

# ‘Very special’ Parag powers Rajasthan to IPL win over Delhi

Riyan Parag’s blistering knock leads Rajasthan to a thrilling 12-run win

● **Rajasthan Royals post 185-5 with Parag’s explosive 84\* off 45 balls**

● **Ravichandran Ashwin’s crucial partnership with Parag helps stabilize Rajasthan’s innings**

● **Delhi’s chase falls short despite Warner’s 49; Stubbs’ late blitz**

AFP | New Delhi

Riyan Parag’s unbeaten 45-ball 84 propelled Rajasthan Royals to 185-5 and sealed a 12-run win over the Delhi Capitals in IPL on Thursday. Rishabh Pant-led Delhi won the toss and chose to field first and maintained a stranglehold over the game until the second half of the Royals’ innings. Rajasthan lost both their explosive openers Yashasvi Jaiswal (five) and Jos Buttler (11) early and even batting mainstay, captain Sanju Samson, failed to



Riyan Parag of Rajasthan Royals plays a shot convert his start and fell for 15. With the team reeling at 36-3

## Scorecard

**Rajasthan Royals** 185 for 5 (Parag 84, Ashwin 29, Axar 1-21, Khaleel 1-24) beat **Delhi Capitals** 173 for 5 (Warner 49, Stubbs 44\*, Chahal 2-19, Burger 2-29) by 12 runs

all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin, who built a crucial 54-run partnership with Parag. Ashwin scored 29 off 19 balls and took the team to 90 before he was dismissed in the 14th over by India teammate Axar Patel. Parag, who has been criticised in previous IPL seasons for his rash shot selection, kept the scoreboard ticking until after the 17th over. The 22-year-old put together another key partnership with Indian wicketkeeper Dhruv Jurel (20). Parag, who reached his 50 off 34 balls, cracked 25 runs with three fours and two sixes off the final over bowled by South African paceman Anrich Nortje. He was ably supported by West Indian Shimron Hetmyer, who hit an unbeaten seven-ball 14 that propelled the team to an impressive 185-5. Samson praised player of the

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SANJU SAMSON

match Parag. “Wherever I go, people ask me about him. There is something very special he can give to Indian cricket,” he said. Patel was the standout bowler for Delhi and finished with 1-21 in his four over spell. Delhi started their chase well with Australian openers Mitchell Marsh and veteran David Warner. Marsh was removed after a 12-ball 23 in the fourth over by South African quick Nandre Burger, who also removed Ricky Bhui (0) in the same over. But that didn’t stop Warner, who took the team to 59-2 at the end of the powerplay. He was removed in the 12th over after a well compiled 34-ball 49, falling to young India fast bowler Avesh Khan. Delhi subsequently fell behind the run rate before a late innings



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counterattack by South African Tristan Stubbs who finished with an unbeaten 23-ball 44. Avesh bowled a tight last over to seal a 12-run victory. Leg spinner Yuzvendra Chahal finished his three overs with 2-19 while Burger had 2-29. Losing captain Pant said that he was “definitely disappointed”. Pant, who hopes to make a comeback to the Indian team after his long injury layoff ahead of the T20 World Cup this summer, made 28 off 26 balls. “The best thing to do from here is to learn from it,” he added.

## ‘Probably impossible’ Alonso will be Bayern’s next coach, says Hoeness

AFP | Barcelona

Honorary Bayern Munich president Uli Hoeness admitted yesterday bringing in-demand manager Xabi Alonso to the club was “probably impossible.” The Bayer Leverkusen coach, who spent three years in Munich as a player, is Bayern’s number one target to replace Thomas Tuchel who will leave his post in the summer. Alonso’s Leverkusen are 10 points clear atop the Bundesliga table with eight matches left and on course for a first-ever league title. Still unbeaten this season, Leverkusen are also in the semi-finals of the German Cup and the last eight of the Europa League, having won 34 and drawn four of 38 games this season. Speaking with Bavarian television, Hoeness confirmed Bay-



Bayer Leverkusen’s head coach Xabi Alonso reacts after a match (file photo) ern wanted Alonso but predicted he would stay at Leverkusen beyond the season. “We’ll have to see if we can do it this year. It will be difficult, if not probably impossible,” he said. The Bayern powerbroker, who grew the club into a global

“(Alonso) is more inclined to stay at Bayer Leverkusen in view of their current successes, because he would not want to leave them behind. Let’s say if he had two or three more years of success, it would probably be easier to bring him out of there

Bayern Munich President Uli Hoeness

“Let’s say if he had two or three more years of success, it would probably be easier to bring him out of there.” Alonso has been linked to Bayern as well as Real Madrid and Liverpool, where he also spent time as a player.

## Pochettino taken aback by Chilwell’s starts for England after injury



England defender Ben Chilwell (L) in action against Brazil midfielder Raphinha (R) (file photo)

AFP | London

Chelsea manager Mauricio Pochettino said yesterday he was surprised Ben Chilwell started two games for England during the international break after the defender only recently returned from a knee injury. Chilwell last started for Chelsea on March 2 against Brentford and has played just a few minutes for the London club since then, as a late substitute in the FA Cup against Leicester. Nevertheless, the 27-year-old featured for the whole of England’s 2-2 draw with Belgium at Wembley on Tuesday, three days after spending 67 minutes on the field in a defeat by Brazil. Chelsea currently have nine

players ruled out of Saturday’s Premier League match with Burnley at Stamford Bridge, with several others to be assessed following international duty, including Chilwell -- who suffered a blow to his knee against Belgium. “He didn’t play after Brentford, then he played only a few minutes against Leicester,” said Pochettino. “(Then) he started two games (for England). “It’s a surprise for us. It’s bad luck because he got a dead leg in the last moment against Belgium. Now we need to assess if he can be available.” Enzo Fernandez, who played twice for Argentina in the United States during the break, will also have his fitness monitored ahead of this weekend’s match.

## Crawley says England won’t turn backs on ‘Bazball’ despite India loss

AFP | London

Zak Crawley has insisted England have no intention of retreating into a “negative” approach after their recent 4-1 Test series loss in India but accepted they must “pick the right moments” to absorb pressure. England lost their first series under the red-ball leadership



Zak Crawley duo of captain Ben Stokes and coach Brendon McCullum in convincing fashion earlier this

month after winning the first Test in Hyderabad. That reverse sparked a widespread debate over the merits of England’s aggressive ‘Bazball’ style following several batting collapses, with even former New Zealand captain ‘Baz’ McCullum saying the team would have to “refine” their style. “We always talk about ab-

sorbing pressure and putting pressure back on,” 26-year-old opening batsman Crawley said yesterday. “The last couple of years we’ve done the putting pressure back on pretty well and we’ve spoken about maybe picking those moments to absorb at the right times as well. We can certainly refine that.”