

Fiery Mukesh is Bengal's hero

The medium-pacer's six-for sends Karnataka to its doom in quick time

RANJI TROPHY

Y.B. SARANGI
KOLKATA
Mukesh Kumar's stupendous six-wicket haul propelled Bengal to a 174-run upset win over Mushtaq Ali Trophy and Vijay Hazare Trophy champion Karnataka on the fourth day of the Ranji Trophy semifinal at the Eden Gardens here on Tuesday.

Mukesh's career-best six for 61, his second six-wicket performance this season, fast-tracked Bengal's progress to its 14th final, and the first after 2006-07, as a below-par Karnataka was dismissed for 177.

Needing 254 runs to win, Karnataka — which resumed at 98 for three — surrendered meekly for the second time for a sub-200 total. It managed only 79 off 17.3 overs in less than two hours of play.

While Bengal's first innings bowling hero Ishan Porel kept one end tight, Mukesh wreaked havoc by hitting the right channel and claiming five for 28 runs in an unbroken spell of nine overs.

Early strike

Mukesh began with a bang when an unsure Manish Pandey feathered to wicketkeeper Shreevats Gowami in the third over of the morning.

In his next over, the medium-pacer struck in back-to-



Mission accomplished: The Bengal cricketers are a joyous bunch after posting a convincing win over Karnataka in the semifinal on Tuesday. •PTI

back deliveries. K.V. Siddharth's outside edge went to the first slip and S. Sharath was leg-before from superb length. The writing was on the wall for the visitors.

A determined Devdutt Padikkal, starting the day on 50, added 12 more before becoming Mukesh's victim.

A different angle from round the wicket tricked the southpaw into edging to the keeper.

After Porel removed Gowtham, Mukesh dismissed Ronit More to claim his fifth wicket of the day and sixth of the innings.

It was his fourth five-for.

Akash then bowled a hard-hitting Abhimanyu Mithun to trigger celebrations on the ground and in the stands.

A joyous Bengal side thanked thousands of fans for their whole-hearted support over four days.

"Beating a team like Karnataka at home will boost us. We will carry forward this confidence to the final," said Bengal captain Abhimanyu Easwaran.

The scores: Bengal — 1st innings: 312.

Karnataka — 1st innings: 122.

Bengal — 2nd innings: 161.

Karnataka — 2nd innings: K.L. Rahul lbw b Porel 0, R. Samarth lbw b Akash 27, Devdutt Padik-

kal c Goswami b Mukesh 62, Karun Nair lbw b Mukesh 6, Manish Pandey c Goswami b Mukesh 12, K.V. Siddharth c Abhimanyu b Mukesh 0, S. Sharath lbw b Mukesh 0, K. Gowtham c sub b Porel 22, Abhimanyu Mithun b Akash 38, Ronit More c Abhimanyu b Mukesh 4, Prasad Krishna (not out) 2; Extras (b-2, lb-2): 4; Total (in 55.3 overs): 177.

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-57, 3-76, 4-99, 5-103, 6-103, 7-118, 8-142, 9-147.

Bengal bowling: Porel 19-5-58-2, Mukesh 21-5-61-6, Akash 11.3-1-44-2, Nandi 4-0-10-0.

Man-of-the-match: Anustup Majumdar.

Bengal won by 174 runs to enter the final

Gujarat has a job on hand

Vasavada notches up his third hundred of the season

AMOL KARHADKAR
RAJKOT

Arpit Vasavada has trained with and lived in the same locality as Cheteshwar Pujara. On Tuesday, the left-handed Vasavada did his more famous mate proud by bailing Saurashtra out of trouble and virtually sealing a berth in the Ranji Trophy final for the second time in succession.

Thanks to Vasavada's third hundred this season (139, 230b, 16x4, 1x6) — a knock he later termed as "the most important" of his career — Saurashtra extended its second innings into the last hour of the fourth day and set Gujarat a daunting target of 327.

Early strike

Captain Jaydev Unadkat then dismissed opener Priyank Panchal for a duck to leave Gujarat at seven for one at stumps on the penultimate day at the SCA stadium.

Having staged Saurashtra's mini-recovery after taking guard at 15 for five on the third evening along with Chetan Sakariya (45, 118b, 6x4), Vasavada knew his job was far from over.

Sakariya continued to bat effortlessly to groom senior

pro Vasavada in confidence. Even after Sakariya sacrificed his wicket after a misunderstanding while taking a run. Vasavada who was on 49 then didn't lose his composure.

Jani's dream run

With Chirag Jani (51, 143b, 6x4, 1x6) continuing his dream run, Vasavada ensured that the duo kept the scoreboard ticking to take the game away from Gujarat. By the time Jani perished to Chintan Gaja off the second new ball, Vasavada had notched up his hundred and nearly taken Saurashtra to safety. His 434-minute vigil was finally over when he perished to Arzan Nagwaswalla's short-ball ploy as Saurashtra's innings came to an end.

Butter fingers

Gujarat, though, had themselves to blame. The pacers' short-ball ploy came too late and butter fingers didn't help their cause.

Rujul Bhatt spilling an edge at slip off Sakariya on the third evening turned out to be the costliest. Sakariya and Vasavada added 90 runs.

Gujarat dropped two more catches on Tuesday.

While Priyank Panchal put down a sharp chance at gully off Mankad's edge to deprive Roosh Kalaria a wicket, Axar dropped a regulation catch at square-leg off Nagwaswalla to give Dharmendrasinh Jadeja a reprieve.

The scores:

Saurashtra — 1st innings: 304.

Gujarat — 1st innings: 252.

Saurashtra — 2nd innings: Harvik Desai c Gohel b Gaja 0, Kishan Parmar c Raval b Gaja 0, Avi Barot c Gandhi b Gaja 1, Vishwaraj Jadeja b Gaja 6, Chetan Sakariya run out 45, Sheldon Jackson c Bhatt b Gaja 0, Arpit Vasavada c Gandhi b Vasavada 139, Chirag Jani c Gohel b Gaja 51, Prerak Mankad c Raval b Gaja 1, Dharmendrasinh Jadeja c Raval b Nagwaswalla 21, Jaydev Unadkat (not out) 0; Extras (lb-7, w-3); Total (in 98.4 overs): 274.

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-1, 3-4, 4-15, 5-15, 6-105, 7-214, 8-222, 9-263.

Gujarat bowling: Kalaria 26-11-36-0, Gaja 23-6-71-7, Nagwaswalla 19-4-3-75-2, Bhatt 7-0-24-0, Axar 23-3-61-0.

Gujarat — 2nd innings: Samit Gohel (batting) 5, Priyank Panchal c Dharmendrasinh b Unadkat 0, Bhargav Merai (batting) 1; Extras (w-1); Total (for one wkt. in 9 overs): 7.

Fall of wicket: 1-1.

Saurashtra bowling: Unadkat 5-3-6-1, Sakariya 3-2-1-0, Dharmendrasinh 1-1-0-0.



Holding fort: Arpit Vasavada pulled Saurashtra out of trouble with a vital knock. •VIJAY SONEJI

TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Ten 1 (SD & HD), 6 a.m.
Ranji Trophy: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & Star Sports 3, 9.15 a.m.
South Africa vs Australia: 2nd ODI, Sony Six (SD & HD), 4.30 p.m.
Sri Lanka vs West Indies: 1st T20I, Sony ESPN (SD & HD), 6.45 p.m.
FA Cup: Sony Ten 1, Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 1 a.m. (Thursday).

Arjun enters second round

SPORTS BUREAU
FARO (PORTUGAL)
Arjun Kadhe defeated Luis Faria of Portugal 2-6, 6-1, 6-0 in the first round of the \$15,000 ITF men's Futures tennis here on Tuesday.
The results:
\$15,000 ITF men, Monastir, Tunisia: First round: Baptiste Crepatte (Fra) bt Adil Kalyanpur 6-0, 7-5. **Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Theo Ambage & Maxence Broville (Fra) bt Aditya Vardhan Duddupudi & Nitin Gunduboina 6-0, 6-1.
\$15,000 ITF men, Faro, Portugal: First round: Arjun Kadhe bt Luis Faria (Por) 2-6, 6-1, 6-0.
\$15,000 ITF women, Cairo: **Doubles (pre-quarterfinals):** Izabela Gabriela Novac (Rou) & Saumya Vig bt Hala Fouad & Nada Fouad (Egy) 7-6(3), 3-6, [12-10].

Indian seniors' tennis team announced

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI
The All India Tennis Association (AITA) has selected the Indian teams in the over-50 to 60 age groups for the World team championship to be staged in Boca Raton, Florida, US, from April 26 to May 2.
The players have been selected on the basis of their international ranking, mostly in singles, with the odd exception.
The proficient Nagaraj Revanasiddaihi, who figures among the top four in the country in the over-55 age group, was a notable omission.
The team:
Over-50: Gurdarshan Singh Ramana, Tikam Singh Panwar, Tuleswar Singh Thongbam, K.V. Narayana Murthy
Over-55: Pawan Jain, Chandra Bhusan, Puneet Kumar Gupta, Arun Aggarwal.
Over-60: Mayur Vasant Manek, Ajeet Bhardwaj, Rakesh Kohli, Bhag Nand Singh Negi.

Manpreet, Rani in race for HI awards

LUTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI
Harmanpreet Singh, Mandeep Singh, captain Manpreet Singh and Surender Kumar would be vying for boasting rights as the best Indian hockey player for the year 2019 and a purse of ₹ 25 lakh at the 3rd Hockey India awards to be held here on Sunday.
The nominations for the annual awards were announced on Tuesday. While the men would be competing for the Dhruv Batra Player of the Year (male), among the women, Deep Grace Ekka, drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur, captain Rani and goalkeeper Savita Punia have been nominated for the Player of the Year award.
The awards, for excellence in 2019 and overall contribution to the game,

have a total prize money worth ₹ 1.30 crores and a trophy in each section.
The Major Dhyan Chand Lifetime Achievement Award carries a cash prize of ₹ 30 lakh while the Jugraj Singh Upcoming Player of the Year (Men) and Asunta Lakra Upcoming Player of the Year (Women) would get cash prizes of ₹ 10 lakh each.
Individual awards in each department — best forward, midfielder, defender and goalkeeper — carry a cash prizes of ₹ 5 lakh each.
The biggest of them would be the Lifetime Achievement award, to be announced on the day of the event, carrying a prize purse of ₹ 30 lakh and trophy.
The nominees: Player of the Year (male): Harmanpreet Singh, Mandeep Singh, Manpreet Singh, Surender Kumar.

Player of the Year (female): Deep Grace Ekka, Gurjit Kaur, Rani Rampal, Savita Punia.
Upcoming Player of the Year (Under-21 male): Dilpreet Singh, Gursahibjit Singh, Mandeep Mor, Vivek Sagar Prasad.
Upcoming Player of the Year (Under-21 female): Lalremsiami, Salima Tete, Sharmila Devi.
Forward of the Year: Lalit Upadhyay, Mandeep Singh, Navneet Kaur, Rani Rampal.
Midfielder of the Year: Manpreet Singh, Monika, Neha Goyal, Vivek Sagar Prasad.
Defender of the Year: Deep Grace Ekka, Harmanpreet Singh, Surender Kumar, Varun Kumar.
Goalkeeper of the Year: Krishan Pathak, PR Sreejesh, Rajani Etimarpu, Savita Punia.
Jhman Lal Sharma Award for Invaluable Contribution: TBA.
President's Award for Outstanding Achievement: TBA.
Lifetime Achievement Award: TBA.

Gritty Gokulam shares honours with EB

Down to 10 in the second half, the hosts rise to the occasion

I-LEAGUE

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
KOZHIKODE
They were reduced to 10 for nearly half the match, but the Gokulam Kerala men were still able to salvage a point from East Bengal on a warm Tuesday night at the Corporation Stadium. The exciting I-League encounter ended in a 1-1 draw.
Gokulam wasted no time in launching relentless attacks in the rival half. With Marcus Joseph and Henry Kisekka tirelessly sprinting into the East Bengal area, a goal didn't seem too far away. And it came in the eighth minute.
K.P. Rahul, the under-22 player who started for the first time, deserved a lot of credit for the goal. He made a splendid run down the left and duped the East Bengal defence before passing the ball to his captain. Joseph, from the edge of the box, decided against cutting in and drove the ball firmly into the far post, beating goalkeeper K. Mirshad.
Fine save
Two minutes later, Mirshad came up with a fine save to stop from Joseph scoring again. Kisekka could not take advantage of the deflection either, much to the relief of the East Bengal camp.
Striking back
Before long, the Kolkata giant started to retaliate. In the 23rd minute, a tackle inside the box by Gokulam's Hui-



Aerial duel: The East Bengal and Gokulam Kerala players battle it out in their I-League match. •K. RAGESH

drom Nocha Singh, against Juan Mera Gonzalez, was deemed bad enough for a penalty. From the spot, Victor Perez Alonso made no mistake, making it 1-1.

There was more action on either side of the ground, but there was no change in the scoreline at half-time.

Gokulam had a setback shortly after resumption. In the 49th minute, Nocha was sent off. In an action replay, he was penalised for a tackle on Gonzalez.

The number disadvantage — 10 against 11 — didn't stop the hosts from going for a second goal. It never came, though the team and its passionate fans thought it did. The injury-time strike from Lalomawia was ruled off-side.

The results:
At Kozhikode: Gokulam Kerala 1 (Marcus Joseph 8) drew with East Bengal 1 (Victor Perez Alonso 23-pen).

At Mumbai: Indian Arrows 1 (M. Givson Singh 93-pen) drew with Punjab FC 1 (Sanju Pradhan 6).

Saha in for final

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Test wicketkeeper-batsman Wriddhiman Saha on Tuesday was named in a 16-member Bengal squad for the Ranji Trophy final to be played from March 9.
Opener Koushik Ghosh, who picked up an injury, and young pacer Golam Mostafa have been left out. Mohammed Shami does not feature in the team.
The squad: Abhimanyu Easwaran (capt.), Manoj Tiwary, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Anustup Majumdar, Shreevats Goswami (wk), Sudip Chatterjee, Abhishek Raman, Arnab Nandi, Shahbaz Ahmed, Ishan Porel, Mukesh Kumar, Akash Deep, Shreyan Chakraborty, Nilkantha Das, Agniv Pan (wk) and Sudip Gharami.

Gaurav does it for Sahgal

NEW DELHI: Gaurav Sahgal scored five goals as Sahgal Stud-Sona registered a 7 goals to 2-1/2 victory over Artillery in a league match of the Royalkoas General Sparrow Centenary Polo Cup at the Army Equestrian Centre, Delhi Cantonment, on Tuesday.

In another match, Army Service Corps (ASC) beat Remount and Veterinary Corps 5-3.

The results (league):
Sahgal Stud-Sona 7 (Gaurav Sahgal 5, Mahesh Sharma 2) bt Artillery 2 1/2 (Karamat Ali, handicap 1 1/2).
Army Service Corps 5 (Anant Rajpurohit 2, GS Pandher, Naveen Singh, Ravinder Mang) bt Remount and Veterinary Corps 3 (Vijay Singh, D. Santosh, Angad Singh Sandhu).

THE HINDU GROUP

LOVE LETTERS WILL NEVER GO OUT OF FASHION.

The year is 2020, but affectionate words are still very much in demand. This International Women's Day, show your love and gratitude by writing a few deserving lines for the wonderful women in your life. The best of the entries will receive memorable goodies from us. Mail your good words to hello@thehindu.co.in

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