

Sporting Clube de Goa lay hands on GPL title

The result saw Sporting Clube finish top of the table with 46 points from 20 matches edging past Dempo SC who settled for second place with 45 points; Clube de Salgaocar earn I-League 3 berth

HERALD PIC



Goa Football Association President Caitano Fernandes presents the trophy to Sporting Clube de Goa in the presence of other dignitaries at the Ella ground, Old Goa, on Friday

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PANJIM/MAPUSA: Sporting Clube de Goa clinched the Goa Professional League title after playing out a goalless draw against rivals Dempo Sports Club in at the Ella ground, Old Goa, on Friday.

The result saw Sporting Clube finish top of the table with 46 points from 20 matches, edging past Dempo SC, who settled for second place with 45 points. Sporting Clube displayed attacking intent early on, pressing high and carving out openings. Leran Dias came close to setting up the opener midway through the first half with a dangerous cross from the right, but it flashed across the face of goal with no takers.

Dempo SC grew into the game with strong midfield control and threatening wing play, especially through Salgeo Dias on the left. However, the encounter turned fiery after a heated altercation between

Sporting Clube's Naocha and Dempo SC's Laxmanrao Rane, which resulted in straight red cards for both players and reduced the sides to ten men.

Despite the numerical disadvantage, both teams continued to push.

Sporting Clube coach Armando Colaco introduced Selwyn Miranda and Vikram Venkatachalam to inject fresh energy, while Dempo SC coach Remus Gomes responded with Asmon Viegas in midfield.

Dempo SC pressed hard for a winner, with Nestor Dias and Arnold Oliveira combining well in attack, but were repeatedly denied by Sporting Clube goalkeeper Siddharth Rana, who also earned a yellow card for time-wasting.

The best chance of the match fell to Shreyash Naik in the dying minutes, after Salgeo Dias headed a cross into his path, but the finish flew wide with the goal at his mercy. The 0-0 result was enough for Sporting Clube to seal the Goa Professional League title.

Clube de Salgaocar down Geno FC 2-0 in the Goa Professional Super League match played at Duler Stadium, Mapusa, on Friday.

With Friday's win, Clube de Salgaocar have 41 points and finished at third position of GPL table to secure place in the Third Division I-League next season.

Geno FC did have better of the ball exchanges and attempts at the rival goals in the first session.

In the 10th minute, Abelson Jachi strike from close was brilliantly blocked for a corner by Clube de Salgaocar's U-21 Reezvon Fernandes. Five minutes later, a weak shot by Franky Oliveira was saved by Clube de Salgaocar's goalkeeper Sanij Bugde. Another glorious chance went a begging for Geno FC when Abelson Jachi snatched the ball from stopper back Reezvon to sent a cut back pass to Franky Oliveira but the latter saw his placement miss the target narrowly.

Clube de Salgaocar's De-nil Rebello latched a curling strike from outside the penalty box only to see Geno FC's goalkeeper Savio Pereira pair the ball for a corner. Just four minutes into the second session, once again Geno FC's Chaitan Komarpant strike from close was blocked by Clube de Salgaocar's Brian Faria for a corner. In the 68th minute, Clube de Salgaocar's Boinao Singh sent a curling ball inside the 6-yard box where after a scramble by Geno FC's defenders and Saiesh Halarnkar saw the latter stab the ball into the goal, 1-0.

Pepped up by the goal, Clube de Salgaocar's doubled their lead in the 79th minute with Isac Zomuanpuia scoring from the penalty spot after he was brought down by Geno FC's goalkeeper Savio Pereira inside the 18-yard box 2-0. In the last 10 minutes of the match, deadly crosses by Clube de Salgaocar's substitute Royal Oliveira saw Boinao Singh miss to connect his header into the unguarded goal.

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Bruno strikes twice as Man Utd put one foot in Europa League final

Tottenham take control against Bodo/Glimt

AGENCIES



Bruno Fernandes celebrates scoring Manchester United's second goal with teammates in the Europa League semi-final first leg against Athletic Bilbao, at San Mames, Bilbao, Spain, on Thursday

PTI, BILBAO (Spain): Bruno Fernandes struck twice as Manchester United put one foot in the Europa League final with a clinical away performance to beat 10-man Athletic Bilbao 3-0 on Thursday.

The fervent home fans were enraged when Athletic defender Daniel Vivian was sent off for pulling back Rasmus Hojlund and Fernandes slotted home the resulting penalty, after Casemiro had opened the scoring against the run of play in the semi-fi-

EUROPA LEAGUE RESULTS

Semi-final, first legs
Tottenham 3 (Johnson 1, Maddison 34, Solanke 61-pen)
Bodo/Glimt 1 (Saltnes 83); Athletic Bilbao 0 Manchester United 3 (Casemiro 30, Fernandes 37-pen, 45)
Second legs to be played May 9

nal first leg, Fernandes rolled in a third before half-time as Ruben Amorim's side moved a step closer to the final, to be held at Athletic's San Mames stadium.

The hosts have been dreaming of winning a first European trophy on their own soil but their hopes

were demolished by United's professional display in the north of Spain -- and Athletic's supporters argued, the refereeing.

Languishing in 14th in the Premier League, Champions League qualification for United is only possible with a Europa League tri-

umph, as is access to the £100 million (\$133 million) honey-pot it entails.

Despite regularly crumbling under pressure this season, the Red Devils -- who produced a stunning comeback against Lyon in the quarter-finals -- first survived and then thrived in a hostile environment.

The second leg takes place next Friday at Old Trafford, ahead of the final on May 22 against Tottenham or Bodo/Glimt.

Tottenham closed in on a place in the Europa League final after Brennan Johnson struck just 38 seconds into their 3-1 win against Norwegian side Bodo/Glimt on Thursday.

Johnson's quick-fire opener was followed by James Maddison's strike before the interval in the semi-final first leg at the Tottenham Hotspur Stadium.

Dominic Solanke's second-half penalty should have been the end of the tie.

But a late goal from Ulrik Saltnes ensured the second leg on May 9 will be a nervous occasion for beleaguered Tottenham boss Ange Postecoglou.

FC Goa eye second Super Cup win today

Face Jamshedpur FC with an aim to secure qualification to the 2025-26 AFC Champions League

PTI, BHUBANESWAR: FC Goa will aim to become the first team to win the Super Cup twice, while Jamshedpur FC will target a historic maiden title when the two sides clash in the final of the ongoing edition, here, on Saturday.

The winners of the final will also secure qualification to the 2025-26 AFC Champions League Two Preliminary round, adding significant motivation to the contest at the Kalinga Stadium.

Former champions FC Goa, who lifted the title in 2019, are looking to end a four-year absence from the continental football.

Their only appearance in Asia came in the 2021 AFC Champions League group stage. Jamshedpur FC, on the other hand, have entered uncharted territory. This is their first-ever appearance in a tournament final in their eight-year history, having previously fallen at the semi-final stage in the Super Cup twice.

After narrowly missing out on AFC qualification in 2023 following a playoff defeat, the 'Men of Steel' have another opportunity to secure a spot on the continental stage.

"For us, it's very important because it would be the first time that we qualify for an Asian competition, so we'll try to give our best," said Jamshedpur head coach Khalid Jamil on the eve of the final.

His FC Goa counterpart, Manolo Marquez, stressed the significance of the opportunity.

"When you have this opportunity to qualify for Asia, obviously you have to

INACIO NORONHA



FC Goa Head Coach Manolo Marquez and Captain Odei Onaindia with the Kalinga Super Cup 2025 Trophy ahead of Saturday's final clash against Jamshedpur FC in Bhubaneswar. The Gaurs will aim to lift the title for a second time, having first won it in 2019 and along with it the coveted spot to complete in the AFC Champions League Preliminary Round two next season

“Every game is different. We finished second and Jamshedpur finished 10 points below us, but we lost both games against them. Now, it's a final. What happened in the past is not important. Fifteen teams tried to win the tournament. We knew we had to win four games, and we've already won three. There are no easy games here

– Manolo Marquez, FC Goa Head Coach

be very motivated. FC Goa already played in the Champions League four years ago. Jamshedpur never did. But both teams would want to make it to this competition."

The final will be the fourth Super Cup meeting between the two teams, making it the joint-most-played fixture in the competition's history.

Their previous encounters have produced 21 goals combined.

FC Goa won two thrilling quarter-final clashes in 2018 (5-1) and 2019 (4-3),

while Jamshedpur won 5-3 in the 2023 group stage.

In the current ISL season, however, Jamshedpur did the double over Goa, winning 2-1 in Fatorda and 3-1 at home.

"Every game is different," Marquez said. "We finished second, and Jamshedpur finished 10 points below us, but we lost both games against them. Now, it's a final. What happened in the past is not important."

Jamil echoed similar thoughts. "This is a totally different game. We have to

be strong. We know we are playing against a technically strong team. We have to give our best."

Defensively inconsistent during the ISL season, where they conceded 46 goals, Jamshedpur have been rock-solid in the Super Cup, going three games without conceding. They beat Hyderabad FC 2-0, edged past NorthEast United on penalties, and secured a 1-0 semi-final win over Mumbai City FC.

FC Goa have also looked dominant, defeating Gokulam Kerala 3-0, Punjab FC 2-1 and overcoming Mohun Bagan SG 3-1 in the last four.

"Fifteen teams tried to win the tournament. We knew we had to win four games, and we've already won three. There are no easy games here," said Marquez.

Goa captain Odei Onaindia added, "From the beginning, we said we wanted to win this tournament. Now we are in the final, and we are prepared for a tough game against a very good team."

Jamil said, "There are no predictions. We know it's an important game for both of us. We need to be confident." For young Jamshedpur forward Nikhil Barla, the occasion carries personal significance.

"It's a great feeling. I joined the academy in 2018, and now I'm playing in the final. It's a proud moment for me and my family."

Unlike the earlier rounds where tied matches went straight to penalties, the final will include 30 minutes of extra time if needed. Marquez, who won the 2021-22 ISL title with Hyderabad on penalties, is prepared.

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