

Barca clinches 28th La Liga title, Yamal's stunning strike seals domestic treble

Yamal excelled for Barcelona with goals, dribbling and playmaking as he confirmed his status as next big star of global soccer; along with Raphinha, Pedri and company, Barcelona were unstoppable

AP, BARCELONA: This was Lamine Yamal's season. So it just had to be the teenage phenom who scored the decisive goal to clinch Barcelona's 28th Spanish league title.

And what a goal it was for the player who still wears dental braces and sports a new dyed-blond hairdo.

The 17-year-old struck the winner in Barcelona's 2-0 victory at cross-town rival Espanyol on Thursday when he slid past two defenders outside the area and whipped one his now trademark left-footed curlers into the corner of the net.

It was a perfect culmination to Yamal's last 10 months.

After helping Spain win the European Championship last summer, Yamal excelled for Barcelona this campaign with his goals, dribbling and playmaking as he confirmed his status as the next big star of global soccer. Along with Raphinha, Pedri and company, and Barcelona were unstoppable.

"I always try my best and today I was lucky it went in," Yamal said. "I am very happy I could help the team and celebrate it."

Fermin López ensured the win in stoppage time after Espanyol was reduced to 10 men in the 80th when Leandro Cabrera received a

direct red for hitting Yamal in the stomach while disputing a ball.

Barcelona won the title with two rounds remaining. It completed a domestic double with the Copa del Rey title — treble if you add the Spanish Super Cup — and reached the Champions League semi-finals in a fantastic first season for coach Hansi Flick.

Flick's team virtually ended Madrid's title defense when it beat its top rival 4-3 on Sunday, making it four of four clasico victories across all competitions this season. Madrid's victory over Mallorca on Wednesday prevented Barcelona from winning the title without playing. But the Catalan club needed just two points from its final three games of the season.

Barcelona's players danced briefly on the field to celebrate while sprinklers doused them with water.

"You don't win a league every day and we have to enjoy this and give it the value it has," said Barcelona midfielder Pedri after completing his 200th game for his club at age 22.

Lionel Messi posted a message on Instagram sending his "Congratulations" for his old team. Real Madrid also congratulated its fierce rival on X, while thousands of Barcelona

AGENCIES



Lamine Yamal celebrates after scoring the first goal against Espanyol during the La Liga match, at the RCDE Stadium in Barcelona, Spain

fans gathered to celebrate in downtown Barcelona.

Barcelona dominated the domestic competitions, winning 15 and drawing two of its league games in 2025. Toss in the cups, and the only tiny blemish was coming oh-so-close to

reaching the Champions League final before it fell in gut-wrenching fashion at Inter Milan.

Yamal credited his coach for inspiring a core of players who had won nothing last season under Xavi Hernández.

"We are thankful for what Xavi has us, but it is true that coach (Flick) has given us a new life," Yamal said.

Looking back on his arrival in the summer, Flick said that he had instilled a "positive" attitude in his team and it had adapted well to his style of play that requires a high defensive line and all-in pressing.

"Barcelona has to win titles and three titles is really great," Flick said. "I suffered a bit after the game in Milan, but after winning three titles I am very happy and the club is too."

Espanyol outplayed its wealthier rival in the first half. But Urko González shot wide on a counterattack early on and Javi Pardo couldn't beat Wojciech Szczesny in a one-on-one opportunity.

But Yamal's great shot in the 53rd minute put Barcelona in control. Espanyol goalkeeper Joan García, who is linked to a move to a big club this summer, including Barcelona, dove but

couldn't reach the perfectly placed shot.

On Yamal's goal, Pedri said: "He scored two goals like that today in practice. We are fortunate to have him on our side."

Espanyol needed to a good result from the derby as it hopes to stay out of the relegation fight. Espanyol remained in 16th place and five points from the drop zone.

The game was briefly paused by the referee in the opening minutes when a car rammed into a crowd outside the RCDE Stadium, injuring several people. Authorities said it was an accident and not related to the game.

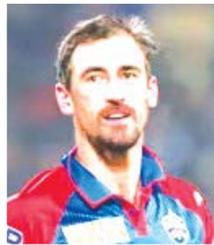
Fourth-placed Athletic Bilbao secured a Champions League spot after winning 2-0 at Getafe.

Third-placed Atletico Madrid lost 2-0 to Osasuna, while Real Betis stumbled in its fight for a fifth-place finish and the last Champions League spot after drawing 2-2 Rayo Vallecano.

LA LIGA RESULTS

Osasuna 2 (Catena 25, Budimir 82) Atletico Madrid 0, Rayo Vallecano 2 (De Frutos 37, Lejeune 45+6) Real Betis 2 (Hernandez 51, Isco 61-pen), Espanyol 0 Barcelona 2 (Yamal 53, Lopez 90+5), Getafe 0 Athletic Bilbao 2 (Guruzeta 76, Vivian 89), Alaves 1 (Jordan 79-pen) Valencia 0, Villarreal 3 (Perez 23, 31, Pepe 45) Leganes 0, Real Madrid 2 (Mbappe 68, Ramon 90+5) Mallorca 1 (Valjent 11)

Starc, Ferreira skip IPL return; Jacks back for MI, Stoinis too set to fly back



Mitchell Starc



Donovan Ferreira



Will Jacks



Marcus Stoinis

PTI, NEW DELHI: Delhi Capitals' Mitchell Starc and Donovan Ferreira have opted not to return for the remainder of the IPL, while England all-rounder Will Jacks will rejoin Mumbai Indians for their final two league fixtures.

Australian pacer Starc and South African batter Ferreira have communicated their decision to the Delhi Capitals management.

Starc has been a pivotal figure in DC's campaign, emerging as their leading wicket-taker with 14 scalps in 11 matches at an average of 26.14. His absence is a significant

setback for Delhi's already slim playoff hopes. Ferreira, meanwhile, has played only once this season.

Fellow South African Tristan Stubbs has joined the DC squad for the remaining three league matches. The World Test Championship Final-bound Stubbs will be unavailable for the playoffs should DC qualify.

In a major boost to DC, vice-captain Faf du Plessis has decided to return for the remainder of the IPL. While Bangladesh pacer Mustafizur Rahman, who was signed as temporary replacement to Jake Fraser

McGurk, has obtained the No Objection Certificate from his national board and will be available for a limited duration from May 18 to 24. For Punjab Kings, Marcus Stoinis and Josh Inglis have agreed to join the team but will be missing its first game post IPL resumption on May 18.

MI batter Jacks confirmed his return by posting a photo of his flight ticket to Mumbai on Instagram on Friday.

But like compatriot Jos Buttler, Jacks will leave for national duty after completing Mumbai Indians' last two league engage-

ments as the IPL play-offs are clashing with England's white ball series against the West Indies starting May 29.

Mumbai Indians currently sit fourth on the points table and must win both their remaining matches to confirm a playoff berth.

The IPL was halted on May 9 due to military tension between India and Pakistan. It resumes on Saturday with the final pushed back to June 3 from May 25, clashing with international commitments of players from South Africa, England, Australia and the West Indies.

IPL resumes with the RCB vs KKR face-off

PTI, BENGALURU: Brought to a halt by the recent India-Pakistan border tensions, the IPL will resume on Saturday with Royal Challengers Bengaluru taking on Kolkata Knight Riders in a high-stakes contest where the spotlight will firmly be on Virat Kohli following his recent Test retirement.

The unexpected 10-day break has left both the RCB and the KKR with different goals to achieve and common challenges to hurdle over. The RCB are second on the table with 16 points from 11 matches, and a win here can propel them to the playoffs.

KKR are sixth on the table with 11 points from 12 games, and a slip-up will evaporate the defending champions' hopes of making the knockouts. They are also faced with the challenging task of hitting the pre-break intensity straightaway at the Chinnaswamy stadium.

The hosts are coming off a four-match winning streak while the tourists have managed to stitch two victories in three matches before the league came to a grinding

halt. Questions remain on whether they can regain that competitive edge after a passage of uncertainty.

But RCB are better-placed to surmount these difficulties, and the sight of skipper Rajat Patidar batting rather fluently at nets might have soothed a lot of nerves. Patidar had injured his finger during the home match against Chennai Super Kings, forcing him to wear a splint. The hosts also have most of their foreign recruits back in the hut after returning home in the wake of the Indo-Pak military face-off.

The likes of Phil Salt, Lungi Ngidi, Tim David, Liam Livingstone and Romario Shepherd are available for this match and beyond.

The jarring notes will be the injury-enforced absence of Devdutt Padikkal and pacer Josh Hazlewood.

RCB will also hope that Mayank Agarwal, who has replaced Padikkal in the line-up, will rise to the occasion. Hazlewood has a shoulder injury and the franchise has not yet given clarity on his availability.

Jaiswal picked in A squad, Gill to feature in second game

PTI, NEW DELHI: India Test team regulars including Yashasvi Jaiswal, Nitish Kumar Reddy and Dhruv Jurel were on Friday named in the India A squad for the two-match series against England Lions beginning in Canterbury on May 30.

Shubman Gill, who is set to be appointed India's Test captain following Rohit Sharma's retirement, and B. Sai Sudharsan will be available for the second four-day game against England Lions starting in Northampton from June 6.

The India A tour precedes the five-match Test series in England. The A side will also play an intra-squad match with the senior team in Beckenham from June 13 to 16. The first Test begins in Leeds on June 20.

In the BCCI statement related to the squad announcement, it was clear that no changes have been made to the original schedule despite pushing back

the IPL final to June 3 from May 25. The squad includes players from the IPL teams which are either out of the playoffs race or are unlikely to make the knockouts.

Karun Nair, a heavy scorer on the domestic circuit, is back into the national set up after eight years. Vidarbha left-arm spinner Harsh Dubey, who took a record

INDIA A SQUAD

Abhimanyu Easwaran (C), Yashasvi Jaiswal, Karun Nair, Dhruv Jurel (VC) (WK), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Shardul Thakur, Ishan Kishan (WK), Manav Suthar, Tanush Kotian, Mukesh Kumar, Akash Deep, Harshit Rana, Anshul Kamboj, Khaleel Ahmed, Raturaj Gaikwad, Sarfaraz Khan, Tushar Deshpande, Harsh Dubey. Note: Shubman Gill and Sai Sudharsan will join the squad ahead of the second match

69 wickets in Ranji Trophy this season, is also part of the touring party.

Ishan Kishan, who has been out of national reckoning for a while, is the second wicket-keeper in the squad. Pacers Harshit Rana and Akash Deep, who were part of the Test squad in Australia, and batter Sarfaraz Khan have also been picked for the shadow tour of England. Abhimanyu Easwaran will captain the side. Runs in the A series will give senior side regulars much-needed confidence ahead of the Tests while the other star performers could be rewarded with a national cap in the near future.

Following the retirement of Rohit and Virat Kohli, India find themselves in the middle of a massive transition phase. Gill would look to make the most of his time in the second four-day fixture. Sudharsan 'Titans', is expected to be picked in the Test squad.

India storm into SAFF U-19 final, set up title clash with Bangladesh

PTI, YUPIA (Arunachal Pradesh): Defending champions India marched into the final of the SAFF U-19 Championship 2025 with a commanding 3-0 win over the Maldives in front of a raucous home crowd and heavy rain, here, on Friday.

Goals from Danny Meitei Laishram (14'), Omung Dodum (21') and Prashant Jajo (66') sealed a dominant win, as India extended their perfect record -- both in victories and clean sheets -- en route to the summit clash.

India will now face Bangladesh, who edged Nepal 2-1 in the other semi-final held earlier in the day.

From the first whistle, India looked sharp, hungry, and in complete control. The breakthrough came in the 14th minute through a well-executed corner routine.

Jajo floated in a teasing delivery from the left,

and Meitei connected sweetly with a left-footed volley that bounced once before crashing into the net -- his fifth goal of the tournament.

India doubled their lead six minutes later with a goal born of seamless teamwork.

Jajo again played creator, darting down the left flank before scooping the ball over the defence.

FOOTBALL

Meitei laid off smartly for local hero Dodum, who made no mistake from close range to make it 2-0.

Although Maldives had shown attacking promise in earlier matches, they struggled to break through India's disciplined defence.

On the rare occasions they got a shot away, goalkeeper Suraj Singh Aheibam stood firm.

India remained tactical-

ly astute in the second half, snuffing out any hopes of a Maldivian comeback by closing down passing lanes and maintaining a compact shape.

As rain began to pour, conditions worsened, but India adapted swiftly.

In the 66th minute, Jajo unleashed a powerful right-footed shot from distance. Maldives goalkeeper Xahran Hassan Ziyad misjudged the pace of the strike, allowing the ball to slip through his hands -- a costly error that effectively sealed the match at 3-0.

Despite some late efforts from Maldives to salvage pride, India's defence held firm to secure a place in the final.

RESULT

India 3 (Danny Meitei 14', Omung Dodum 21', Prashant Jajo 66') Maldives 0

Neeraj finally breaches 90m mark but finishes second in Doha DL

PTI, DOHA: Neeraj Chopra finally breached the elusive 90m mark with a 90.23m throw but finished second behind Julian Weber of Germany in a dramatic men's javelin contest at the Doha leg of the prestigious Diamond League Meeting series, here, on Friday.

Weber turned the tables and took the top spot with his final throw, measuring 91.06m.

The 27-year-old double Olympic medallist Indian

sent his spear 90.23m in his third attempt to join a list of javelin throwers, led by his current coach Jan Zelezny of Czechia, who had recorded 90m-plus efforts. He became the third Asian and 25th overall to achieve the feat.

Olympic champion Arshad Nadeem (92.97m) of Pakistan and Chao-Tsun Cheng (91.36m) of Chinese Taipei are the two other Asians to have breached the coveted mark.



Neeraj Chopra

sportspopup

Praggnanandhaa draws with Aronian, shares top spot at Superbet Classic

BUCHAREST (Romania): Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa played out a draw with Levon Aronian of the United States to finish in a three-way tie for first place at the Superbet Classic, the opening event of the Grand Chess Tour. With three players -- Praggnanandhaa, Alireza Firouzja and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave -- ending the ninth and final round with 5.5 points apiece, the winner will be decided via tiebreaks. In the tiebreaker, the players will play two mini games of 5 minutes each plus a two second increment and if the tie persists the winner will be decided through an Armageddon game. The Superbet Classic carries a total prize purse of USD 350,000. Praggnanandhaa did not take many chances with his pieces against Aronian who came up with an opening surprise in the form of French defense. Results: R Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 5.5) drew with Levon Aronian (USA, 4); Deac Bogdan-Daniel (Rou, 4) lost to Alireza Firouzja (Fra, 5.5); Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 5.5) beat Jan Krzysztof (Pol, 3); Wesley So (4) drew with Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb, 4.5); D Gukesh (Ind, 4) drew with Fabiano Caruana (USA, 5).

Rohit says it will be 'special feeling' to play at Wankhede with a stand in his name

MUMBAI: Senior India batter Rohit Sharma said it will be a "special feeling" for him to play in India jersey in the ODIs at the Wankhede Stadium where a stand was on Friday named after him. Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) named a stand each at the Wankhede Stadium after Rohit, former India skipper Ajit Wadekar, and ex-BCCI president Sharad Pawar. "I had never dreamt of what was going to happen today. You try to achieve a lot of milestones, but something like this is really special, because Wankhede is an iconic stadium and so many memories have been made here," said Rohit, who announced his retirement from Test cricket on May 7. "To have my name here with the greats of the game and the world's best political leader, I cannot express the feeling. I am super grateful. I am still playing and retired from two formats. It will be surreal to play when I play on 21st (for Mumbai Indians in IPL) and have a stand here, it will be special when I represent the country here," added Rohit who has also retired from T20 Internationals after leading India to the World Cup trophy last year. He also thanked his family members for the sacrifices they had made for him throughout his career.

Gill's competitiveness stands out: Gavaskar on India's likely Test captain

NEW DELHI: The great Sunil Gavaskar feels the high-octane IPL is the perfect training ground for future India captains, providing the likes of Shubman Gill the required leadership experience before graduating to the highest level. Gujarat Titans skipper Gill is expected to captain India on the Test tour of England following the retirement of Rohit Sharma. Rishabh Pant is likely to be his deputy. Virat Kohli's retirement, which came just days after Rohit's decision, has left a massive void in the Test team. Gavaskar said it would take at least a couple of years for Gill and other potential leaders like Pant and Shreyas Iyer to become finished products. "It would take a couple of years (to groom future leaders) to get to the level of our super captains (MS Dhoni, Rohit, Virat). All of them brought a different approach to captaincy," said Gavaskar in a response to a PTI query on Star Sports Press Room. Pant is currently captaining LSG, while Iyer is leading the Punjab Kings in this IPL. "When you see Gill, Iyer and Pant, three main pretenders to Indian captaincy you see an amalgamation of all three (Dhoni, Rohit, Virat). Gill probably is more competitive, when there is a decision, he is asking the umpire right away. He is probably a lot more involved."

Air taxis to ferry fans and VIPs to venues at 2028 Los Angeles Olympics

LOS ANGELES: Fans and VIPs can fly their way to venues at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics with the first air taxi ever to be used at a games. Archer Aviation's piloted electric air taxi known as Midnight will ferry up to four passengers from a vertiport takeoff and landing hub near a major venue about 10 to 20 minutes to their destination within the company's Los Angeles network. The planned network includes vertiports at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood and the Los Angeles Memorial Coliseum south of downtown, which are slated to share opening and closing ceremonies. Other locations are Los Angeles International Airport, Hollywood, Santa Monica and Orange County. "We want to transform the way people get around Los Angeles and leave a legacy that shapes the future of transportation in America," Adam Goldstein, CEO and founder of Archer Aviation, said in a statement Thursday. "There's no better time to do that than during the LA28 Games."