

ROYAL'S YASHASVI SURYAVANSHI

Fourteen-year-old wonder boy sets record, becomes youngest to score Indian Premier League's 2nd fastest ton in history



TEEN SENSATION: Rajasthan Royals' Vaibhav Suryavanshi celebrates his century during the Indian Premier League match against Gujarat Titans, in Jaipur, on Monday

PTI, JAIPUR: Fourteen-year-old boy wonder Vaibhav Suryavanshi walked into the collective consciousness of cricket fans by becoming the youngest ever to score a hundred in an IPL match where result became inconsequential in the wake of a batting carnage for the ages.

For the record, Royals kept their play-off qualification hopes alive with a walk-in-the-park eight-wicket victory over Gujarat Titans in a chase of 210 made easy by a chubby-cheeked prodigy from Bihar's Samastipur, who was born three years after the cash-rich league started.

His 35-ball century is now the second fastest in IPL and fastest ever for any Indian after Chris Gayle's 30-ball knock for RCB.

When other 14-year-olds across the country are busy completing middle-school assignments and being admonished by quietly sneaking in for a PlayStation session, the left-handed Suryavanshi, simply stood and delivered against Indian bowlers Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Siraj with a collective experience of 141 Tests between them.

Ishant had made his Test debut back in 2006 when Suryavanshi wasn't even an idea but the "Gen Alpha" kid (all those born be-

tween 2010-2024) made a mockery of everything thrown at him.

There were 11 sixes and seven fours in his 38-ball-101 that even made a regal Yashasvi Jaiswal (70 not out, 40 balls, 9x4s, 2x6s) look like a mere bystander.

Even with baby fat refusing to leave the contours of his cheeks, the stable core and holding his shape are things that stand out.

The basics built through those hours of toil in Patna, playing 600 balls a day from the age of 10 did show its results. The days of facing 16-17 year old net bowlers for whom his father Sanjiv Suryavanshi, would pack 10 extra tiffin boxes haven't gone waste.

The decision of the Suryavanshi family to put all their eggs in one basket and have no Plan B by selling farm land to fuel their son's cricketing ambitions will certainly become a part of cricketing folklores that will be spoken in years to come.

The bat speed was astonishing and the manner in which he picked up Sir-

aj over long-on and belted Ishant into the square leg stand was there to be seen.

Even Test spinner Washington Sundar scurried for cover and Karim Janat, the Afghan international was hit for 30 runs in an over including a disdainful flick. By the time he was yorked by Prasidh Krishna, none of the GT players had any energy left to celebrate.

Ravi Shastri said on air that RR assistant coach Sairaj Bahutule had told him about the little one's fondness for jalebis and possibly head coach Rahul Dravid won't mind a bit of indulgence.

When Shubman Gill scored 50-ball-84 and Jos Buttler smashed 26-ball-50 not out earlier, it seemed like a mayhem but once Suryavanshi started to send the balls into the orbit, no one knew that how he could be stopped.

"His hitting was tremendous," GT skipper Gill said. "Incredible, one of the best innings that I have seen. I just told him to keep going," was all Jaiswal, the megastar in-waiting could say.

SCOREBOARD

Gujarat Titans: Sai Sudharsan c Parag b Theekshana 39, *Shubman Gill c Parag b Theekshana 84, Jos Buttler not out 50, Washington Sundar c Hetmyer b Sharma 13, Rahul Tewatia lbw b Archer 9, Shikhar Dhawan not out 5. **Extras:** 9. **Total:** 209-4. **Fall of wickets:** 93-1, 167-2, 193-3, 202-4. **Bowling:** Jofra Archer 4-0-49-1, Maheesh Theekshana 4-0-35-2, Yuvraj Singh 3-0-38-0, Sandeep Sharma 4-0-33-1, *Riyon Parag 1-0-14-0, Wanindu Hasaranga 4-0-39-0. **Rajasthan Royals:** Yashasvi Jaiswal not out 70, Vaibhav Suryavanshi b Krishna 101, Nitish Rana lbw b Khan 4, *Riyon Parag not out 32. **Extras:** 5. **Total:** 212-2. **Fall of wickets:** 166-1, 171-2. **Bowling:** Mohammed Siraj 2-0-24-0, Ishant Sharma 2-0-36-0, Washington Sundar 1-5-0-34-0, Prasidh Krishna 4-0-47-1, Rashid Khan 4-0-24-1, Karim Janat 1-0-30-0, Sai Sudharsan 1-0-16-0.

Man-of-the-match: Vaibhav Suryavanshi

sportspopup

Bangladesh spinner Taijul's 5 wickets trigger Zimbabwe collapse in 2nd Test

CHATTOGRAM: Bangladesh's left-arm spinner Taijul Islam registered his 16th five-wicket haul as Zimbabwe slumped to 227-9 at the end of the first day of the second Test in Chattogram on Monday. Nick Welch and Sean Williams each scored fifties for the visitors but the day belonged to Bangladesh as they sought to level the two-match series after losing the opener. Zimbabwe got off to a decent start after winning the toss and opting to bat but lost both openers in quick succession. Debutant Tanzim Hasan Sakib made the first breakthrough, getting Brian Bennett caught behind off an outside edge. Brief scores: Zimbabwe: 227-9 in 90 overs (Sean Williams 67, Nick Welch 54; Taijul Islam 5-60, Nayeem Hasan 2-42).

Women's tri-series: Confident India look to keep winning run intact

COLOMBO: Their campaign off to a dominant start, a confident India will look to maintain momentum when they face South Africa in their second match of the women's tri-series, here, on Tuesday. The Indian team extended its winning streak in ODIs to seven matches with a comprehensive nine-wicket victory over hosts Sri Lanka in the tournament opener on Sunday. The 'Women in Blue' excelled across all three departments.

Man City beats Forest 2-0 to reach FA Cup final and keep trophy hopes alive

LONDON: Even Manchester City's worst season under Pep Guardiola could still end with a trophy. On the day it was officially deposed as Premier League champion, City reached the FA Cup final for the third year in a row by beating Nottingham Forest 2-0 at Wembley Stadium to maintain a chance of salvaging something from a dismal campaign. City scored early Sunday in each half as Rico Lewis put his team ahead in just the second minute and defender Josko Gvardiol doubled the lead in the 51st with a header from a corner. City will play Crystal Palace in the final on May 17.

Sudirman Cup final: India face uphill task against Indonesia in battle for survival

XIAMEN (China): Faced with a Herculean task to trump a formidable Indonesia and stay afloat in the competition, an under-strength India will need its struggling singles stars to deliver the goods in a must-win Group D contest at the BWF Sudirman Cup Finals here on Tuesday. India's campaign began on a disastrous start on Sunday with a 1-4 defeat to Denmark, a result that put their qualification for the knockout stage in serious jeopardy.

India bags 13 gold medals at South Asian Youth TT Championships

KATHMANDU: India bagged 13 gold and three silver in an impressive medal haul in the South Asian Youth Table Tennis Championships here. The qualification event for this year's Youth Asian Championships saw the Indian contingent dominate the competition across various categories on Sunday. The Indian teams grabbed three gold medals in the Under-19 girls, Under-15 boys, and Under-15 girls sections and made a clean sweep of all six golds in the U-19 and U-15 doubles, including the mixed doubles events.

Joshi in contention for spin coach's role

PTI, NEW DELHI: Former India left-arm spinner Sunil Joshi has thrown his hat in the ring for the post of spin bowling coach at BCCI's Centre of Excellence (COE) that was vacated by Sairaj Bahutule earlier this year.

The COE was earlier known as the National Cricket Academy when it was based out of the Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru. It remains in the city but is now operational from a new location after BCCI purchased land to build a more expansive facility.

Bahutule resigned to become an assistant coach in IPL franchise Rajasthan Royals.

AIFF asks Churchill Bros to return trophy; GFA for probe

PTI, NEW DELHI: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Monday asked Churchill Brothers to return the I-League trophy it presented to the club, even as Goa Football Association (GFA) questioned the rationale behind awarding the silverware despite a stay order from the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS).

On Sunday, hours after Switzerland-based CAS stayed AIFF's decision to declare Churchill Brothers as I-League champions and barred it from conducting any formal medal ceremony, the national federation awarded the winners trophy to the Goan club.

AIFF deputy Secretary General M Satyanarayan presented the trophy to Churchill Brothers players

and later claimed that the federation learnt about the CAS order only after the ceremony was over as its secretary was closed on Sunday.

But on Monday, the AIFF was forced to ask Churchill to return the trophy.

"On Monday, we have written to Churchill Brothers to return the I-League trophy," an AIFF source told PTI on condition of anonymity.

"We are bound to obey CAS order. Let the CAS decide on the matter and we will hand over the trophy after the decision."

Meanwhile, GFA President Caitano Fernandes on Monday wrote a letter to the AIFF Executive Committee members to hold an "urgent inquiry on the potential disregard of the CAS order."

"...the decision to proceed

with the presentation in apparent disregard of a CAS directive brings serious embarrassment to AIFF. Ignoring a CAS order would undoubtedly have severe consequences for the AIFF and the reputation of Indian football on the international stage," Fernandes wrote in the letter.

"Therefore, I implore the esteemed members of the Executive Committee to treat this matter with utmost seriousness it deserves. A comprehensive and impartial probe must be launched immediately to investigate...the rationale behind proceeding with the event."

He also claimed that he was not provided any com-

munication regarding the I-League trophy presentation after he was initially invited for the formal ceremony on Sunday. He said by doing so, the AIFF has shown "unacceptable level of mistreatment towards the GFA."

"On the evening of April 26th... I received an e-mail

from Satyanarayan inviting me in my capacity as GFA president and member of League Committee to attend the trophy presentation scheduled to take place in Goa on April 27th. The e-mail stated that the venue and specific schedule would be confirmed upon his arrival in Goa," he wrote.

Fernandes said he received no further communication regarding the trophy presentation and later came to know that the ceremony has already taken place "completely bypassing the involvement and presence of GFA."

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Mohamed Salah: Liverpool's Egyptian Pharaoh

The 32-year-old scored 28 goals, provided 18 assists so far as Reds equalled Manchester United's record of 20 English top-flight titles; Salah's tally of 185 goals in the top flight is the fifth highest in Premier League history and is in the top 10 for assists

AFP, LIVERPOOL: An Egyptian hero and living legend in Liverpool, Mohamed Salah has burnished his remarkable legacy at Anfield with one of the great all-time individual seasons to deliver the Premier League title.

The 32-year-old has scored 28 goals and provided 18 assists so far as Liverpool equalled Manchester United's record of 20 English top-flight titles on Sunday.

A third player of the year award from both his fellow players and football writers appears a formality, with Salah now firmly in the debate over who is the greatest player of the Premier League era.

His combined total of 46 goals and assists is a new Premier League record for a 38-game season and the all-time mark of 47 looks likely to fall before the season is out.

Salah's tally of 185 goals in the English top flight is the fifth highest in Premier League history and he is in

the top 10 for assists. The forward did not arrive at Anfield as a superstar when Liverpool paid Roma £34 million (\$45 million) for his services in 2017.

A pacy winger with promise, he had struggled for consistency and end product since making the move from his homeland to Swiss side Basel as a 19-year-old. Salah failed to make the grade in his first spell in the Premier League at Chelsea and the Blues discarded him after just 19 games in what proved to be a monumental mistake.

The forward spent loan spells at Fiorentina and Roma before he joined Roma on a permanent basis.

His performances there restored Salah's reputation

and tempted Liverpool into taking a punt on his potential, even if he was not Jürgen Klopp's first choice.

The German manager had wanted his compatriot Julian Brandt instead, but was convinced by the club's recruitment team and together they helped restore the Reds to the top of English and European

football.

Klopp did not take long to be convinced as Salah scored 44 times in a stunning debut season, leading Liverpool to the Champions League final and a top-four Premier League finish.

He was quickly christened as "The Egyptian King" on Merseyside and soon the trophies stacked up.

Salah left the 2018 Champions League final defeat to Real

Madrid in tears after being forced off by a shoulder injury in the first half, which also limited his impact for Egypt at the World Cup

just weeks later.

One year on, he scored in the Champions League final as Liverpool beat Tottenham 2-0 to deliver the first silverware of the Klopp era.

The club's first Premier League title for 30 years followed in 2020, with an FA Cup and two League Cups subsequently added to the trophy cabinet, plus another run to the Champions League final.

Salah was named in Time magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in 2019, described as an "iconic figure for Egyptians, Scousers and Muslims the world over".

Salah has used that profile to call for greater gender equality in the Arab world

and to appeal for humanitarian aid to be allowed into Gaza following Israeli air strikes in October 2023. However, he has mostly done his talking on the field. A fitness fanatic, Salah regularly posts images of his workouts on social media, which he credits for enabling him to remain among the world's elite despite his advancing years.

Klopp's emotional departure last year was seen by many as the end of an era for this Liverpool side.

Instead, in Arne Slot's first season, Salah has been the catalyst for an unexpected cruise to the Premier League title.

"It's not a coincidence because the first day I arrived over here, we did a fitness test and he was our fittest player," said Slot.

"So it tells you what his plans were for the season. It also tells you a lot about his personality."

ENGLISH PREMIER LEAGUE TABLE

TEAM	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	PTS
Liverpool	34	25	7	2	80	32	82 -- Champions
Arsenal	34	18	13	3	63	29	67
Newcastle	34	19	5	10	65	44	62
Man City	34	18	7	9	66	43	61
Chelsea	34	17	9	8	59	40	60
Nottm Forest	33	18	6	9	53	39	60
Aston Villa	34	16	9	9	54	49	57
Fulham	34	14	9	11	50	46	51
Brighton	34	13	12	9	56	55	51
Bournemouth	34	13	11	10	53	41	50
Brentford	33	13	7	13	56	50	46
Crystal Palace	34	11	12	11	43	47	45
Wolves	34	12	5	17	51	61	41
Man Utd	34	10	9	15	39	47	39
Everton	34	8	14	12	34	41	38
Tottenham	34	11	4	19	62	56	37
West Ham	34	9	9	16	39	58	36
Ipswich	34	4	9	21	33	74	21 -- Relegated
Leicester	34	4	6	24	27	76	18 -- Relegated
Southampton	34	2	5	27	25	80	11 -- Relegated

Note: Top five qualify for the 2025/26 Champions League; bottom three relegated to Championship