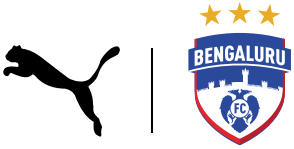
Louder than Ever



Louder Than Ever

Every hour, 51 FIRs are lodged for cases of crime against women in India. According to a survey, nearly one-third of women aged 15-49 in India have experienced violence of some form. A UN Women supported survey showed that 95% of Indian women and girls feel unsafe in public spaces.

This has to stop.

Bengaluru FC's #LouderThanEver is a campaign aimed at making public spaces safe for women and to spread the awareness of the growing need to be more responsible citizens.

Because a change in all of us,
begins with every one of us.

BENGALURU FC v PUNJAB FC | OCT 18 | VOL. IV

BLUEPRINT



Good evening, Bengaluru

It felt like this international break went on for longer than it should have, but we are here at the Fortress with all of you in the stands and I couldn't be happier. Speaking of international games, India played out a tough 1-1 draw against Vietnam, and it was good to see our Bengaluru boys Suresh (assist) and Gurpreet (penalty save) play a vital role in the result. Equally important was that all six of our boys on India duty have returned without an injury.

We last played in Mumbai in very tough conditions and I am proud of the way the team dealt with all things to bring home a point. We all took a well-deserved break for a few days after that game, and are back rested, refreshed and ready to give our season the next push.

I would like to welcome Panagiotis Dilmperis and his staff at Punjab FC a very warm welcome to Bengaluru. Like us, Punjab have had a fantastic start to the season, and today's game is between the only two teams that remain unbeaten in the League this season which adds an edge to the fixture. We will respect them as opponents, but the focus will be on what we have trained for and how we're expected to play and perform at the Kanteerava.

I am happy about the way everyone on this team turns up when called upon. I've always maintained that the entire squad will need to play their part if we are to have a successful season, and it's taken only four games to prove my point. After today, we play two tough opponents away from home, and a good performance, not just a good result, will be important from a confidence-building point of view.

Today we will be wearing our third kit which is pink in colour and holds more meaning than just being a football shirt. Through this kit, we are raising awareness about the need for safety for women throughout the country, and I think this is both, a relevant and very important cause that needs more voices backing it. The campaign, Louder Than Ever, will see the club say and do a lot of things to spread this message through the season. Our football club has always stood for more than just the game and I am very proud to be the manager of this team.

All focus now shifts to the game where we will be doing everything to take off from where we left. The task will not be easy, but everyone knows what we are capable of at home. I hope all of you have an amazing night, and we will look to make it memorable.

Love,
Gerard

JEFE SAYS

GERARD ZARAGOZA



THE QUICK PREVIEW

The League resumes after a gap of almost two weeks owing to international football, and it remains to be seen what the pause does to the momentum that both Bengaluru and Punjab have managed to generate since the season began. This is a top-of-the-table clash between the only two unbeaten teams in the League, and the battle to tug the invincibility cloak off the other promises to be a feisty one.

NO TALISMAN, NO PROBLEM FOR PUNJAB

The visitors come to the game without their talismanic striker, Luka Majcen, who suffered a broken jaw in their opening match against Kerala Blasters. But Punjab haven't flinched. In his absence, midfielder Filip Mrzljak and forwards Ezequiel Vidal, Leon Augustine and Blasters loanee Nihal Sudheesh, have stepped up to share the load of scoring. The Shers have now won three on the spin and don't look like slowing down.

FORMIDABLE FORTRESS

The Blues have won all their fixtures at home this season and the Fortress has pulled in huge numbers for all those games. With an average crowd of 11,689 people over the three matches, Zaragoza's men will be banking on the Blues faithful to turn up to the Kanteerava and be their 12th man in this all-important fixture for the hosts.

THE SHEETS ARE CLEAN

Both teams have proven that they have a knack for scoring goals, having scored a total of 13 across the 7 matches they have played so far. The hosts hold a slight edge over the visitors, as they are the only team to have a clean sheet in the season, thanks to their fortified backline marshalled by Rahul Bheke. The Blues are the only team in the history of the League to start four straight games without conceding a goal. Gurpreet Singh Sandhu has been exceptional between the sticks. Needless to say, Punjab will have their task cut out.

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BFC SQUAD

HEAD COACH ▶ GERARD ZARAGOZA

GOALKEEPERS

GURPREET SINGH SANDHU	1
SAHIL POONIA	22
LALTHUAMMAWIA RALTE	28

DEFENDERS

RAHUL BHEKE	2
CHINGLENSANA SINGH	4
ALEKSANDAR JOVANOVIC	5
MOHAMED SALAH	12
CLARENCE FERNANDES	15
NIKHIL POOJARY	27
NAOREM ROSHAN SINGH	32

MIDFIELDERS

HARSH PATRE	6
SURESH WANGJAM	8
ALBERTO NOGUERA	10
PEDRO CAPO	18
SHREYAS KETKAR	21
LALREMTLUANGA FANAI	23
SHIVALDO SINGH	29
VINITH VENKATESH	31

FORWARDS

RYAN WILLIAMS	7
SIVASAKTHI NARAYANAN	9
SUNIL CHHETRI	11
MONIRUL MOLLA	16
EDGAR MENDEZ	17
HALICHARAN NARZARY	19
ROHIT DANU	24
JORGE PEREYRA DIAZ	30



PFC SQUAD

HEAD COACH ▶ PANAGIOTIS DILMPERIS



GOALKEEPERS	
RAVI KUMAR	1
AYUSH DESHWAL	47
MUHEET SHABIR KHAN	78

DEFENDERS	
IVAN NOVOSELEC	33
KHAIMINGTHANG LHUNGDIM	12
TEKCHAM ABHISHEK SINGH	27
SURESH MEITEI NONGMEIKAPAM	74
MELROY MELWIN ASSISI	14
RAKESH SINGH MEITEI	26
NITESH DARJEE	45

MIDFIELDERS	
FILIP MRZLJAK	24
NIKHIL PRABHU	4
RICKY JOHN SHABONG	6
VINIT RAI CHAMLING	16
SHAMI SINGAMAYUM	25
ASHIS PRADHAN	23
MANGLENTHANG KIPGEN	17
NINTHOINGANBA MEETEI	44

FORWARDS	
ASMIR SULJIC	7
LEON AUGUSTINE ASOKAN	31
MUSHAGA BAKENGA	9
NIHAL SUDHEESH	77
NORBERTO EZEQUIEL VIDAL	10
LUKA MAJCEN	99
MUHAMMAD SUHAIL F	29
SAMUEL JAMES LYNGDOH	11



STAFF FEATURE

SEBASTIAN VEGA
ASSISTANT COACH

Sebastian Vega, the assistant coach of Bengaluru FC, sat down with us last evening and spoke about his life, how he got into the sport, his relationship with Gerard, his love for pets and what he thinks about Namma Ooru. Here are some excerpts from the interview...

Q: When did you realise that football is going to be a big part of your life?
SV: Since I was young, I would play football every day. I grew up playing football with my younger brother Facundo and that's when I realised that I want this sport to be my life, because I love it a lot.

Q: Have you played professional football before? What was your first team and what are your memories from playing back then?
SV: I used to play semi-professional football for Argentinos del Sud, a club in my hometown, Mar del Plata. I was a seven-year-old who would play with kids who were two or three years older. In my teens, I played for CA Kimberley and got the opportunity to play with the first team, which was very special.

Q: What was the name of the first team you trained/managed and how was that experience?
SV: Initially, I trained a group of small children in Spain called Remolins Bitem. Later when I shifted to Barcelona, I trained and managed a club called Racing Sarria.

Q: You have been Gerard's assistant at three different clubs across the world. What has made you stick by him in his journey, both as a person and a coach, and what have you learnt under his leadership?
SV: I met Gerard around 20 years ago, at a football camp that we together were a part of. He is a person who has great ambitions and is very demanding. Once he sets his mind onto something, he will not stop till he has achieved his goal and that is something that I really admire. Other than his competitive yet humble nature, he is a very good man and a dear friend.

Q: Do you have any pets at home? What are their names and what do they mean to you?
SV: At the moment, we do not have any pets. We lost our Duna, who was a Rhodesian-Boxer crossbreed during Covid. She was with us for almost eleven years, and we were really upset after her passing, so we chose not to have any pets for a while.

Q: What is your favourite dish to eat/drink in Bengaluru?
SV: The food here is very spicy for me, but your desserts are delicious. I really like Laddus and Gulab Jamun and I am a big fan of coconut water.

Q: What are three things that come to your mind when you think about Bengaluru?
SV: Football, BFC and the fans at the Kanteerava.


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EDGAR MENDEZ



Depending on what it is that you've turned up for when you've made your way to the stadium, trekked up the winding slopes and parked yourself into the stands, football always has an impressive catalogue of what's on offer. If it is adrenaline you're after, then few things come close to watching a possessed winger singe the grass.

If sorcery is your fix, the perfectly executed elastico is rather bewitching. For cheap thrills, the good ol' nutmeg never disappoints. But if it is happiness you're after, then there's no better sight than watching a footballer have a good time on the pitch.

It's still early days in the season and in what is a rather happy Bengaluru FC squad, Edgar Mendez seems to have the brightest smile. At 34, the pedigreed Spaniard, who began his career with Real Madrid's U19s, was meant to bring his years of experience to the table, deliver the goods and then just sit back and wait for the next assignment. Instead, he gives you the impression of a youngster who, after bursting at the seams, has just gotten his big chance and wants to make the most of it while feeling no pressure. He wants the goal, wants the assist and is more than happy to carry you in celebration, as skipper Sunil Chhetri found out.

What does he pin it down to? "The club is good, my teammates are good, the fans encourage us, and there is no better help than having your family by your side always." Lucid, simple and honest. In that one sentence, Mendez breaks down what it takes to be a happy footballer.

Having spent most of his career in Spain, with Mexico being the only other destination he's played his football in, Edgar isn't a journeyman by any stretch of imagination. The striker, however, said he had been manifesting an Asian adventure for some time now. "The truth is, I've always wanted to play in Asia at some point in my career, but it never seemed to align. The moment I knew Bengaluru wanted me, everything was easy."

And easy is exactly how he has gone about settling into his role at the club. The striker has featured in all four games in the League this season and has a goal and two assists to show for. There's always the sense that something will happen when Mendez has the ball anywhere in the final third. He has a lethal hit on him, and he's given the Fortress a glimpse of his intentions from distance.

When he swiveled on his left leg and hooked the ball with his right to score Bengaluru's opener against Mohun Bagan at the



Kanteerava, Mendez chose to celebrate by tucking the ball under his shirt and sucking his thumb – the quinessential 'we're having a baby' announcement that footballers have made their own. Asked if his enjoying football at Bengaluru is down to the thought of becoming a father for the second time, Mendez nods with vigorous certainty. "We're so happy that our family is growing and to be able to go through these moments in India makes it just that much more special. I've always believed that when you're around a happy family and home, it reflects in your game and on the pitch."

The Mendezes have in fact taken a liking to the city and are regulars at the Fortress. His wife Katerine and daughter Julieta are Mendez's two-member cheer squad that he admits he simply cannot do without. "My family always accompanies me wherever I play my football. It's almost like all of us sign the contract. Here in Bengaluru, they love coming to the games because of the atmosphere the fans create. They also love the city because we keep getting the feeling that it is calm and safe."

With every passing game, the songs from the stands that feature a verse on Mendez grow louder, and you can see the Spaniard soaking it all in. "It makes me very happy when I see that the fans are happy with my work. For me, it is an honour to represent this club. We are going through a great moment, hand in hand, and I have a feeling that this will be a special year for us."

All it's taken is two months of Bengaluru and Mendez feels he's found family in the dressing room, the stands and the city. It explains why the man has a perennial smile. Truly, there are few better sights in football than a happy footballer. And Bengaluru have that in Mendez.

STAT ATTACK

MATCHES PLAYED

BFC		PFC
0	2	1
BFC WIN		PFC WIN
	1	
	DRAW	

Sunil Chhetri would appear in his 160 ISL match, if he plays on Friday. The most for any Indian forward in the League.

BFC are the 1ST TEAM in ISL history, to maintain a clean sheet in their opening 4 games of the season.

Rahul Bheke has the most successful passes completed in the League so far, with **203**



Gurpreet Singh Sandhu has the most number of clean sheets for any goalkeeper in the ISL with 48 in 142 appearances.

LAST 5 GAMES IN THE ISL

BFC	D	W	W	W	L
PFC	W	W	W	W	L

BFC KEY MEN



ROSHAN SINGH

The attacking wing-back has had a blistering start to the season, showing more than just shades of his form in the 2021-22 season where he was named Emerging Player of the Year. Handed the license to join the attack by Zaragoza, Roshan has vindicated his manager's decision with consistent performances on both ends of the pitch across the four games played this season. He won the penalty against Mohun Bagan that Sunil Chhetri put past Vishal Kaith. Roshan has been taking on defenders with confidence and guile, his crossing has been impressive and his work in defence, clean.



SURESH SINGH

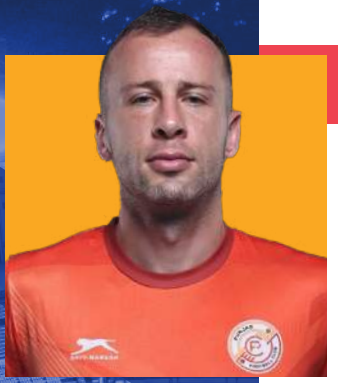
El Torito has been just that – a bull. What the midfielder has added to his game this season is a touch of better decision making and slicker feet. Importantly, he's focusing on doing what he does best – making a nuisance of himself around anyone who has the ball and is a threat. Four games in, Suresh already has a goal to his name in the 3-0 win over Bagan. In the same game, he picked the perfect pass to set up Sivasakthi in front of goal, only for the striker to be denied by Vishal Kaith. He tracks back with ferocity and slows things down when he needs to.



EDGAR MENDEZ

The Spaniard has settled in just the way Zaragoza would have wanted him to. Mendez might have just the lone goal in the League so far, but he's shown the League all that he's capable of. He's been getting into great scoring positions, and you can sense it is a simple matter of time before he begins racking up the goals. If he isn't getting the goals, he's bagging the assists, and he has struck a fantastic understanding with Sunil Chhetri. We sense this is the game where he switches gears on the scoring front.

PFC KEY MEN



FILIP MRZLJAK

Ever since Punjab's talisman Luka Majcen has been injured, this name has been on almost all their supporters' lips. An attacking midfielder, who also occasionally drops deep to help the backline, the Croatian has three goal contributions in as many games this season. A physically and technically proficient player, Mrzljak's looming presence in the final third is something that the Blues will be prepared for today.



EZEQUIEL VIDAL

Argentine winger Ezequiel 'Pulga' Vidal, has started every game for the Shers so far and has been a constant threat to any opponent's backline. His ridiculous long-range strike against Hyderabad, paired with his nimble feet and dazzling skills makes him the perfect ingredient to spice up the battle on the flanks, where he would take on either Nikhil Poojary or Roshan Singh.



KHAIMINTHANG LHUNGDIM

The 24-year-old Manipuri defender has been a mainstay in this Punjab backline, having played every minute of their opening three games of the season. With 10 duels and 13 recoveries to his name so far, he is a versatile player who can also play in midfield. The Blues frontline will have their task cut out coming up against him today evening.

WHERE DO I WANT TO GO WHEN I WANT TO?

with Aleksandar Jovanovic

Eat local cuisine
I recently discovered Rameshwaram Cafe, when we were returning back from training one morning. Their dosas and idlis are one of the best I've had so far.

Relax outdoors
Again, when I think about relaxing, Cubbon Park just clicks instantly in my mind. I think that place has a charm of its own.

Go on a family outing
I don't really venture out here in the city, but if I had to pick one spot it would probably be Cubbon Park, for a quiet family time with the missus and my kid.

Eat sushi in the city
Lucky Chan on Indiranagar 12th Main Road is one of my go-to spots for sushi in the city.

Have the ultimate Bengaluru bar experience
Bar hopping in the city is quite easy because there are bars and pubs almost everywhere. Although, my top choice for the best bar experience in the Ooru would be at The Balcony Bar in Indiranagar.



Go go-karting
I tried go-karting once, my knee obstructed me from turning the steering wheel as I am very tall. Never sat in a go-kart after that!

Unwind after a hectic week
Honestly, I would either watch the Premier League on TV or take a walk inside the society with my favourite music playing through the earphones.

Play arcade games with the kids - Now with our second child on the way, I don't really get time to take my eldest kid outside that much. I've heard there are good arcade games in Brigade Gateway. One of my friends lives there, so we visit him once a while.

Watch the latest films - I am not much for a film person, but I do watch a lot of Netflix at home. Peaky Blinders is my favourite show of all time.

Play FIFA/Call Of Duty
Again, not much of a gamer myself. I'd probably go to either of the lads' apartments if I wanted to enjoy a game on the console.

Go for a night out with the lads
TOIT hands down. No two ways about it.

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BENGALURU FC SOCCER SCHOOLS | UWA

Bengaluru launch ‘Louder Than Ever’ campaign with Third Kit

Blues To Swap Home Kit For Pink Jerseys In Tonight’s Fixture At Kanteerava, In A Bid To Promote Women’s Safety And Raise Awareness About Crimes Against Women...

Bengaluru: Bengaluru FC, on Tuesday, announced the launch of their 2024-25 PUMA Third Kit, which will be featured in tonight’s encounter against Punjab FC at the Fortress. The kit symbolises the club’s stance towards crimes against women and aims to increase awareness about the need for Women’s Safety.

Through their larger ‘Louder than Ever’ campaign, launched on Tuesday, the club aims to raise their voice against crimes aimed at women. Launched with a video featuring first team players Chinglensana Singh, Aleksandar Jovanovic and Rohit Danu, which amassed over 288K views (across all platforms at the time of writing), the club’s ideology of being close to their community reverberates strongly.

“Our efforts to stand with the community have always been steadfast and the 'Louder Than Ever' campaign is one that all of us at JSW Sports holds close to our hearts,” said Divyanshu Singh, COO, JSW Sports.

Keeping in mind the cause, there will be numerous activations which the club will undertake in the coming weeks. To make this matchday special, a shade of pink will take over the Fortress. The players exiting the bus will be wearing pink stickers on their outfit and the Blue Crew will paint the fans' faces pink, instead of the usual blue.

The Blues also announced the setting up of a ‘Womens Only Security Helpdesk’ at the fanzone for female supporters to reach out for help if the need arises. Through the course of the season, the club aims to collaborate with NGOs and influencers to raise awareness for Women’s Safety.


Louder
than
Ever

BLUE BULLETIN



MIXED START FOR BLUE COLTS IN BDFA SUPER DIVISION

The Blue Colts began their BDFA Super Division campaign with a 2-1defeat to Real Chikkamagaluru FC, and then followed it up with a huge 8-1 defeat of ASC &Centre at the Bangalore Football Stadium. After having lost the lead in the opening few minutes, they crawled back to bag the equaliser in the 85th minute, thanks to Rashid C K's strike in the opener. However, their jubilation was cut short, when RCFC won a penalty in the final minute of the game to seal the deal. Five days later, the Blue Colts bounced back in style with the win over ASC. Striker Joshua D'Silva notched a hat-trick (four goals), while goals from Rashid (two goals), Soham Varshneya and Kelvin Singh completed the rout. BFC B will face Sporting Club Bangalore in their next fixture at the Bangalore Football Stadium on Sunday, October 20.



BFC SOCCER SCHOOLS ANNOUNCE ONE-OF-A-KIND PARTNERSHIP WITH UAE BASED H16 SPORTS ACADEMY

Bengaluru FC Soccer Schools have announced a one-of-a-kind strategic partnership with H16 Sports Academy, based in Ajman, UAE. The partnership includes a range of initiatives like friendly matches between teams from both countries and comprehensive Coach Education Programmes.

The collaboration marks a significant step towards building a robust football culture in Ajman, further solidifying both Bengaluru FC Soccer Schools and H16 Sports Academy's commitment to youth development in the sport.

PENALTY HEARTBREAK FOR BLUE COLTS IN PUTTAIAH FINAL

Bengaluru FC B powered their way through to the C Puttaiah Memorial Cup final but fell short to defending champions FC Agniputhra 5-3 on penalties. The game that ended in a 0-0 stalemate after regulation time, saw the hosts hit four consecutive spot-kicks before midfielder Soham Varshneya's effort was saved by goalkeeper Micky Dias.

Agniputhra's Surendra Prasad sent the Blue Colts custodian, Sahil Poonia, the wrong way to help his side retain their title.




BENGALURU
FC