

SYED MUSHTAQ
ROUND-UP



Suryakumar Yadav was unbeaten on 94.

Suryakumar leads
Mumbai's charge

Surat: Mumbai captain Suryakumar Yadav blazed his way to an unbeaten 94 as Mumbai defeated Karnataka by seven wickets in a Group B Super League match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here on Monday to end the rival's winning spree. Mumbai were chasing a stiff 172-run target and Surya, who has been in great form, single-handedly guided the domestic giants to victory with an over to spare. Surya (94 not out off 53 balls, 11 fours, 4 sixes) walked in to bat after Mumbai were in a spot of bother at 44/2, losing openers Aditya Tare (12) and Prithvi Shaw (30) and still needing over 100 runs to win. The aggressive right-hander steadied the ship by stitching together a 46-run stand with Shreyas Iyer (14) for the third wicket. However, Karnataka pegged Mumbai back by removing Iyer in the 11th over. After Iyer departed, it was 'Surya show' at the C B Patel Ground as he toyed with the Karnataka bowlers, who wilted under his blistering attack. Surya 2.0 was on display as he had all shots in the book and smashed the ball around to guide his side home. This was perhaps one of the finest knocks in the national T20 championship. This was Karnataka's first defeat in the Super League stage, and Mumbai's win has opened up things in the group.

BRIEF SCORES: Karnataka 171/6 in 20 overs (Rohan Kadam 71, Devdutt Padikkal 57, Shardul Thakur 2/29) lost to Mumbai 174/3 in 19 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 94 not out, Prithvi Shaw 30, Shreyas Gopal 1/19) by seven wickets.

Haryana overhaul
inspid Baroda

Surat: In the second game, Haryana thrashed Baroda by six wickets and rode on fifties by Chaitanya Bishnoi (56) and Shivam Chauhan (50 not out) as they overhauled 139-run target with 15 balls to spare. Put into bat, barring veteran Yusuf Pathan (45 not out), no other Baroda batsman showed spine as Haryana restricted them to sub-par 138/5. In another game, Tamil Nadu beat Punjab by four wickets with spinners M Sai Kishore (3-10) and M Siddharth (3-9) spinning their web around the opposition batsmen. Punjab crawled to a below-par 94/8, courtesy Mayank Markande's unbeaten 33, but Tamil Nadu manage to chase the target despite losing six wickets in the process. In the final game of the day, Rajasthan beat Maharashtra by six wickets as they chased the 100-run target in 16.2 overs. Mahipal Lomror top scored with an unbeaten 35.

BRIEF SCORES: Baroda 138/5 (Yusuf Pathan 45 not out, Kedar Devdhar 25; Sumit Kumar 1-17; Yuzvendra Chahal 1-23) lost to Haryana 139/4 (Chaitanya Bishnoi 56, Shivam Chauhan 50 not out) by six wickets. **PTI**

Players come to blows in Nehru hockey final

Punjab Police and Punjab National Bank get involved in a brawl, prompting organisers to suspend them; HI action awaited

TUSHAR BHADURI
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

AN UNSEEMLY brawl between players spoiled the final of the 56th Nehru Senior Hockey Tournament between Punjab Police and Punjab National Bank on Monday. Trouble erupted towards the end of the third period with the teams locked 3-3. The trigger was a tackle against a PNB forward. This incident resulted in tempers getting frayed and players chasing each other around the turf wielding their sticks as lathis.

"It all started with a tackle that PNB players took exception to and there was a scuffle which lasted 5-7 minutes," an eyewitness said.

Eventually, the match restarted after three Punjab Police players – Hardeep Singh, Jagmeet Singh and Kanwarjeet Singh – and two from PNB – Sukhjeet Singh and Sumit Toppo – were shown red cards.

Punjab Police manager Balwant Singh was also given marching orders. Toppo was himself badly injured in the head after being hit with a hockey stick.

PNB capitalised on their numerical advantage in the final quarter, scoring three goals in eight minutes to secure a 6-3 victory and a cash prize of Rs two lakh.

The losing finalists got half that amount. Abhishek scored a hat-trick for the winners.

One of the umpires for the game, Raghu Prasad, is one of the top match officials of the International Hockey Federation (FIH).

He took charge of matches at last year's Hockey World Cup in Bhubaneswar and will do so at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as well.

Punjab Police had in their ranks former India internationals Gurbaj Singh and Sarvanjit Singh.

According to the eyewitness, they were pacifying the players and trying to help the umpires bring the situation under control.

"The players got hyper in the match and



Players fought with sticks on the turf for a while before officials could bring the situation under control. *Stick2hockey.com*

there was a fight between the players of the two teams. Players from both teams were at fault as they lost their temper. Such incidents bring disrepute to the sport. We should make sure that this issue does not become big news," Gurbaj told *The Indian Express*.

A PNB player, speaking on condition of anonymity, gave further details.

"It was when a PNB player was approaching the Punjab Police penalty area that the umpire declared a foul. Punjab Police players objected and the PNB player pushed Punjab Police defenders after which the latter started the fight. One of the Punjab

Police players hit a PNB counterpart on the head with a hockey stick and the player sat down holding his head. Later also, Punjab Police players on the bench and officials entered the field, running after PNB players and thrashing them," he said.

A few players were also taken to hospital. Repeated attempts to contact Tournament Director Mahesh Kumar were futile.

Both teams have been suspended from the tournament – Punjab Police for four years and PNB for two.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society (JNHTS) will also write

to the concerned authorities in the two organisations, informing them of the actions of their teams, the suspension from participation, and requesting suitable action at their end against the errant players.

Hockey India is also expected to take a hard stand on the matter. "We had a meeting of captains and coaches after the final and they will submit their report to Hockey India," Gurbaj said.

Indian Olympic Association president Narinder Batra, who is also the FIH chief and a former head of Hockey India, called for strict action against the offenders.

"Such irresponsible teams and their careless and uncensored managements, such players and weak and spineless organising committees spoil the name of the game and bring bad reputation to the sport. I urge Hockey India to take maximum strict action," he said.

Now a lot will depend on the report the JNHTS sends to the governing body of the sports in the country. "We are waiting for the official report from the tournament officials and on its basis Hockey India will take necessary action," HI CEO Elena Norman said.

Ghosal loses titanic battle against 'Beast'

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

SAURAV GHOSAL woke up Monday with ringing applause and lingering regret still swirling in his head. Playing the last match of his 2019 season – his 15th year after winning the British Juniors crown in 2004 which promised dizzy days ahead – Ghosal was sobering from the highs of having played a spell-binding 85-minute classic against World No. 2 Mohamed ElShorbagy which was the talk of the squash town. And then, losing the titanic battle, 11-5, 9-11, 9-11, 12-10, 10-12, on the softest of backhand volley drops played at 10-9 match-ball in the fifth – which the 33-year-old says will cause him a lot of remorse in the coming days.

ElShorbagy's return – a backhand flick struck an agonising centimeter or two above the tin. "Had I not played that shot, or not hit it softer and struck it harder instead, he'd have hit into the tin, and maybe we would be talking about the biggest win of my career today!" Ghosal said. An upset over the Egyptian dubbed 'the Beast' would've validated Ghosal's hardwork put in over this summer. "It would've been huge," he says, pipping up though at all the praise his fighting game has received over the weekend, including his opponent chiming in, "It's the best match I've played against him in our 12 years. I'm really happy I was part of something special."

Those present at the Weybridge and watching it on the live-stream were on the edge of the seat as the Indian World No 11, mixed the delectable with the dazzling, and matched his celebrated Egyptian opponent known for his unflinching fierce game, shot for shot. In the midst of the brutal rallies, Ghosal in fact impressed with a backhand improvisation where he slid the racquet



Ghosal lost to World No.2 Mohamed ElShorbagy 11-5, 9-11, 9-11, 12-10, 10-12.

face dramatically under the dipping ball for the lowest of popping nicks, and left ElShorbagy stranded, finishing with a glorious straight back in the right corner.

Now the former No 1, ElShorbagy can show-off on court. He has a short trickle boast from the back that never stops being cute and an assured crowd-pleaser: between the legs whizzer. But it was Ghosal who in between the 'his backhand to my backhand' never-ending slugfests, played the subtle angles that quickly made it to youtube's gape gallery.

Ghosal had been livid about a couple of 'No Lets' at the end of the titanic battle where he won an "unappetizing" first game strewn with the Egyptian's errors, braved through the next two when rallies got brutal and he was pipped 11-9, found second wind in the fourth, playing his improvisations, and then in the fifth, let fame that comes with beating

the Top 5, pass him by. He didn't say much in the immediate aftermath.

"But when I saw him later, I told him, you better freaking win this tournament after beating me," he laughs. To add to his Monday wretchedness, Ghosal mock-cribs, ElShorbagy went onto lose the final in 90 minutes, and not even hand him closure.

He did blame "earlier tough rounds" that finished him, for the loss though.

The two go back a long way – including training stints at David Palmer's. Ghosal remembers a long time back in a Chennai PSA when he beat a young, upcoming ElShorbagy four years his junior. And then the Egyptian's career took off and he never lost to the Indian again (it's 0-8 last 8 times) including a 3-0 win at the World Championships in Qatar last week, where the Indian had sensed he was moving and hitting well. But still, it was

the sort of calm before a storm, where Saurav Ghosal doesn't quite remember what his nondescript breakfast was that morning.

The Beast from Alexandria is a relentless fighter ("The thought of winning never crossed my mind, because Mo is the last person you entertain such thoughts against"). Ghosal has learnt to tiptoe around him – i.e. not letting any ball sit up, for Mo to destroy, for ElShorbagy smother, not for him the touch-play. His achievements are under-rated but Ghosal knows how unforgiving he can get on court.

"What you see is what you get. Some players ply it very dirty on court, but act like saints, not him. He'll be honest about being selfish in training though he'll use all the tricks on court. But if he's playing most people, I'd be in his corner. He's a really good guy deep down," Ghosal says. The respect is mutually shared, and ElShorbagy tends to struggle when playing Ghosal, like he does against friends.

Ghosal would match him though on Friday – in not letting go. "Some rallies were so fierce and long in second and third, we were both dead on the glass walls," Ghosal recalls. Like fish sticking their snouts on an aquarium, the two would return for the 4th game after trading punishing rallies, literally lifting the ball to catch breath.

Ghosal was happy he simply could raise his game level to what the Egyptian was operating at. "At one point of tiredness, you just start enjoying the pain of brutal rallies. You can't play a match like that whining about how you're struggling and blah blah. I thought, let me push little and then hard and see how much I can trouble him," Ghosal said. The crowd would get behind him too. "Most were sad for me when I lost," he said gleefully. He had modest takeaways on the Monday after: "If I could go toe to toe with ElShorbagy, I surely can push the others next season."

Bailey to become Aussie selector while still playing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE, NOVEMBER 25

FORMER LIMITED-OVERS captain George Bailey is set to be Australia's new selector after he was picked to be a part of the national selection panel along side coach Justin Langer and chairman Trevor Hohns.

Bailey, 37, is still an active cricketer and plies his trade in the Big Bash League for Hobart Hurricanes and in the Sheffield Shield for Tasmania. According to a report in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, Bailey will not be the first active cricketer to be a national selector. In the past Don Bradman and Michael Clarke have enjoyed the post while still being the captain of the national team. Bailey, who has represented Australia in five Tests, 90 ODIs and 30 T20s, is yet to call it quits from the game.

Asked about the necessity of a new selector, Cricket Australia head of national teams Ben Oliver said he was "really pleased with the people who put their hat in the ring for that role". "There will be some people who are really disappointed no doubt but they should all take great encouragement and they all have a lot to offer," he said.

Although it is believed that CA is showing keen interest in Bailey because of his vast knowledge of the white-ball formats as a player, especially with next year's Twenty20 World Cup at home round the corner, Oliver said the new selector would also be involved in selecting squads for Test matches.

"The panel, and all three, will be responsible for all Australian men's teams," Oliver said. "What we've tried to achieve in this recruitment process is adding in some complementary skills to support Trevor and Justin and one of those is a consideration around short-format cricket."

[SPORTS BAR]

Anand fifth, Carlsen set to win chess tourney

Viswanathan Anand suffered two defeats but as many wins kept him in the joint fifth place at the Tata Steel Rapid and Blitz tournament, a part of the Grand Chess Tour. Reigning world champion Magnus Carlsen continued his run as he took his lead to an almost unassailable five points. The Norwegian is virtually assured of the title despite a whole day and many games to come. Anand now has 4.5 points out of a possible nine and remains in contention for a berth in the Grand Finale of this tournament, to be held in London in December. With nine games on Tuesday still to come, Carlsen has a five-point lead with 21.5 points to his credit out of a possible 27 points.

Sangram, Varman win double trap nationals

Haryana's Sangram Dahiya and Madhya Pradesh's Varsha Varman won the men's and women's double trap titles respectively at the 63rd National Shotgun Shooting Championship here on Monday. Sangram shot 142 out of 150 targets to leave behind former world champion Ankur Mittal of ONGC, who managed 137 hits over the five rounds of 30 targets each. Varsha, in the women's category of 120 targets each, had 97 to her name to clinch the gold ahead of state-mate Manisha Keer, who had 93 hits.



Brescia president Massimo Cellino and striker Mario Balotelli.

'He's black, what can I say': Club prez on Balotelli

Mario Balotelli was the subject of a racist remark by the president of his club on Monday in the latest discriminatory incident of a Serie A season marred by derogatory chants and other offensive behavior. Balotelli has struggled since returning to the Italian league with Brescia, his hometown club, and was dropped from the weekend's match following a dispute with coach Fabio Grosso. Asked about Balotelli on Monday, Brescia president Massimo Cellino said: "He's black, what can I say, he's working on clearing himself but he's having a lot of difficulty." Brescia later attempted to downplay Cellino's comment, saying in a statement that it was merely "a quip" that was "clearly misunderstood." The club added that Cellino was "attempting to downplay the excessive media coverage by protecting (Balotelli)." Balotelli experienced racism at the beginning of his career in Italy, where he rose to prominence with Inter Milan, and he was also the target of racist chants this month during a match at Hellas Verona.

Austrian Oly champ denies sexual assault

Two-time Olympic judo champion Peter Seisenbacher of Austria has denied the alleged sexual assault of two young girls he was coaching in the early 2000s. At the start of his trial on Monday, Seisenbacher said: "I am not guilty." According to state prosecutors, the alleged abuse took place in Vienna between 1999 and 2004. The women filed charges against their former coach in 2013. "Nothing has happened. Nobody has been attacked," Seisenbacher's attorney, Bernhard Lehofer, said.

28 medals for India at U-15 Asian wrestling

Sagar Jaglan erased a 1-6 deficit to grab a gold in the freestyle 68kg category as India concluded its campaign at the Under-15 Asian Wrestling Championships with 28 medals, including 13 gold, on Sunday. Led by 2019 Cadet World Championships bronze medalist Deepak Chahal, the freestyle grapplers won four gold medals on the final day. Chahal won the gold in 75kg, while Haryana's Vishal (62kg), Sagar Jaglan (68kg), and Madhya Pradesh's Jatin (85kg) were the others who finished on the top podium. India finished on top of the team rankings in freestyle for the first time with 225 points as all 10 wrestlers finished on the podium. Kazakhstan finished second while Japan was third.



Saina pulls out of Syed Modi International

Saina Nehwal pulled out at the last moment to take some sheen off the Syed Modi International, beginning here on Tuesday, when the in-form Lakshya Sen will seek a third BWF World Tour title. Three-time former champion Saina, who has been battling illness and injuries, is going through a bad patch, having lost six times in the first round this season. The 29-year-old from Hyderabad has already pulled out of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) to prepare for the next season. World champion PV Sindhu has chosen to give the tournament a miss. The 18-year-old Lakshya, on the other hand, will look to grab his maiden Super 300 crown this week following his title triumphs at two Super 100 events – Dutch and SaarLorLux Open – this year.