

# Thunderstorm washes out play, Knight Riders and Punjab Kings share points

**PTI, KOLKATA:** Rain played spoilsport as Kolkata Knight Riders' IPL match against Punjab Kings was called off after the visiting team posted 201 for 4, here, on Saturday.

Prabhsimran Singh and Priyansh Arya slammed stellar half-centuries to lay a solid opening foundation, but KKR pulled things back at the death as Punjab Kings posted 201 for 4 after PBKS opted to bat.

In reply, KKR were seven for no loss in one over when a sudden thunderstorm struck around 9.35pm, sending debris flying across the ground and even blowing the covers into the stands. The ground staff quickly covered the pitch, but relentless rain followed, leaving no scope for a resumption of play.

After nearly 90 minutes of waiting, with no let-up in the weather, the match was officially called off at 10.58pm.

As a result, both the teams shared one point each. KKR now have seven points from nine matches to stay at seventh spot, while Punjab Kings moved to 11 points from nine games.

Earlier, in-form Arya, who scored a maiden IPL century against Chennai Super Kings, continued his

PTI



Ground staff covers the field after rain stopped play during an Indian Premier League match between Kolkata Knight Riders and Punjab Kings, at the Eden Gardens Stadium, in Kolkata, West Bengal, on Saturday

dream debut season with a classy 27-ball fifty.

He, along with the seasoned Prabhsimran, gave PBKS a blazing start with a 120-run opening stand in just 11.5 overs.

Arya was the early aggressor, crafting a fluent 69 off 35 balls (8x4s, 4x6s), while Prabhsimran shifted gears after Arya's dismissal, finishing with a sparkling 83 off 49 deliveries (6x4s, 6x6s). From a tentative 32 off 34 balls, Prabhsimran exploded by smashing 49 runs off his next 17 balls.

However, the momentum dipped after Prabhsimran's departure, with KKR con-

**SCOREBOARD**  
**Punjab Kings:** Priyansh Arya c Arora b Russell 69, Prabhsimran Singh c Powell b Arora 83, \*Shreyas Iyer not out 25, Glenn Maxwell b Chakaravarthi 7, Marco Jansen c Iyer b Arora 3, Josh Inglis not out 11. **Extras:** 3. **Total:** 201-4. **Fall of wickets:** 120-1, 160-2, 172-3, 184-4. **Bowling:** Vaibhav Arora 4-0-34-2, Chetan Sakariya 3-0-39-0, Harshit Rana 2-0-27-0, Varun Chakaravarthi 4-0-39-1, Sunil Narine 4-0-35-0, Andre Russell 3-0-27-1.  
**Kolkata Knight Riders:** Rahmanullah Gurbaz not out 1, Sunil Narine not out 4. **Extras:** 2. **Total:** 7-0. **Bowling:** Marco Jansen 1-0-6-0.

ceding just 40 runs and picking up two wickets in the final five overs, a phase that could leave PBKS 20-30 runs short of a daunting total. Vaibhav Arora (2/34) was the pick of KKR bowlers, dismissing Prabhsim-

ran with a full toss.

Andre Russell, who broke the opening stand by removing Arya in the 12th over, finished with 1/27 from three tidy overs.

Varun Chakaravarthi (1/39) and Sunil Narine

(0/35) also played key roles in slowing down the scoring rate in the second half. In full flow, Prabhsimran had earlier unleashed an assault on Chakaravarthi, smashing him for 4-6-4 in a 19-run over as PBKS looked set for a total in excess of 230. Between overs 10 and 15, they hammered 71 runs and the run rate went past 11 runs per over.

It proved a good toss to win for Punjab Kings, who made merry on a batting paradise with the ball coming nicely onto the bat against a low-on-confidence KKR side.

Unlike previous matches where the pitch slowed down, Saturday's strip was perfect for batting, and Arya capitalised with his array of elegant strokes.

He showed intent right from the start, cracking a cover drive off Arora and later lofting a stunning six over third man off a wide yorker from Harshit Rana.

The 23-year-old Delhi batter looked full of maturity, dominating KKR's attack with flair, while Prabhsimran overcame a slow start to launch a brutal assault once well-set.

Despite adding Chetan Sakariya and Rovman Powell to their lineup and employing a seven-bowler strategy, KKR once again struggled to master their home conditions at Eden Gardens.

## TODAY'S IPL FIXTURES

**Mumbai Indians vs Lucknow Super Giants, at Wankhede Cricket Stadium, Mumbai, at 3.30 pm**  
**Delhi Capitals vs Royal Challengers Bengaluru, at Arun Jaitley Cricket Stadium, New Delhi, at 7.30 pm**

## Djokovic exits Madrid Open

**AP, MADRID:** Novak Djokovic cupped his ear to demand more applause from the crowd after the 24-time major winner chased down an apparently lost ball and won an improbable point.

Instead of sparking a comeback, it turned out to be Djokovic's last gasp as he fell in straight sets to Matteo Arnaldi in his first match of the Madrid Open on Saturday.

The 37-year-old Djokovic has lost three matches in a row, including losing the Miami final, and his opener to Alejandro Tabilo at the Monte Carlo Masters two weeks ago as he struggles at the start of the clay-court swing ahead of the French Open next month.

Arnaldi won 6-3, 6-4, delaying Djokovic's search for a career 100th title. The Serb was undermined by 32 unforced errors to his opponent's 18 and had his serve broken three times.

It was the first meeting between Djokovic and 44th-ranked Arnaldi of Italy. "He's my idol, he's always been," Arnaldi said of Djokovic.

Arnaldi raised his arms and turned to the crowd after striking a winner



Serbia's Novak Djokovic waves after losing against Italy's Matteo Arnaldi at the end of their 2025 ATP Tour Madrid Open tennis tournament second round singles match at the Caja Magica in Madrid, on Saturday

that gave him a second-set break. Djokovic tried to hit right back and had three break points, but Arnaldi rallied to save his serve and finished off the three-time champion.

Djokovic is still seeking his first title of the season after winning his 99th title last August at the Paris Olympics. He has lost four finals since then. The only two players to reach the 100-title milestone are Jimmy Connors (109) and Roger Federer (103).

Arnaldi will next face Damir Dzumhur after he

rallied past Sebastian Baez 1-6, 6-1, 6-2.

Other Results: The sixth-seeded Alex de Minaur beat Lorenzo Sonego 6-2, 6-3 and moves on to play Denis Shapovalov after the Canadian defeated Kei Nishikori 6-1, 6-4.

Stefanos Tsitsipas fought back against Jan-Lennard Struff 3-6, 6-4, 6-3 and will face 10th-seeded Lorenzo Musetti, who beat Tomas Martin Etcheverry 7-6 (3), 6-2. Cameron Norrie also came back to down Jiri Lehecka 2-6, 6-4, 6-0. He will play Gabriel Diallo.

Russian teenager Mirra Andreeva reached the last 16 for the third straight year by defeating Magdalena Frech 7-5, 6-3. The 17-year-old Andreeva, ranked No. 7, has yet to lose before the Madrid fourth round.

Andreeva, who will turn 18 on Tuesday, will next face Ukrainian qualifier Yuliia Starodubtseva, who defeated 18th-seeded Liudmila Samsonova in three sets. Americans Coco Gauff and Madison Keys also advanced with straight-set wins. Fourth-seeded Gauff beat compatriot Ann Li 6-2, 6-3, while the fifth-seeded Keys edged Anna Kalinskaya 7-5, 7-6 (3).

## CSK might have got it wrong at auction table, admits Fleming

**PTI, CHENNAI:** Half the IPL battle is normally won at auction table but in case of Chennai Super Kings, the seeds of their struggles this season were sown on that very evening in Jeddah many months ago, when they failed to get the best assortment of players.

Long-time head coach **Stephen Fleming** admitted that it has led to an unmitigated disaster in the ongoing edition of the league.

The CSK's template of going for the tried and tested players have backfired with the team languishing at the bottom of the points table having lost seven out of nine games.

"It's hard to say. We got it completely right with the performances that we've had. So we have been looking over that in detail, just around our style of play. Also looking at how the game is evolving, and it's not easy. "And that's why we're proud of our record today, that we've been able to be consistent for so long. And it doesn't take much for it to go another way," Fleming said after losing to Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Friday, initially trying hard to defend the team.



But then there was acceptance that they might have missed a trick or two.

"Other teams have got better, and that's the point of the auction. But we just haven't been able to get it right. So you take responsibility from the top down, and you just ask a little bit more of the players.

"But yeah, that has to be an area where we need to reflect and say it wasn't as good as what it could have been, or it hasn't worked out how we wanted.

"But it's also not a perfect science. The auction is a very fluid beast. It's like buying 25 houses, so you come away at the end of it mentally and sometimes physically exhausted. And to be fair, I still think we've got a good squad. We're not far away," he said, putting

up a brave front.

Players like Rahul Tripathi, Deepak Hooda, Vijay Shankar have been super flops and CSK's reluctance to try out new talents at the start of the tournament cost them dear.

At the back end, youngsters such as Ayush Mhatre, Shaik Rasheed and Dewald Brevis are showing promise for the next season.

Fleming also agreed that they probably need to have a closer look at their style of play, after his initial reluctance.

Injury to skipper Rituraj Gaikwad and trying out as many as 19 players to get the right combination also contributed to their dismal show. Being the team's key strategist, Fleming admitted that the buck stops at him.

"A couple of key injuries, just a bit of a lack of form. And we've just struggled really to nail a game plan. Chopped and changed too much, but I think he was trying to look for something that perhaps we felt wasn't there.

"So yeah, there's a lot of responsibility in soul-searching, and it certainly starts with me at the top, 100 per cent."

## Newcastle, Chelsea win to boost top-five hopes in English Premier League, Ipswich relegated

**AP, LONDON:** Newcastle and Chelsea picked up victories in the Premier League to move into the Champions League qualification positions as Ipswich became the third and final team to be relegated on Saturday.

On the day Newcastle manager Eddie Howe returned to the dugout after recovering from pneumonia, his team's 3-0 win over Ipswich at St. James' Park was significant at both ends of the standings.

Newcastle jumped into third place in the congested race to finish in the top five and secure a spot in next season's Champions League.

Meanwhile, Ipswich's return to the Championship was confirmed, with the team partly owned by pop star Ed Sheeran joining Southampton and Leicester back in the second tier.

It's the second straight season that the three promoted clubs have gone

straight back down.

Howe has already guided Newcastle to the English League Cup title this season for the club's first major trophy in 70 years. He said his team's remaining four league matches feel like cup finals, too.

Chelsea climbed into fifth place, two points behind Newcastle and one behind Manchester City, by beating Everton 1-0 thanks to Nicolas Jackson's first-half goal. That sealed back-to-back wins for Chelsea.

Just five points separate Newcastle and seventh-placed Aston Villa, which wasn't in action in the Premier League on Saturday. Instead, Villa was playing Crystal Palace at Wembley Stadium in the first FA Cup semi-final.

Jamie Vardy began his long goodbye to Leicester, after confirming on Thursday he'd be leaving at the end of the season, by having a penalty saved in a 3-0 loss

AFP



Chelsea's Senegalese striker #15 Nicolas Jackson is mobbed by teammates after scoring the opening goal during the English Premier League match against Everton at Stamford Bridge in London on Saturday

at Wolverhampton.

Brazil striker Matheus Cunha, linked heavily with a summer move to Manchester United, scored one and set up two in Wolves' sixth straight win that has seen the

team power clear of relegation danger.

Van Nistelrooy said he was unaware about his own future after failing to keep Leicester up.

Last-placed Southampton conceded in stoppage

time to lose at home to Fulham 2-1 and stay on 11 points — tied for the lowest ever tally for a single season in the Premier League, set by Derby County in the 2007-08 season.

Brighton scored in the 89th minute and again in stoppage time to secure a 3-2 win over West Ham, whose winless run extended to seven games under recently hired manager Graham Potter — formerly of Brighton.

West Ham's Premier League status was guaranteed because of Ipswich's relegation but Potter accepted that being one place above the bottom three was not good enough.

### ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS

**Brighton 3 (Ayari 13, Mitoma 89, Balebale 90+2) West Ham 2 (Kudus 48, Soucek 83), Chelsea 1 (Jackson 27) Everton 0, Newcastle 3 (Isak 45+4-pen, Burn 56, Osula 80) Ipswich 0, Southampton 1 (Stephens 14) Fulham 2 (Smith Rowe 72, Sessegnon 90+2), Wolves 3 (Cunha 33, Strand Larsen 56, Gomes 85) Leicester 0**  
**ENGLISH FA CUP SEMI-FINAL RESULT**  
**Crystal Palace 3 (Eze 31, Sarr 58, 90+4) Aston Villa 0**

## sportspopup

### Indian women's hockey team loses 3-5 to Australia 'A' in tour opener

**PERTH:** The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly before losing 3-5 to a clinical Australia 'A' in its opening match of tour Down Under here Saturday. India found the back of the net through Mahima Tete (27th minute), Navneet Kaur (45th), and Lalremsiami (50th), while Neasa Flynn (3rd), Olivia Downes (9th), Ruby Harris (11th), Tatum Stewart (21st), and Kendra Fitzpatrick (44th) scored for Australia 'A' at the Perth hockey stadium. In a touching gesture of solidarity, the India players wore black armbands during the match to mourn the loss of innocent lives lost in the Pahalgam attack on April 22. The team has decided to continue wearing black armbands for the remainder of the Australia tour as a mark of respect and remembrance for the victims and their families. India will aim to bounce back strongly when they face Australia 'A' again in the second match of the tour on Sunday.

### If you are outcome-based in T20s, you won't get anywhere: Jake Fraser-McGurk

**NEW DELHI:** Young Australian opener Jake Fraser-McGurk has experienced the highs and lows of the IPL rather early in his career. The 23-year-old made instant impact in his IPL debut last year, aggregating 330 runs at a staggering strike rate of 234.04. Runs are not flowing from his bat this season and after six games, Jake was dropped by the team management. Jake could still get to play in the remaining games but he is not losing sleep over his underwhelming performance thus far. "It's not great this year but you can't be too results-based and outcome-based in this game otherwise you just won't get anywhere. "You've just got to keep trusting the process and keep backing your strengths and trying to strengthen your weaknesses and hopefully one day it turns around and then you kick-start again. That's the game. It's 20-20 cricket," said the Australian on the eve of the game against RCB here on Sunday.

### Kohli doesn't need to practice extra against spin: RCB spin coach

**NEW DELHI:** A 'genius' like Virat Kohli doesn't need to put in extra hours perfecting his play against spin, said RCB spin-bowling coach Malolan Rangarajan on the Indian superstar's improved strike rate against spinners this Indian Premier League. Questions have been raised over Kohli's play against spinners in the middle overs even previously in the IPL but talking about last year, Malolan said it wasn't fair to single out Kohli. "It wasn't only Virat last season who was not batting at the desired strike rate. It was the whole team. So I think the whole team got together. And that's precisely what happened. That's part one," said Malolan on the eve of the away game against Delhi Capitals here on Sunday. "Part two is about Virat Kohli as the individual. He does not need to go and practice extra against left-arm spin and leg spin. He's batted for 20-25 years."

### I am happy with my progress, says India and LSG spinner Ravi Bishnoi

**MUMBAI:** India and Lucknow Super Giants leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi on Saturday said he is satisfied with his career graph in international cricket and doesn't feel any pressure from the intense competition for a spot in the national team in white-ball formats. Having made his international debut in 2022, right-arm leg-spinner Bishnoi has played 42 T20Is and one ODI for India. "It has been good so far. The (IPL) franchise has also shown the faith in me, it's been a good graph, ups and downs are part of any sport but I have been patient and working on my skills and my processes," Bishnoi told the media at the Wankhede Stadium here on Saturday. Bishnoi noted that every bowler who has been picked for the national side has been able to make his mark, denying that the performances from one player puts pressure on others. "It's good for Indian cricket overall because the more the competition grows, the more cricket will develop," he said.

### Pollard bats for experienced players getting leeway and support during tough days

**MUMBAI:** Mumbai Indians batting coach Kieron Pollard on Saturday batted for giving some leeway and support to experienced players during their tough times, while praising Rohit Sharma and Hardik Pandya for the way they have fought against the odds on the field and off it. Rohit has bounced back from a string of ordinary scores to record two consecutive fifties in this IPL, whereas Pandya is floating seamlessly through his roles as the leader and all-rounder after a turbulent run last year. "For us (MI), we always had that belief that he's (Rohit) going to come good. I just want to continue to urge you guys, at times, sometimes it gives guys opportunity," Pollard told the media ahead of MI's match against Lucknow Super Giants on Sunday. "There's dips, there's low confidence. But for someone who has played this sport for a long time, you have these moments and sometimes you just need that extra support from people."

### Vettori says working around batting line-up served SRH well against CSK

**CHENNAI:** Sunrisers Hyderabad coach Daniel Vettori said that working around their batting line-up and getting the match-ups right with Kamindu Mendis in the mix served the team well against Chennai Super Kings in their Indian Premier League match. SRH ended their winless streak against Chennai Super Kings at Chepauk when they defeated the hosts by five wickets here on Friday, scoring 155 for five in 18.4 overs after CSK were bowled out for 154. Vettori admitted SRH have not done well on slow and tricky surfaces so far in this IPL which saw them lose to Mumbai Indians in an away game and two matches at home in Uppal. "No, we haven't (done well on those pitches)," Vettori told the media after the match. "We've encountered them away and we've encountered them at home, so it hasn't quite matched up with our expectations around the surfaces. But the onus is on us to adapt and understand what's required," he said.

### Women's tri-series: All eyes on rookie seamer Gautam as India take on SL

**COLOMBO:** Captain Harmanpreet Kaur would like to check the Indian women's team's pace-bowling resources, including rookie seamer Kashvee Gautam, when it takes on hosts Sri Lanka in the opening tri-series match here on Sunday. The tournament kicks off the Women in Blue's preparations for the 50-over World Cup which will be held in India later this year and the bowling composition will be key. The batting department bears a settled look. Kashvee, a former India U-19 Women's T20 World Cup winner, was a revelation for Gujarat Giants in the Women's Premier League, in which she picked up 11 wickets in nine games at an economy rate of 6.45. With Titas Sadhu, Renuka Singh and Pooja Vastrakar all nursing injuries, the pace bowling is dependant on Arundhati Reddy, with all-rounder Amanjot Kaur being the only other medium pacer in the squad.