

Rohit, Jonny dazzle as MI enter Qualifier 2

Take on Punjab Kings in a virtual semi-final match in Ahmedabad on Sunday with the winner progressing to the IPL 2025 final against Royal Challengers Bengaluru

PTI, MULLANPUR: The mighty Mumbai Indians handled the nerves better on the big stage to outlast Gujarat Titans by 20 runs in a high-scoring IPL Eliminator despite a classy effort from Sai Sudharsan, here, on Friday.

Rohit Sharma (81 off 50) rode his luck to play a fine knock after Jonny Bairstow (47 off 22) made instant impact on his Mumbai Indians debut to push them to an imposing 228 five in 20 overs.

Titans, who were sloppy in the field and with the ball, were able to take the game down to the wire with sensational batting from Sudharsan (80 off 49) before falling short at 208 for six to exit the tournament.

In the end, it was Mumbai Indians who won the key moments to advance in the competition. The victory took them to Qualifier 2 in Ahmedabad on Sunday when they take on Punjab Kings.

Despite heavy dew, overcoming a such a steep target in a knock-out game needed a special effort which came from Sudharsan who put

his team on course for an improbable chase until his dismissal in the 16th over.

Bumrah removed Washington Sundar (48 off 24) with his trademark yorker before Sudharsan missed scoop against Richard Gleeson to see his stumps dislodged, bringing Mumbai Indians back into the game.

While it lasted, it was a delight to see Sudharsan go about his business. In a game of pure muscle, Sudharsan was a picture of elegance and found gaps all around the park with pinpoint precision.

The equation came down to 36 from 12 balls with two left-handers Rahul Tewatia and Sherfane Rutherford in the middle. Mumbai Indians debutant Richard Gleeson bowled the final over with Titans needing 24 runs and he bowled three immaculate deliveries to ensure victory before hobbling out due to hamstring issue. In fact, Suryakumar Yadav, the vice-captain was marshalling resources in the final over and it was a brave punt to bring Gleeson in for three

deliveries knowing that he is in considerable discomfort. Once the target was out of reach, Surya took him off and asked left-arm seamer Ashwini Kumar to complete formalities.

Earlier, on a surface which had less grass compared to the one used on Thursday, Mumbai Indians decided to bat first and the batters ensured the team goes into the break with an upper-hand.

Titans dropped three crucial catches -- two of Ro-

hit (81 off 50) and one of Suryakumar Yadav (33 off 20) - and produced another ordinary effort with the ball in the knock-out fixture.

Rohit was dropped twice in the powerplay before veteran made the opposition pay dearly for their on-field errors. On the first occasion, Gerald Coetzee dropped him in the deep and Kusal Mendis' GT debut went all awry when he bungled a regulation take behind stumps off Mohammed Siraj.

SCOREBOARD

Mumbai Indians: Rohit Sharma c Khan b Krishna 81, Jonny Bairstow c Coetzee b Kishore 47, Suryakumar Yadav c Sundar b Kishore 33, Tilak Varma c Mendis b Siraj 25, *Hardik Pandya not out 22, Naman Dhir c Khan b Krishna 9, Mitchell Santner not out 0. **Extras:** 11. **Total:** 228-5. **Fall of wickets:** 84-1, 143-2, 186-3, 194-4, 207-5. **Bowling:** Mohammed Siraj 4-0-37-1, Prashidh Krishna 4-0-53-2, Sai Kishore 4-0-42-2, Rashid Khan 4-0-31-0, Gerald Coetzee 3-0-51-0, Washington Sundar 1-0-7-0. **Gujarat Titans:** Sai Sudharsan b Gleeson 80, *Shubman Gill lbw b Boult 1, Kusal Mendis hit wicket b Santner 20, Washington Sundar b Bumrah 48, Sherfane Rutherford c Varma b Boult 24, Rahul Tewatia not out 16, Shahrulkh Khan c Yadav b Gleeson 13, Rashid Khan not out 0. **Extras:** 5. **Total:** 208-6. **Fall of wickets:** 3-1, 67-2, 151-3, 170-4, 193-5, 208-6. **Bowling:** Trent Boult 4-0-56-2, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-27-1, Richard Gleeson 3-3-0-39-1, *Hardik Pandya 3-0-37-0, Mitchell Santner 1-0-10-1, Naman Dhir 1-0-9-0, Ashwani Kumar 3-3-0-29-1. **Man-of-the-match:** Rohit Sharma



Mumbai Indians' Rohit Sharma and Tilak Varma during the IPL Eliminator match against Gujarat Titans, in New Chandigarh, on Friday

No better place than out in the middle: Josh on IPL stint

PTI, MULLANPUR (Chandigarh): Josh Hazlewood's return to Royal Challengers Bengaluru after an injury break is a blessing for the franchise and good preparation for the Australian pacer, who says the intensity he is building up here will come in handy during the World Test Championship final against South Africa next month.

Having recovered from a shoulder injury, Hazlewood played in the IPL after a month but showed no signs of rust, helping Royal Challengers Bengaluru reach their first final since 2016 with an eight-wicket win over Punjab Kings.

The performance was also a tick mark for his preparations ahead of the World Test Championship final against South Africa beginning at Lord's on June 11.

"...I've got to be bowling, you know wherever I am in the world, I've got to be bowling getting ready for that game (WTC final) anyway," said Hazlewood after featuring in his first IPL game since April 27.

"There's no better place than I think out in the middle, obviously you've got to bowl more, more hours of training from time to time to build up for a Test, but to get that intensity right up, there's no better place than the IPL," he asserted after a brilliant haul of 3/21.

Hazlewood, who predominantly gets move-

Brook's England ODI reign begins with crushing win over WI

AP, BIRMINGHAM: Harry Brook's reign as England's new white-ball captain began by thumping the West Indies by 238 runs in a One-Day International at Edgbaston on Thursday.

For the first time in an ODI, the first seven batters scored 35 or more as England racked up 400-8. Brook was among four players to contribute half-centuries.

Medium-pacer Saqib Mahmood knocked over the top order and fast bowler Jamie Overton got hold of the tail.

"That was a pretty phenomenal performance," Brook said. "I'm not concerned (no one converted fifties into hundreds). We got 400 runs. If one of us kicks on, that's a complete performance."

England can clinch its first ODI bilateral series win since September 2023 on Sunday in Cardiff. The third and last match is on Tuesday at the Oval.

About all that England lost at Edgbaston was the toss. West Indies thought it could exploit humid conditions but the initial bowling was mediocre and Ben Duckett and Jamie Smith, who was opening for the first time and dropped on 1, smashed 64 runs within seven overs. By the end of the powerplay, England was 90 for the loss of only Smith.

SCOREBOARD

England: J Smith c King b Joseph 37, B Duckett c Chase b Greaves 60, J Root c Hope b Seales 57, H Brook c Carty b Seales 58, J Buttler c Forde b Seales 37, J Bethell c Hope b Seales 82, W Jacks c Hope b Greaves 39, J Overton c Chase b Joseph 1, B Carse not out 3, A Rashid not out 2. **Extras:** 24. **Total:** 400 for 8. **Fall of wickets:** 1-64, 2-137, 3-188, 4-221, 5-287, 6-385, 7-391, 8-393. **Bowling:** Forde 8-0-88-0; Seales 9-0-84-4; Joseph 10-0-69-2; Chase 6-0-41-0; Motie 7-0-39-0; Greaves 10-0-68-2.

West Indies: B King c Buttler b Carse 10, J Greaves c Brook b Mahmood 4, K Carty c Brook b Mahmood 22, S Hope c Carse b Mahmood 25, J Andrew c Brook b Bethell 8, A Jangoo c Brook b Rashid 14, R Chase c Jacks b Overton 9, M Forde c Mahmood b Overton 1. G Motie c Brook b Overton 18. A Joseph b Rashid 12. J Seales not out 29. **Extras:** 10. **Total:** 162 all out. **Fall of wickets:** 1-8, 2-17, 3-53, 4-69, 5-79, 6-97, 7-102, 8-102, 9-124, 10-162. **Bowling:** Mahmood 7-1-32-3; Carse 6-0-39-1; Overton 5-2-0-22-3; Bethell 2-4-0-18-1; Rashid 5-2-0-50-2.

Player-of-the-match: Jacob Bethell

Satwik-Chirag pair outplays Goh-Nur to sail into semi-finals

PTI, SINGAPORE: India's top men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty stayed on course for their maiden title of the season, storming into the Singapore Open semi-finals with a straight-game win over world No. 1 Malaysian duo of Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin, here, on Friday.

Making a comeback after battling fitness issues for the last few weeks,

SINGAPORE OPEN

The Indian pair displayed rock-solid defence and controlled the front court with precision to register a 21-17, 21-15 win in a 39-minute quarterfinal clash at the Super 750 badminton tournament.

Satwik and Chirag will next face third-seeds Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia. This is their third semi-final appearance of the season, having reached the last-four stage at both the Malaysia and India Open earlier this year.

The last time the two played was in March at the All England Championships which ended with Chirag aggravating his back injury and the duo was forced to withdraw in the second round.

The former World No.1 Indians held a 6-2 head-to-head record against the Malaysians going into the match, although they had lost their most recent meeting at the India Open.

It's tough to keep playing all formats, need to be smart & selective: Bumrah

PTI, NEW DELHI: Jasprit Bumrah is eagerly eyeing the challenge of featuring in Test matches in England, but the star India pacer admitted the difficulty of playing all three formats for a long time and said he will have to be more "selective" at some point.

While announcing the India squad for the tour of England, chief selector Ajit Agarkar had said that Bumrah might not be available for all five Test matches.

"Obviously, it is tough for any individual to keep playing everything for so long. I've been doing it for a while, but then eventually you have to understand where your body's going, what is the important tournament," Bumrah told former Australian skipper Michael Clarke in the Beyond 23 podcast.

The 31-year-old has played 45 Tests, 89 ODIs and 70 T20Is so far for the country besides appearing in 143 IPL matches for Mumbai Indians.

"You have to be a little selective and you have to be a little smart about how you use your body. As a cricketer, I would never want to leave anything and always keep on going."

"At this moment I'm okay, but I don't set goals or I don't look at myself that this is the number that I should be at and this is the time," he added.

However, Bumrah termed the desire to represent India in the Los Angeles Olympics in 2028 as a motivating factor for him.



"You have to be a little selective and you have to be a little smart about how you use your body. As a cricketer, I would never want to leave anything and always keep on going. At this moment I'm okay, but I don't set goals or I don't look at myself that this is the number that I should be at and this is the time. The journey's going good so far. The day I realise that the drive is gone or the effort is not there and my body's not holding up, that is a decision when you take that time —Jasprit Bumrah"

Cricket will be a part of LA 2028, a first for the sport since 1900.

"The journey's going good so far. The day I realise that the drive is gone or the effort is not there and my body's not holding up, that is a decision when you take that time."

"I've heard that there's cricket in the Olympics, so that is something that I'm looking forward to. Who would have thought cricket as an Olympic sport? So, that is something that is really exciting to me. But I don't set goals because whenever I've set goals, I've never been able to fulfil them," he added.

Bumrah will spearhead India's attack in England during the five-match Test

series, and he was keen to tame that challenge.

"You know, playing in England is always a different challenge. I always love bowling with the Duke ball. But I don't know how much the Duke ball is doing right now because there's always constant changes to the ball."

"But the weather, the swinging condition sometimes... then when the ball becomes soft, you know, there's always a challenge. So I always look forward to playing in England."

Bumrah also felt that England's Bazball way of cricket would give the Indian bowlers a fine chance in the Test series.

"They're playing an interesting style of cricket, which is an interesting one

because I don't really understand it too much."

"But as a bowling unit, you know, we always feel confident that when the batters are being ultra aggressive, on a given day, anybody could run through and, you know, get wickets," he noted.

Bumrah said the inclusion of Mohammed Siraj in the line-up will do a world of good for India against England. "In Australia, we did miss (Mohammad) Shami. And Siraj was gaining confidence. So, yeah, it's always good when he's there. He's very skillful. So, it always adds a lot of input."

"So, yes, not thinking about England too much at this moment. Right now, we're at an important stage of the IPL. As and when we get there, you start planning on the go because you can't be thinking about something else and playing something else," he said.

The ace fast bowler said he channelises his aggression through performances, rather than trying to sledge the opposition batters.

"I do have my competitive spirit and I do play to win, but I don't want to cross the line. You want to give your best, but you don't have to be a clown. That is something I try and not to be. I am only looking at bowling fast."

"So, I try to control my aggression, drive it in a manner which will help me. And then probably I found a way to use it to my advantage," he said.

Wily Inter Milan aim to stop PSG juggernaut in Champions League final

AFP, MUNICH (Germany): Favourites Paris Saint-Germain have their sights fixed on finally winning the Champions League trophy but a rugged and battle-hardened Inter Milan stand in their way in Sunday's final in Munich at 12.30 am.

The climax to the European season has thrown up a mouth-watering clash of opposing styles and ideas of how to build a team. It is a contest between one of the continent's old guard and one of the state-owned modern superclubs.

Despite enormous spending, PSG have never won the most glamorous prize in European club football and this is just their second final since the transformative Qatari takeover of the team from the French capital in 2011.

In 2020, during the pandemic, they lost the final to Bayern Munich behind closed doors in Lisbon, despite the presence of Kylian Mbappe and Neymar up front.

Adding an ageing and unmotivated Lionel Messi to that front line took them further away from European glory than at any point in the last decade and their thrilling run to Munich has come in the season after Mbappe followed the South American superstar duo out of the exit door.

Mbappe thought a move to last year's Champions League winners Real Madrid would improve his chances of getting his hands on the trophy. Instead Luis Enrique's thrilling young Paris side -- average age under 24 -- has taken Europe by storm.

When they last came to Munich in November and lost 1-0 to Bayern, they were in danger of being knocked out during the league phase in the first season since the competition's new format was introduced.

A brilliant comeback win in January against 2023 champions Manchester City was the catalyst for a superb run as PSG eliminated three more Premier



Inter Milan's Italian coach Simone Inzaghi (centre) talks to players during a training session as part of the club's media day ahead of the UEFA Champions League final match against Paris Saint-Germain (PSG), in Appiano Gentile, on Friday

League sides -- Liverpool, Aston Villa and Arsenal -- en route to the final.

Ousmane Dembele has been the standout with 33 goals in all competitions, ably assisted by fellow forwards Desire Doue, Bradley Barcola and January signing Khvicha Kvaratskhelia.

PREVIEW

Others like Achraf Hakimi, formerly of Inter and perhaps the world's best full-back, and Italy goalkeeper Gianluigi Donnarumma have also been superb for the French league and cup double winners.

"We know what kind of football we want to play and now we just need to go out and do it to our full potential," said their Spanish coach, who is looking to win his second Champions League title, a decade after leading Messi's Barcelona to glory in Berlin.

"It is always very difficult to get to the final of the Champions League. All players and coaches dream of playing in it but most don't get the chance."

"We want to be the first ones in Paris to win the Champions League and make history."

That, remarkably, would make them just the second French club to win the competition -- if they are looking for an omen then Marseille's 1993 triumph also came in Munich, across the city at the old Olympic Stadium, and against Inter's city rivals AC Milan.

Inter, meanwhile, are bidding to win a fourth European Cup to add to back-to-back triumphs under Helenio Herrera in the 1960s, and the 2010 victory against Bayern in Madrid, under Jose Mourinho.

Coach Simone Inzaghi was already in charge when the Nerazzurri got to the final two years ago and lost narrowly to City.

As many as eight of the team that started that night in Is-

tanbul could do so again here, where Inter have also already played this season.

Inzaghi's side beat Bayern in the quarter-finals before getting the better of Barcelona in the last four in one of the all-time great Champions League ties, especially the epic second leg in the rain at San Siro.

"To really make history we have to win on Saturday," said Inzaghi, whose likely starting line-up will feature three players aged 36 or over.

Inter will set up in a 3-5-2 formation that contrasts sharply with the 4-3-3 of PSG, and it will be fascinating to see how they respond to losing out to Napoli for the Serie A title on the last day of the season.

"We know that it will be difficult, we know that we're facing a super team just like Barcelona and Bayern Munich but they will come up against a team which has the same goal as PSG. All we can do is try put in a great performance in the final," he added.

