch.

Virat Kohli did not last long either, as Marco Jansen peddled 20 metres back to pull off a terrific catch off Arshdeep.

The Royal Challengers' power play phase score read a sorry 26 for three as Liam Livingstone too departed without making any effect.

Yuzvendra Chahal (2/11) made his return to his one-time IPL home Chinnaswamy Stadium memorable with the wicket of Jitesh Sharma.

Amidst the ruins around him, skipper Rajat Patidar played some handsome shots, and none better than

a pick-up off his pads off Bartlett that soared over mid-wicket for a six.

But RCB soon received a body blow as Patidar (23, 18b) could not clear Bartlett at sweeper cover off Chahal, who teased the batters with those tossed up, fuller deliveries.

Jansen (2/10), who used short-pitched balls to good effect, had his own moments as he jettisoned Krunal Pandya and Impact Sub Manoj Bhandage as RCB innings unravelled.

It was despite a few big blows by Player of the Match David that included three sixes in a row off left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar, who also had a share in RCB's spoils with two wickets.

SCOREBOARD

Royal Challengers Bengaluru: Philip Salt c Inglis b Arshdeep 4, Virat Kohli c Jansen b Arshdeep 1, *Rajat Patidar c Bartlett b Chahal 23, Liam Livingstone c Arya b Bartlett 4, Jitesh Sharma c Wadhera b Chahal 2, Krunal Pandya c and b Jansen 1, Tim David not out 50, Manoj Bhandage lbw b Jansen 1, Bhuvneshwar Kumar c Bartlett b Brar 8, Yash Dayal lbw b Brar 0, Josh Hazlewood not out 0. **Extras:** 1. **Total:** 95-9. **Fall of wickets:** 4-1, 21-2, 26-3, 32-4, 33-5, 41-6, 42-7, 63-8, 63-9. **Bowling:** Arshdeep Singh 3-0-23-2, Xavier Bartlett 3-0-26-1, Marco Jansen 3-0-10-2, Yuzvendra Chahal 3-0-11-2, Harpreet Brar 2-0-25-2.

Punjab Kings: Priyansh Arya c David b Hazlewood 16, Prabhsimran Singh c David b Bhuvneshwar 13, *Shreyas Iyer c Sharma b Hazlewood 7, Josh Inglis c Sharma b Hazlewood 14, Nehal Wadhera not out 33, Shashank Singh c Salt b Bhuvneshwar 1, Marcus Stoinis not out 7. **Extras:** 7. **Total:** 98-5. **Fall of wickets:** 22-1, 32-2, 52-3, 53-4, 81-5. **Bowling:** Bhuvneshwar Kumar 3-0-26-2, Yash Dayal 2.1-0-18-0, Josh Hazlewood 3-0-14-3, Krunal Pandya 1-0-10-0, Suyash Sharma 3-0-25-0.

Man-of-the-match: Tim David

TODAY'S IPL FIXTURES

Gujarat Titans vs Delhi Capitals, at the Narendra Modi Stadium, Ahmedabad, at 3.30 pm
Rajasthan Royals vs Lucknow Super Giants, at the Sawai Mansingh Cricket Stadium, Jaipur, at 7.30 pm

Man Utd stun Lyon in 9-goal Europa League classic to reach semis; Spurs Athletic Bilbao also reach last four

AFP, PARIS: Harry Maguire headed in the winner as Manchester United produced an astonishing extra-time comeback on Thursday to beat Lyon and set up a Europa League semi-final against Athletic Bilbao, while Tottenham Hotspur are also through to the last four after beating Eintracht Frankfurt.

Maguire's header in added time in extra time gave United a 5-4 win on the night at Old Trafford, and a 7-6 triumph on aggregate.

They appeared to be cruising towards the last four when, after a 2-2 first-leg draw last week in France, Manuel Ugarte turned in an Alejandro Garnacho comeback on 10 minutes and then Diogo Dalot fired home in first-half injury time.

Bruno Fernandes had hit the bar with a brilliant volley in between, and United had chances to kill the tie before Corentin Tolisso's headed goal on 71 minutes gave Lyon hope.

Nicolas Tagliafico then levelled the scores on the night, and in the tie, with 12 minutes of normal time remaining, his shot crossing the line before goalkeeper Andre Onana got a hand to it.

Lyon then had Tolisso sent off for a second yellow card just before the end of normal time, but they went 3-2 up when Rayan Cherki fired in following a fine run by Malick Fofana in the 105th minute.

And the French side looked to be going through when Alexander Lacazette netted a penalty to make

it 4-2 on the night, and 6-4 on aggregate, five minutes into the second half of extra time following a foul on Fofana by Luke Shaw.

However, almost from the restart the hosts were awarded a penalty of their own following a VAR check for a foul on Casemiro, and Fernandes converted to give them renewed hope.

A fine finish by substitute Kobbie Mainoo levelled the tie again in the 120th minute, seemingly setting up a penalty shoot-out, but Maguire had the last word as he headed in Casemiro's cross to

AFP

spark delirium on the pitch and in the Old Trafford stands.

United will play Athletic in the last four, with the first leg in Bilbao, in their first European semi-final since losing the 2021 Europa League final on penalties to Villarreal. In Bilbao, Athletic beat Rangers 2-0 to progress to the last four following a goalless draw in the first leg in Glasgow.

Athletic went ahead on the night, and in the tie, in first-half stoppage time when Oihan Sancet converted a penalty after Maroan Sannadi was fouled in the box by John Souttar. Nicolas Raskin struck the post

for Rangers early in the second half before Athletic secured the victory, and their qualification, when Nico Williams headed home a cross from Oscar De Marcos.

The Basque club are determined to go all the way to the final which will be played in their San Mames stadium on May 21.

Tottenham, struggling in the Premier League, beat 2022 Europa League winners Frankfurt 1-0 on the night in Germany to advance 2-1 on aggregate.

Dominic Solanke scored the only goal of the game, netting a penalty

two minutes before the break after James Maddison was cluttered by home goalkeeper Kaua Santos.

It is Tottenham's first European semi-final since their run to the Champions League final in 2019, and they will play Bodo/Glimt in the last four. The Norwegians beat Lazio 3-2 on penalties in Rome after another remarkable tie finished 3-3 on aggregate.

EUROPA LEAGUE RESULTS

Quarter-finals, second legs
Athletic Bilbao 2 (Sancet 45+4-pen, Nico Williams 80) Rangers 0. Athletic win 2-0 on aggregate.
Eintracht Frankfurt 0 Tottenham Hotspur 1 (Solanke 43-pen). Tottenham win 2-1 on aggregate.
Lazio 3 (Castellanos 21, Noslin 90+3, Dia 100) Bodo/Glimt 1 (Helmersen 109) after extra time, tie finished 3-3 on aggregate.
Bodo/Glimt won 5-2 on penalties.
Manchester United 5 (Ugarte 10, Dalot 45+1, Fernandes 114-pen, Mainoo 120, Maguire 120+1) Lyon 4 (Tolisso 71, Tagliafico 78, Cherki 105, Lacazette 110-pen) after extra time, Man Utd win 7-6 on aggregate.

SEMI-FINAL LINE-UP
Tottenham Hotspur vs Bodo/Glimt
Athletic Bilbao vs Manchester United
First legs to be played May 2, second legs May 9



Manchester United's Uruguayan midfielder #25 Manuel Ugarte (right) celebrates with teammates after scoring the opening goal during the UEFA Europa League quarter-final second leg match against Lyon at Old Trafford Stadium in Manchester, England

Liverpool can win 20th English Premier League title this weekend to equal Manchester United's record

AP, LIVERPOOL: The countdown is on for Liverpool to clinch a record-tying 20th English top-flight title. It could even happen this weekend.

Should Arsenal lose at Ipswich early Sunday afternoon, Liverpool will get the chance to wrap up the Premier League championship a few hours later by beating Leicester.

PREVIEW

Otherwise, the title could be confirmed on Wednesday when Arsenal hosts Crystal Palace — or the following weekend when Liverpool hosts Tottenham at Anfield.

It looks a certainty to happen, given Liverpool holds a 13-point lead with six games left. Needing just six more points to be certain, barring the unlikely of collapses, it's now a matter of when, not if.

Having led the way virtually all season, however, the Merseyside club is hardly powering to the finish line.

The big gap to Arsenal has taken the pressure off. Maybe that's why Liverpool hasn't been playing with the intensity the team has displayed for much of the campaign and is typically needed in a title run-in.

Recent wins at Anfield over Everton and West Ham were hardly convincing, while in between was a meek defeat to Fulham — just Liverpool's second Premier League loss of the campaign.

Throw in losses to Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League and Newcastle in the League Cup final and Arne Slot's team has begun to stumble in recent weeks. Had second-place Arsenal been able to mount more of a challenge it could have made for a grandstand finish.

Instead, Mikel Arteta's team has saved its best for the Champions League — eliminating holder Real Madrid this week — while being held to draws by Everton and Brentford in the league. Arsenal has only won two of its last seven Premier League games, giving Liverpool the luxury of not having to be anywhere near its best at a time when its title credentials should have been put under pressure.

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE FIXTURES

SATURDAY
Brentford vs Brighton, at 7.30 pm
West Ham vs Southampton, at 7.30 pm
Everton vs Manchester City, at 7.30 pm
Crystal Palace vs Bournemouth, at 7.30 pm
Aston Villa vs Newcastle, at 10 pm
SUNDAY
Ipswich Town vs Arsenal, at 6.30 pm
Manchester United vs Wolves, at 6.30 pm
Fulham vs Chelsea, at 6.30 pm
Leicester City vs Liverpool, at 9 pm

A 20th league title would

see Liverpool equal Manchester United's record and it looks well placed to go on a set a new benchmark before its great rival gets back into contention at the top of English soccer.

It was Liverpool that once held the record of 18 titles, but two decades of dominance for United under former manager Alex Ferguson saw the club win 13 league crowns from 1993-2013. Liverpool didn't win any titles in that time and

ended a 30-year wait to be champion in 2020.

While title number 20 is now within touching distance, United is languishing in the bottom half of the standings and in need of a major rebuild under head coach Ruben Amorim. It hasn't been involved in a title race since Ferguson retired in 2013, despite second-place finishes in 2018 and 2021 when United was 19 and 12 points adrift, respectively, of champion Manchester City.

Liverpool is already making plans for the future. Mohamed Salah and Virgil van Dijk have been tied to contract extensions, ending months of uncertainty and ensuring its two most influential players will remain at Anfield.

"Liverpool should be able to challenge for titles in the upcoming years," Van Dijk said this week. "Whatever

happens in terms of players going out, players coming in, I think it should be a big summer. I think they're planning to make it a big summer, so we all have to trust the board to do the right job."

With City needing to replace the departing Kevin De Bruyne, while other key players like Bernardo Silva and Ilkay Gundogan are in the latter stages of their careers, there is no guarantee Pep Guardiola will be able to mount a title challenge next season. Arsenal, runner-up the past two seasons, is still to prove it can get over the line in a title race.

Liverpool, meanwhile, looks ahead of schedule in Slot's first year and should have significant amounts to spend in the transfer market after only making one signing in the last offseason — Federico Chiesa.

sportspopup

CSK rope in South African Dewald as replacement for injured Gurjapneet

NEW DELHI: Chennai Super Kings on Friday announced the roping in of South Africa all-rounder Dewald Brevis, one of the most exciting young cricketers in the world, into their squad, replacing injured pacer Gurjapneet Singh for the remainder of the IPL. Brevis, who has played two T20 Internationals after making debut in 2023, has made a name in franchise tournaments around the world, including playing in the IPL, CPL, MLC and SA20. "Chennai Super Kings (CSK) have signed South Africa's Dewald Brevis as a replacement for the injured Gurjapneet Singh for the remainder of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025," the IPL said in a media statement. Brevis will join CSK for Rs 2.2 crore.

Veer, Anahat enter semis of world squash championship

KUALA LUMPUR: Indian squash players Veer Chotrani and Anahat Singh advanced to the semi-finals of the World Championship Qualifying Event (Asia) after registering contrasting wins, here, on Friday. Chotrani logged a come-from-behind win over home favourite Mohammad Syafiq Kamal in the men's event. The second-seeded Indian prevailed 9-11, 11-6, 11-6, 11-7 over his sixth-seeded opponent to make the last-four stage. The 17-year-old Anahat, seeded fifth, produced a dominant display, defeating Japan's Akari Midorikawa 11-1 11-7 11-5 in the women's quarterfinals. She will take on eighth-seeded Helen Tang of Hong Kong in the semi-finals on Saturday. Tang had beaten India's Tanvi Khanna 11-5 11-6 10-12 11-9 in the quarter-finals. Khanna had upstaged top seed N Ching Cheng of Hong Kong in her previous match. The winners of the tournament will qualify for the world championships scheduled in Chicago from May 9 to 17.

It's such an unreal feeling to have a stand named after me at Wankhede: Rohit Sharma

MUMBAI: An emotional India captain Rohit Sharma on Friday recalled his journey from standing outside the Wankhede Stadium as a young player to catch a glimpse of Mumbai Ranji Trophy stars to having a stand named after him at the iconic venue, terming it as an "unreal feeling". The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) had recently announced naming a stand after India's Test and ODI skipper Rohit along with former captain Ajit Wadekar and former BCCI president and ICC chairman Sharad Pawar. "No one dreams of things like this when they are just starting off playing cricket," said Rohit after being announced as the brand ambassador of the third edition of the T20 Mumbai League. Then he took a trip back in time, remembering being a starry-eyed budding player jostling to watch the stars of yesteryears. "I still remember those days when I used to stand outside (the) Wankhede Stadium just to enter and watch Mumbai Ranji Trophy team practice; I am talking about 2004 or maybe 2003.

India sends 56-member contingent for Asian U-15 & U-17 boxing championships

NEW DELHI: India has fielded a 56-member squad for the Asian U-15 & U-17 Boxing Championships being held in Amman, Jordan. This is the first event organised by Asian Boxing, endorsed by both the Olympic Council of Asia and the newly-formed World Boxing. The standout names in the U-17 boys' squad include Sahil Duhan and Devansh, who clinched silver and bronze respectively at the 2024 Asian Junior Championship, as well as Tikam Singh, who is the SGFI 2024 gold medalist. On the girls' side, Samiksha Singh, Anshika, and Khushi Chand were among the medal winners at the 2024 Asian School Boys & Girls Boxing Championships in Al Ain. The U-15 lineup features Ravi Sihag, a bronze medalist from the Asian School Boys Championship in Al Ain in 2024, as well as the 2024 sub-junior national girls boxing champion (64-67 kg) Trushna Mohite.

Attempts at fixing: BCCI bans former

Mumbai T20 League team owner Bhamrah
NEW DELHI: BCCI Ombudsman Justice (Retd) Arun Mishra has banned the former co-owner of a Mumbai T20 League franchise Gurmeet Singh Bhamrah for making a corrupt approach to city players Dhawal Kulkarni and Bhavin Thakkar during the event's 2019 edition. Kulkarni, a medium pacer, has also represented India in a 12 ODIs and a couple of T20 Internationals. Bhamrah, who was also involved with the now defunct GT20 Canada as well, is no longer a part of Mumbai T20 League, which is being revived this year after a COVID-forced suspension following the 2019 edition. He co-owned the SoBo Superonics. The order copy doesn't specify the length of the ban but it could be anything between five years to a life ban as per the codes of the BCCI's Anti Corruption code.

Either Babar has an ego issue or is too shy in seeking help from seniors: Zaheer

KARACHI: Babar Azam is either an egotist or too shy to seek advice from former players, who perhaps can help him get back to form by sorting out the technical flaws in his batting, said former Pakistan skipper Zaheer Abbas. Zaheer, who scored 100 first class centuries in his career said that Babar needed to sit down and talk to his seniors. "I think either Babar has an ego issue or is too shy to seek advice from his seniors in overcoming his current situation," Zaheer said. Zaheer said there were many instances where Pakistani and Indian players had sought advice from each other when going through a bad patch. "I think in 2016 Younis Khan spoke to Muhammad Azharuddin and went on to score a double hundred in England. I also recall how Azharuddin had sought guidance from me on India's tour to Pakistan in 1989-90," the batting artist said. "He was struggling to find runs and I told him to change his batting grip. Saeed Anwar sought Sunil Gavaskar's advice."

Argentina's star footballer Paulo announced as Laureus Awards ambassador

MADRID: Argentina's World Cup-winning football star Paulo Dybala was on Friday announced as the ambassador for the Laureus Awards to be held, here, on Monday. The 31-year-old forward, who has won five Serie A titles with Juventus and the World Cup in 2022, said he was looking forward to attending the 25th anniversary of the Laureus Awards in the company of several sporting legends, including tennis great Rafael Nadal, athletics legend Edwin Moses and former Australian cricket captain Steve Waugh, among others. "The Laureus mission, to use sport as a vehicle for societal change, is inspiring and I am looking forward to attending a special 25th anniversary Laureus Awards in the company of many sporting legends," said Dybala, who now plays for AS Roma. Full list of the 2025 Laureus World Sports Awards Nominees: Laureus World Sportsman of The Year Award: Carlos Alcaraz (Tennis); Mondo Duplantix (Athletics); Lon Marchand (Swimming); Tadej Pogacar (Cycling); Max Verstappen (Motor Racing). Laureus World Sportswoman of The Year Award: Simone Biles (Gymnastics); Aitana Bonmat (Football); Sifan Hassan (Athletics); Faith Kipyegon (Athletics); Sydney McLaughlin-Levrone (Athletics); Aryna Sabalenka (Tennis).