

# Knights eye play-offs berth with a thrilling one-run victory over Royals

Russell roars back to form with an unbeaten 50, Rahane's tactics help Kolkata Knight Riders trump Parag-led Rajasthan Royals

PTI, KOLKATA: Andre Russell roared back to form with a blistering unbeaten 50 as Kolkata Knight Riders resisted Riyan Parag's stunning 95 to edge out Rajasthan Royals by one-run in an IPL thriller that kept the defending champions' slim play-off hopes alive, here, on Sunday.

Russell, who had been under scrutiny for his indifferent form this season, smashed a 25-ball 57 as KKR smashed 85 runs in the last five overs to post a commanding 206/4.

In reply, Rajasthan found themselves in tatters at 71/5 inside eight overs and they needed 105 runs from the last 48 balls, before stand-in skipper Parag kept their hopes alive through his knock off 45 balls (6x4, 8x6).

But smart bowling changes from skipper Ajinkya Rahane ensured that Parag got out five short of his maiden IPL century, before Vaibhav Arora held his nerves under pressure in the final over, keeping RR down to 205/8.

The Royals required 22 runs off the last over but Impact Shubham Dube launched Arora for two sixes and a four to bring the equation down to three runs off the final delivery.

But a smart field switch by Rahane placing Rinku Singh at long-off proved decisive as his sharp throw found Arora at non-striker's end who ran out Jofra Archer to seal the thrilling win.

KKR now have 11 points from as many games and have moved up to sixth on the points table but still need to win the remaining three matches to have a sniff at the play-offs.

Before the tense finale,



Kolkata Knight Riders' wicket-keeper Rahmanullah Gurbaz appeals for the wicket of Rajasthan Royals batter Shimron Hetmyer during the Indian Premier League match, at the Eden Gardens, in Kolkata, West Bengal, on Sunday

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## TWISTS & TURNS

RR's chase began in ominous fashion. Vaibhav Suryavanshi (4) departed in the first over and Kunal Singh Rathore followed for a duck, leaving Royals reeling

at 8/2 in the second over. However, Parag injected urgency with three crisp boundaries and two sixes. Yashasvi Jaiswal (34 off 21 balls) unsettled Varun

Chakravarty with back-to-back fours as Royals recovered to maintain a healthy run-rate of just under 10 in the Power Play.

While Harshit Rana

leaked 28 runs in two overs and Arora too was expensive, KKR turned to spin twins Moeen Ali and Chakravarty who turned the game around, sharing four wickets between them to reduce Royals to 71/5.

Moeen broke the rhythm of RR, dismissing Jaiswal. Rinku sprinted in from long-on and completed a sharp diving catch to give KKR the breakthrough.

Rahane then made a smart call to bring back Chakravarty from the other end and it paid off immediately. The mystery spinner bowled a game-changing over, striking twice in three balls, cleaning up Dhruv Jurel and Wanindu Hasaranga with googlies.

But what followed was absolute carnage with Parag launching into Moeen in the 13th over, smashing the off-spinner for five consecutive sixes in a jaw-dropping 32-run over. In the process, Parag raced to his maiden fifty of the season in just 27 balls and added 92 runs for the sixth wicket with Shimron Hetmyer.

But Narine's tidy last over heaped pressure on both the batters as Rana dismissed Hetmyer with a lifter in the next over. With 38 runs needed off the last 18 balls, Parag went big but holed out to Arora at long-on.

Earlier, coming into the match with just 72 runs from seven innings at an average of 10.28, Russell changed the ordinary script. The 37-year-old Jamaican recovered from a slow start (2 off 9 balls) to finish with a staggering strike rate of 228.00.

Russell unleashed his fury in the final five overs, transforming a middling KKR total into a formidable one. In the 16th over, Russell tore into pacer Akash Madhwal, smashing him for 4, 6, and 4.

Russell found a reliable partner in young Angkrish Raghuvanshi, who made 44 off 31 balls (5x4), as the pair stitched together a 61-run stand from just 33 balls, Rahane (30 off 24) and Rahmanullah Gurbaz (35 off 25) earlier added 56 runs off 33 balls.

## SCOREBOARD

**Kolkata Knight Riders:** Rahmanullah Gurbaz c Hetmyer b Theekshana 35, Sunil Narine b Singh 11, \*Ajinkya Rahane c Jurel b Parag 30, Angkrish Raghuvanshi c (sub) Ashok b Archer 44, Andre Russell not out 57, Rinku Singh not out 19. **Extras:** 10. **Total:** 206-4. **Fall of wickets:** 13-1, 69-2, 111-3, 172-4. **Bowling:** Jofra Archer 4-0-30-1, Yudhvir Singh 2-0-26-1, Maheesh Theekshana 4-0-41-1, Akash Madhwal 3-0-50-0, Wanindu Hasaranga 4-0-35-0, \*Riyan Parag 3-0-21-1. **Rajasthan Royals:** Yashasvi Jaiswal c Singh b Ali 34, Vaibhav Suryavanshi c Rahane b Arora 4, Kunal Rathore c Russell b Ali 0, \*Riyan Parag c Arora b Rana 95, Dhruv Jurel b Chakravarty 0, Wanindu Hasaranga b Chakravarty 0, Shimron Hetmyer c Narine b Rana 29, Shubham Dube not out 25, Jofra Archer run out (Arora) 12. **Extras:** 5. **Total:** 205-8. **Fall of wickets:** 5-1, 8-2, 66-3, 71-4, 71-5, 163-6, 173-7, 205-8. **Bowling:** Vaibhav Arora 4-0-50-1, Moeen Ali 3-0-43-2, Harshit Rana 4-0-41-2, Varun Chakravarty 4-0-32-2, Sunil Narine 4-0-27-0, Andre Russell 1-0-11-0.

**Man-of-the-match:** Andre Russell

## Singhs are Kings, push Super Giants on the edge

Pant loses grip on bat, match simultaneously as Punjab Kings rode on heroics from two 'Singhs' - Prabhsimran & Arshdeep - to push LSG to the brink of elimination with a 37-run win



Punjab Kings' batter Prabhsimran Singh plays a shot during the Indian Premier League match against Lucknow Super Giants, at Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium, in Dharamshala, on Sunday

PTI, DHARAMSALA: Rishabh Pant lost the grip on his bat and the match simultaneously as Punjab Kings rode on heroics from the two 'Singhs' -- Prabhsimran and Arshdeep -- to literally push Lucknow Super Giants to the brink of elimination with a 37-run win in an IPL match, here, on Sunday.

It was Prabhsimran's 48-ball 91 that formed the cornerstone of Punjab Kings' unassailable 236 for 5 and any hopes of a remarkable chase was nipped in the bud by Arshdeep's (3/16 in 4 overs) now familiar Powerplay spell which summarily destroyed the opposition top-order.

This time, he kept the three top run getters -- Mitchell Marsh (0), Aiden Markram (13) and the ever-dangerous Nicholas Pooran (6) -- to swing the match decisively

ly in Punjab's favour. Ayush Badoni's (74 off 40 balls) effort was a good one albeit it came for a losing cause.

LSG were finally restricted to 199 for 7 in 20 overs and even if they win their last three games and get to 16 points from 14 games, their net run-rate can make things difficult for them.

Punjab Kings are now placed second with 15 points from 11 games and one more win could possibly

clinch a place in top four for them. But what is becoming an eyesore is LSG's Rs 27 crore worth skipper Pant's inexplicable approach which has fetched him a dismal 128 runs in 11 innings at a sub-100 strike-rate (99.22).

On the day, he scored 18 off 17 balls and that he is completely out of sync was evident in the manner he tried to throw the proverbial kitchen sink at an Azmatullah Omarzai delivery.

## SCOREBOARD

**Punjab Kings:** Priyansh Arya c Yadav b Singh 1, Prabhsimran Singh c Pooran b Rathi 91, Josh Inglis c Miller b Singh 30, \*Shreyas Iyer c Yadav b Rathi 45, Nehal Wadhwa b Yadav 16, Shashank Singh not out 33, Marcus Stoinis not out 15. **Extras:** 5. **Total:** 236-5. **Fall of wickets:** 2-1, 50-2, 128-3, 162-4, 216-5. **Bowling:** Akash Singh 4-0-30-2, Mayank Yadav 4-0-60-0, Avesh Khan 4-0-57-0, Digvesh Rathi 4-0-46-2, Prince Yadav 4-0-43-1. **Lucknow Super Giants:** Aiden Markram b Singh 13, Mitchell Marsh c Wadhwa b Singh 0, Nicholas Pooran lbw b Singh 6, \*Rishabh Pant c Singh b Omarzai 18, Ayush Badoni c Singh b Chahal 74, David Miller c Singh b Omarzai 11, Abdul Samad c and b Jansen 45, Avesh Khan not out 19, Prince Yadav not out 1. **Extras:** 12. **Total:** 199-7. **Fall of wickets:** 17-1, 18-2, 27-3, 58-4, 73-5, 154-6, 188-7. **Bowling:** Arshdeep Singh 4-0-16-3, Marco Jansen 4-0-31-1, Azmatullah Omarzai 4-0-33-2, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-50-1, Vijaykumar Vysakh 3-0-49-0, Marcus Stoinis 1-0-17-0.

**Man-of-the-match:** Prabhsimran Singh

## Sabalenka wins Madrid Open for 20th career title

AP, MADRID: No. 1-ranked Aryna Sabalenka beat No. 4 Coco Gauff in straight sets to win her record-tying third Madrid Open and 20th career title.

Sabalenka powered through the first set and edged the American in a tie-breaker for 6-3, 7-6 (3) on the Caja Mágica clay court.

Sabalenka added to titles in Madrid in 2021 and 2023 and equaled Petra Kvitova's tournament record. It was also Sabalenka's tour-leading third title of the year after Brisbane and Miami. She also pulled level with Gauff on head-to-head with five wins apiece. Gauff could have risen to No. 2 with a victory. The 2023 U.S. Open



Belarus' Aryna Sabalenka poses with her trophy after winning USA's Coco Gauff during their 2025 WTA Tour Madrid Open tennis tournament singles final match at the Caja Magica in Madrid

champion lost only one set this week until the final. Gauff's great record in finals slipped to nine wins in 11.

## Chelsea sink champions Liverpool, Man Utd crash at Brentford

AFP, LONDON: Chelsea improved their chances of qualifying for the Champions League with a vital 3-1 victory as Liverpool suffered a Premier League title hangover, while United's winless run in the Premier League reached six games after a 4-3 defeat at Brentford on Sunday.

Enzo Maresca's Chelsea took the lead through Enzo Fernandez's early strike at Stamford Bridge. Jarell Quansah's second half own goal was followed by Virgil van Dijk's late reply for Liverpool.

Cole Palmer's stoppage-time penalty condemned the champions to only their third league defeat this season.

While Jack Lustre Liverpool had little to play for after winning a record-equaling 20th English crown with a 5-1 rout of Tottenham last weekend, Chelsea had every incentive to secure a price-less three points.

Hoping to return to the Champions League via a top five finish, the Blues sit in fifth place, level on points with fourth-placed Newcastle after their 1-1 draw at Brighton earlier on Sunday.

Sixth-placed Nottingham Forest will join Chelsea and Newcastle on 63 points if they beat Crystal Palace on Monday.

Third-placed Manchester City are only one point clear of Chelsea and, with three games left, the top five battle is set for a thrilling finale.

## ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS

**Brentford 4** (Shaw 27-og, Schade 33, 70, Wissa 74) **Manchester United 3** (Mount 14, Garnacho 82, Diallo 90+5), **Brighton 1** (Minteh 28) **Newcastle 1** (Isak 89-pen), **West Ham 1** (Bowen 28) **Tottenham 1** (Odobert 15), **Chelsea 3** (Fernandez 3, Quansah 56-og, Palmer 90+6-pen) **Liverpool 1** (Van Dijk 85). **Saturday: Arsenal 1** (Rice 34) **Bournemouth 2** (Huijsen 67, Evanilson 75), **Aston Villa 1** (Tielemans 12) **Fulham 0**, **Everton 2** (Beto 26, McNeil 35) **Ipswich 2** (Enciso 41, Hirst 79), **Leicester 2** (Vardy 17, Ayew 44) **Southampton 0**. **Friday: Manchester City 1** (De Bruyne 35) **Wolves 0**.

## sportspopup

### Hockey: India women beats Australia 1-0 to wrap up tour with lone win

PERTH: The Indian women's hockey team saved the best for the last as they beat formidable Australia 1-0 in a thrilling match to notch their lone win and end the tour on a high here on Sunday. Striker Navneet Kaur scored the match-winner in the 21st minute at the Perth Hockey Stadium. India had lost 3-5 and 2-3 to Australia 'A' side before going down 0-2 and 2-3 to the Australia senior side on May 1 and May 3. The visitors dished out their best hockey in the fifth and final game of their Australia tour, prevailing over the hosts in a closely-contested affair.

### Sri Lanka record first win against India in seven years after Nilakshi's effort

COLOMBO: All-rounder Nilakshika Silva brought her years of experience to play during a counter-attacking 33-ball 56 as Sri Lanka humbled India by three wickets -- their first win in seven years against their fancied rivals -- in a women's Tri-series match here on Sunday. The victory, the islanders' second in the tournament, helped them inch closer to the final. This was India's first loss in the event but they are still expected to make the title clash thanks to their convincing wins in their first two matches. Asked to bat first, India posted a competitive 275 for nine riding on swashbuckling wicketkeeper-batter Richa Ghosh's 48-ball 58. Sri Lanka completed the chase with five balls to spare after slipping to 152 for four in the 33rd over. After Nilakshi flattened the India bowlers with her three sixes and five fours, Anushka Sanjeevani (23 not out off 28 balls) and Sugandika Kumari (19 not out off 20 balls) got the job done for Sri Lanka to push the third team South Africa on the verge of elimination.

### Kuldeep can be extremely valuable in English conditions: Experts

NEW DELHI: Kuldeep Yadav is one match-winner that India can't afford to miss in the upcoming Test series in England and the wrist spinner should be picked ahead of batting all-rounders, reckon former selectors and coaches. Ravindra Jadeja is an automatic choice for the five-Test series because of his superior batting skills and Kuldeep also bring to the table a specific skill set, they feel. The national selection committee will announce India and the 'A' squad for the England tour, most likely after the identification of teams for the IPL play-offs. The red ball specialists in other six IPL teams as usual will travel earlier as it has happened on previous tours of England, scheduled right after the conclusion of IPL. Former chairman of selectors MSK Prasad, his selection committee colleague Devang Gandhi and former India opener and noted coach WV Raman all feel that Kuldeep has that 'x' factor that India will need in England. "Kuldeep Yadav is an attacking option and he needs to be in that Indian squad in England. He has played 12 Tests so far and if I look at his strike-rate, it is a wicket every six overs (37.3 balls per wicket). So Kuldeep along with Jadeja is a no-brainer for me," Raman, one of the most astute analysts of the game, told PTI.



### Punjab Kings replace injured Maxwell with Australian all-rounder Mitch Owen

MULLANPUR: Punjab Kings have picked Australian all-rounder Mitch Owen as a replacement for the injured Glenn Maxwell, who was ruled out of the remaining IPL season after fracturing his finger. The Australian stalwart, who has had an underwhelming IPL season this year, could only manage 48 runs in seven games with six single-digit scores. Maxwell suffered the injury before PBKS' rainout game against Kolkata Knight Riders at Eden Gardens on April 26 in which he was dismissed for seven runs. He was replaced by Suryansh Shedge in the subsequent match against Chennai Super Kings, which PBKS won by four wickets. "Punjab Kings have picked all-rounder Mitch Owen as a replacement for Glenn Maxwell, who has been ruled out of the remainder of the TATA Indian Premier League (IPL) 2025 due to a broken finger," said an IPL statement. The 23-year-old Owen, a right-hand batter and a right-arm pacer who has played 14 first-class games, will join the Shreyas Iyer-led franchise for Rs three crore. "Mitch Owen, from Tasmania, Australia, has played 34 T20s and scored 646 runs, including two centuries and a highest score of 108. The Australian all-rounder also has 10 T20 wickets to his name," said the IPL statement.



### Leverkusen draw hands Kane's Bayern Bundesliga title

BERLIN: Bayern Munich were crowned German champions for the 34th time on Sunday, giving striker Harry Kane his first major trophy, after second-placed Bayer Leverkusen drew 2-2 at Freiburg. Bayern's 3-3 draw at RB Leipzig on Saturday, when the Bavarians came from two goals down to take the lead before conceding a stoppage-time equaliser, meant defending Bundesliga champions Leverkusen needed to win at Freiburg to delay the title party. Leverkusen were two goals down before scoring twice in the last 10 minutes. But Xabi Alonso's side could not find a third, as Bayern reclaimed the title at the first attempt after Leverkusen ended their 11-year reign last season. Alonso, who won three Bundesliga titles as a player with Bayern, congratulated his former club. Kane, who had never previously won silverware, was among a group of Bayern players who gathered to watch the Leverkusen game in Munich on Sunday. After full-time on Sunday, the striker shared a video of him singing Queen's 'We Are The Champions' with teammates to social media, as well as an emoji of a trophy. Results: Freiburg 2 (Eggestein 44, Hincapie 48-og) Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Wirtz 82, Tah 90+3), Augsburg 1 (Mounie 90) Holstein Kiel 3 (Machino 25-pen, Bernhardtsson 40, 51).

### Chido Obi becomes youngest player to start a Premier League match for Man United

LONDON: Chido Obi became the youngest player to start a Premier League match for Manchester United when he lined up as the team's striker against Brentford on Sunday at the age of 17 years and 156 days. Obi is a Denmark youth international who joined United from Arsenal last year and has made five appearances in the league this season, each time as a substitute. He has yet to score. With the game coming in between legs against Athletic Bilbao in the Europa League semifinals, United rotated heavily and fielded a team against Brentford with an average age of 22 years and 270 days. According to stats supplier Opta, it is the third youngest team - by average age - ever named for a Premier League match. United beat Athletic 3-0 in the first leg.