BLUEPRINT

BENGALURU FC v ODISHA FC | JAN 22 | VOL. IX





Jefe Says

GERARD ZARAGOZA

Good evening, Bengaluru,

I wish I was writing to you in more positive circumstances, but the truth is that we are weathering a bit of a storm as a team in terms of results, and I have never been one to hide behind big words when it comes to acknowledging our current situation. We've had three disappointing results on the bounce, and we are as upset as all of you are, about it.

The way I look at it from here is, we have just one option – to pick ourselves up and turn up with performances that this team is capable of, and the kind you fans deserve. As difficult as it seems at the moment, this will need you to back us and believe in us. We have achieved incredible things because of you, and today, we have a chance to do this again.

I'd like to welcome Sergio Lobera and his staff at Odisha FC to the Fortress. Like us they too are going through an indifferent run of form, and that makes it two teams desperate to turn things around, coming up against each other today. The game will not just be about our tactics and performance, it will also be a test of our character, and I back our boys to show what they are made of, now more than ever.

We don't have Rahul Bheke today, who misses out with a suspension, but I believe this is a chance for the rest to step up and make themselves counted.

I am aware that a Wednesday fixture makes it tough for too many supporters to come to the Stadium. Yet, we always seem to hear your voices. In fact, we wait for it. So be loud, no matter how many of you make it. This is our home, our Fortress, and let's do all we can – on and off the pitch, to give our season and team the push that it needs.

Love,
Gerard

The Quick Preview

While things are not going their respective ways off late, clashes between Bengaluru FC and Odisha FC always deliver bucketloads of drama. At a time when both sides can ill-afford more dropped points, this contest promises to serve up a classic as both teams vie for a much-needed win.



SEEKING A SWIFT RESPONSE

While Bengaluru FC flew off the blocks, a recent run of poor results has yielded a solitary point from the three previous fixtures, including our first home defeat of the season against Mohammedan last time out. Suresh Singh Wangjam could feature after recovering from a calf injury, and Gerard Zaragoza, who rotated his side against Hyderabad, could be tempted to name El Torito and Ryan Williams from the start.

The boys will hope to get their season back on track, knowing that FC Goa and tonight's opponents also stake significant claims for second on the table. Can this be the night that sets things right for the Blues?

UNBEATEN AT THE KANTEERAVA

As is the case against several sides in the Indian Super League, Bengaluru FC enjoy a strong home record against tonight's opponents and are unbeaten in three fixtures at the Kanteerava against the Juggernauts, with two wins and one draw. Both teams have eight goals from their last five matches, but it is defensively where they have been found wanting. The Juggernauts will have to do without the suspended Carlos Delgado, whereas the return of Hugo Boumous bolsters the attack. Bengaluru FC will miss defensive mainstay Rahul Bheke through suspension. Will the backlines dictate proceedings tonight? Or will the wait for a clean sheet continue?

TOUGH NUT TO CRACK

Odisha have enjoyed a positive run of results against the Blues in recent times and are unbeaten in their previous five fixtures against Bengaluru FC.

OFC Head Coach Sergio Lobera enjoys a favourable matchup against Gerard Zaragoza, and the two Spanish tacticians, who wear their hearts on their sleeves, will desperately want to get one over the other tonight in a battle of their own.

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

ATTACKERS

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



OFC SQUAD

HEAD COACH ▶ **SERGIO LOBERA**

GOALKEEPERS

AMRINDER RANJIT SINGH	1
ANUJ KUMAR	23
KAMALJIT SINGH	31

DEFENDERS

AMEY RANAWADE	4
CARLOS DELGADO RODRIGUEZ	5
JEREMY ZOHMINGLUA	12
JERRY LALRINZUALA	18
NARENDER GAHLOT	3
RICKY MEETEI NAOBAM	30
SAVIOUR GAMA	28
MOURTADA FALL	15
SUBHAM BHATTACHARYA	33
TANKADHAR BAG	45
THOIBA SINGH MOIRANGTHEM	24

MIDFIELDERS

ADNAN HUGO BOUMOUS	8
AHMED JAHOUH	10
ISAK VANLALRUATFELA	19
LALTHATHANGA KHAWLRING	7
NARENDRA NAIK	39
RAYNIER RAYMOND FERNANDES	11
ROHIT KUMAR	6

ATTACKERS

APHAOBA SINGH ASHANGBAM	29
DIEGO MAURICIO	9
DORIELTON GOMEZ NASCIMENTO	90
JERRY MAWIHMINGTHANGA	17
RAHIM ALI	25
RAHUL K P	77



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THE NUMBERS GAME

BENGALURU

MATCHES PLAYED

ODISHA

5	11	4
BFC WINS		OFC WINS

2 DRAWS

3 GOALS

There have been at least 3 goals scored in 7 out of the 11 matches played between the two sides in the ISL.

The Blues recorded a **3-0 HOME WIN** over the visitors back in the 2019/20 season and it remains their biggest victory against them in the ISL, till date.



10.667KM

Pedro Capo has covered more ground than any other player for the Blues, averaging a stunning 10.667km per match so far.

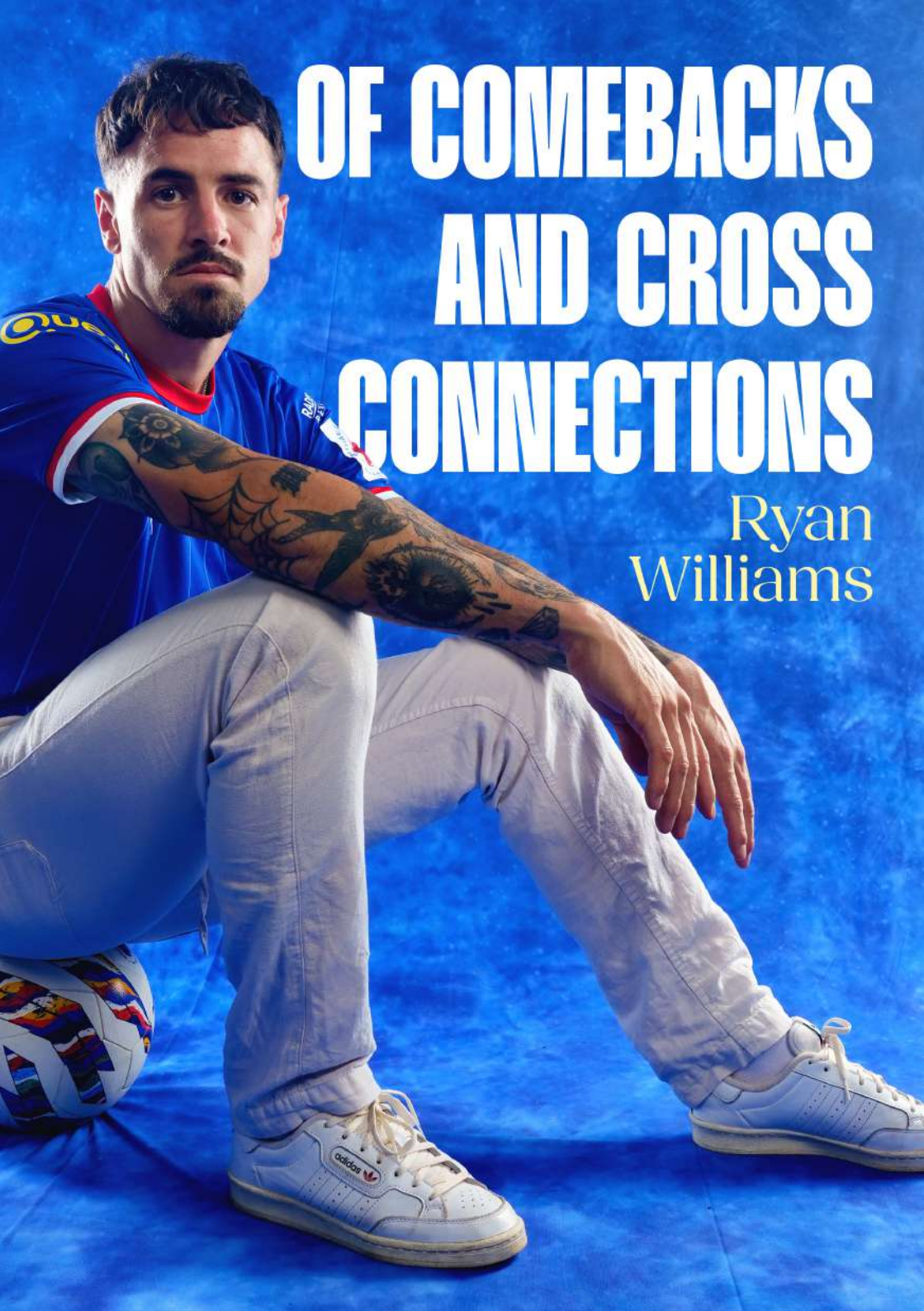
24

The Juggernauts' Senegalese centre-back, Mourtada Fall, is the highest scoring ISL defender with 24 goals in his locker. An aerial threat in the box, the Blues will look to minimise his chances in front of goal at the Fortress tonight.

LAST 5 GAMES IN THE ISL

BENGALURU ▸ D | L | L | W | D

ODISHA ▸ L | D | L | D | W


OF COMEBACKS
AND CROSS
CONNECTIONS
Ryan
Williams

In The Dark Knight Rises, when Bruce Wayne emerges from the depths of the Mehrangarh Fort battered and bruised, only to rise again and fight for the city he loves, it is a moment that resonates beyond just a superhero flick. It is about rebirth, resilience, and overcoming adversity. For Ryan Williams, his return to the Bengaluru FC squad after a three-month injury layoff had a strikingly similar feel. There were doubts, but what has happened since counts as nothing short of a spectacular comeback.

The moment Williams stepped onto the pitch against NorthEast United for his first appearance after an injury earlier this season, it was as if fate had conspired to make his return even more cinematic. With his very first touch, he fired in an equaliser to help the Blues hold NorthEast United in superheroic fashion. It wasn't just a goal—it was a statement. A statement that said Ryan Williams isn't just back; he is here to make things happen. Since then, he has been unstoppable, proving that sometimes, the most pleasing of comebacks are when the player returns stronger, more determined, and hungrier than ever before

In his nine appearances since, Williams has netted five goals and provided four assists. Returning from injury can be a daunting prospect for any player. While some struggle to rediscover their form, especially when the competition is fierce, Williams has managed to find his rhythm and elevate his game to new heights. The Australian talks about how he utilised the technique of visualisation during his time on the sidelines.

"A lot of footballers visualise what they want to happen when they are injured. I visualised stuff like scoring goals, providing assists and success in general. That was one of the hardest injuries I have had to deal with in my career. The team were doing well, I knew I had to fight for my place. But with perseverance and the help of family and friends, I got there at the end."

One of the standout qualities of Williams' game is his ability to provide pinpoint crosses with minimal backlift—a skill that has made him a constant threat down the flanks. Whether the right or the left wing, his delivery is accurate, dangerous, and always seems to land exactly where it needs to. It is as though the ball indubitably follows his intention, finding its way into the box with deadly, heath-seeking precision. The pace, the timing, and the technique—everything is spot on. The secret? Practice and renewed belief.

"I have been playing professionally since I was 17 and have always played out wide. The one difference is when I am putting the crosses in this season, I believe that people are going to score, I didn't have that last season. It's also down to the boys, I'm putting crosses in, and people are scoring, so I am doing the same thing. I practice it every day in training, if you don't practice it regularly, there's no way you can do it in the game. So, it's just persistence and practice," Williams admits.



But what truly sets Williams apart as a perpetual threat is his telepathic understanding with Bengaluru FC captain Sunil Chhetri. The two are on the same wavelength at every second of play in every game. So many of Williams' crosses this season have been met by Chhetri's clinical finishing, often from headers. The connection between the two is more than just footballing chemistry—it is an unspoken bond that is built on mutual respect and a shared desire to succeed.

"We had all of last season to get to know each other on the pitch and on a personal level. He was playing as a sole number nine, whereas now it has been a bit more beneficial that we've had number nines, and he has played on the left and drifted onto the back post where you know if you send in a ball, defenders are very scared," Williams reveals.

Off the pitch, Williams is the complete opposite of the fierce competitor he becomes once the whistle blows. Humble, grounded, and always approachable, Williams is known for his infectious positivity. A proper friendly bloke. His son Ziggy, who plays for Bengaluru FC's Soccer Schools, too has been enjoying his football in the city.

"My mother Audrey and my stepfather Andrew Burrell were here for three weeks; they travelled for the Chennaiyin and Jamshedpur games and came for the Mohammedan game. It's always nice to show them what life is like for me. Moving on to Ziggy, he has been with BFC Soccer Schools, he's been going regularly and enjoying it. The coaching is really good, the guys try and make the kids have fun before anything else, which helps you learn. The kids are always smiling, and working hard, which is what this game is all about."

Williams' ability to accelerate with the ball, combined with his exceptional crossing and dual-footed finishing, have made him a vital cog in the team's plans. The winger has a keen footballing brain, and whether it is cutting inside to shoot or whipping in a ball for a striker, Williams has shown a variety of



attacking options that make him difficult to predict. Never let them know your next move, it is said. But what if every move is an all out superpower?

"I always say to myself to go out there and play like it's your last game. One of the key words I always use is optimism and being myself. Just to go out on the pitch knowing that you can make a difference for the team, that's my thought process most of the time," Williams outlines.

"There are always going to be periods in the season when you come under pressure. That is the case in football, anything can happen and that is why we love this game so much. Let's go and try and make the most of it, and leave no stone unturned in every game," Williams adds passionately.

Ryan's story isn't just about goals and assists; it is about a man who seized his chances, who persevered through doubts and challenges, and continues to rise by adding new dimensions to his game. When you see him play, you realise just how much we mean to him, and how much he means to this team, to this city, and to this fanbase.



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KEY BATTLES

RYAN WILLIAMS vs MOURTADA FALL





Winger Ryan Williams has been in red-hot form for the Blues since his return from injury and has posted five goals and four assists from ten appearances so far this season. Be it his pin-point crossing or his shooting prowess through either foot, Williams has been vital to Bengaluru FC's attacking build-up and will play a key role when he takes to the field against Odisha FC.

Standing in Williams' way and keeping close tabs on his movement will be centre-back Mourtada Fall. A seasoned Indian Super League defender with 135 appearances to his name, Fall will try to match Williams stride for stride throughout the contest.

ALBERTO NOGUERA vs AHMED JAHOUH





A vital midfield battle pits Bengaluru FC's chief creator Alberto Noguera against Odisha's passing maestro Ahmed Jahouh. While Noguera thrives in the spaces between the back-line and the midfield, Jahouh constantly mans this very region, and functions as the Juggernauts' fulcrum. Both players can change the course of any game with a magic swish of the boot and are integral to their respective teams' tactical setups with their positioning and distribution. A mouth-watering midfield match-up indeed!

CHINGLENSANA SINGH vs ISAK VANLALRUATFELA





A defender who banks on his reliable positioning and accurate distribution, Chinglensana Singh has been an assured presence in the Blues' defence. Sana's experience and versatility play a huge part in the defensive third, and his positioning wares will be put to the test against Odisha's versatile Isak Vanlalruatfela. Isak picks up dangerous pockets of space out wide while also drifting inside occasionally, and his accurate distribution is what makes him a standout threat. With three assists already this season, the 23-year-old has essayed a more creative role to perfection.

Prateek Chopra

First team analyst Prateek Chopra sat down with us and spoke about the role of data analysis in modern day football, how it feels being a childhood BFC fan who is working with the club and his go-tos for a quick bite in Bengaluru.



1. What inspired you take up a career in football analysis?

I've always found myself to be at my best when I'm in or around a team setting and I have always loved the process of reviewing and critiquing footage, whether it's from a match or a training session. I've seen first-hand, especially with my experience with the reserve team last season, how analysis can help the team in understanding and preparing against different oppositions and when it goes according to the plan, It really pushes me to get better at what I do so that in-return I can help the team more.

2. Why do data and analysis play a key role in modern football?

At this top level of competition, such as the ISL, all teams are improving season by season. So, it becomes crucial that we are always one step ahead of these teams and analysis and data plays a massive role. From analysis perspective, all the teams nowadays have a certain way of playing, a definitive plan against their opposition. So it's very important that we have our own plans and strategies to counter them and that's where analysis comes in.

3. How have your experiences been at Bengaluru FC?

It's been a dream come true. I have been following and supporting this club from the beginning, I saw my first BFC match at the Kanteerava in 2016. It was against Shillong Lajong during the I-League days, and we won 3-0. I still have that ticket with me.

2017/18 was pretty special for me, although we lost the final that season, but I got to experience my first away trip to CFC, I was a season-ticket holder back then and all the S-T holders got an all-expenses paid trip to Chennai, which was pretty cool. March of 2023 was when I got an opportunity to work as an analyst (internship role) for the academy team in Bellary. Then got a full-time gig with the reserve team for the 2023/24 season, and that season was pretty awesome. We managed to win the Super division, without losing a single match. Narrowly missed out on winning the RFDL but learnt heaps from those experiences and now with first team, it's been nothing short of a dream.

4. How does it feel to work with your fellow staff and the players?

- The things that I get to learn like every day from the coaches, it's incredible. Obviously my day-to-day conversations with the coaches helps me a lot to do my job better, and then seeing Sunil bhai every day everyday how he goes about his business, is inspiring because he is also my idol and its awesome that I get to pick his brain from time to time.

5. What is that one incident that increased your love for the club?

- For me, It has to be the 2nd leg vs JDT at the Kanteerava. That night was special.

6. What are your hobbies?

- Playing and trying out different sports.

- Watching a good murder-mystery show/movie on OTT platforms.

7. Your favourite things to do in Bengaluru?

- This city has a strong culture of pick-up games, so playing those games.

- There's always something new or unique places opening up in our city, so trying those places out with my friends.

8. Some hidden/ underrated spots in Bengaluru for your favourite cuisines.

- Burgerman (Indiranagar)

- French Treaty (Yelahanka)

- Umesh Refreshments (Malleshwaram)

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BLUE BULLETIN

1. COLTS PUT FIVE PAST MEG

Bengaluru FC B underlined their BDFA Super Division title credentials with a commanding 5-1 win over MEG at the Bangalore Football Stadium, on Friday. A brace from winger Rohen Singh and solitary goals by Kelvin Singh, Soham Varshneya and Shashwat Panwar ensured all three points for the Colts. The win reduces the gap between Bengaluru and FC Bengaluru United at the top of the table to 9 points, while Bibiano's boys have four games in hand.

Manav Gowda scored a last-minute equaliser to give the Colts a crucial point against South United FC in a game that ended 1-1

2. GREENWOOD HIGH, SARJAPUR DOMINATE PROCEEDINGS

Out of eight titles on offer across age groups, students from Greenwood High, Sarjapur won the girls' U10, U12 and U15 categories, while Greenwood High Pre School, Gottigere clinched the U6 (Mixed) category in the Casagrand BFC Soccer Shield held at Depot18 Sports Arena in Bengaluru.

Delhi Public School, East bagged the U8 boys' title, while Inventure Academy got the better of Greenwood High, Sarjapur in the boys' U10 final. Inventure Academy downed Mallya Aditi International for the U12 boys' title, while Reva University eased past Christ University to pocket the U21 girls' title in the first phase of fixtures.

Bengaluru FC first team players Chinglensana Singh and Vinith Venkatesh handed over the individual and group awards to the winners and the runners-up, and the event was a resounding success with over 80+ teams participating and scoring over 400 goals throughout three days of intense competition.

3. U17S SEEK SWIFT RIPOSTE

After a positive start to the AIFF U17 Elite Youth League, consecutive losses to Muthoot FA and Kickstart FC saw the Bengaluru FC U17s slip to third place in Group E.

The U17s began on a bright note with a 5-1 win over Roots FC, followed by a 3-0 triumph against Sporting Club Bengaluru. They continued their victorious start with a 5-1 win against Alchemy International FA and a 4-1 triumph over Kickstart FC, but tasted a 2-3 defeat to league leaders Muthoot FA. A 1-0 loss in the reverse fixture against Kickstart FC on January 19 leaves the U17s with a lot of work to do to seal qualification for the final round.

1



2



3



DISHING OUT THE CLASSICS

Bengaluru FC and Odisha FC have played out some cracking contests over the seasons. Here is the pick of the lot.

IN CRUISE CONTROL

Bengaluru FC – 3 bt Odisha FC – 0 (Jan 22, 2020)

In the maiden clash at the Kanteerava between the two sides, Bengaluru FC ran out comfortable winners, with first half goals from Deshorn Brown, Rahul Bheke and a second-half Sunil Chhetri penalty powering the Blues to a comprehensive 3-0 victory. Udanta Singh was a livewire down the right wing from the first attacking action, and Bengaluru FC got their deserved opener through Brown when the Jamaican forward nudged in Erik Paartalu's header across goal from a Dimas Delgado freekick. This was Brown's maiden ISL start, and he capped it off with his first League goal.

The Blues struck again two minutes later when Udanta's teasing cross was played back in to a dangerous area by Paartalu for Bheke to drill in the second goal. Chhetri sealed the deal with his seventh goal in six home matches, a spotless spot kick after Martín Pérez Guedes brought Dimas down. With this win, BFC climbed back to the top of the table.

COMING BACK IN STYLE

Bengaluru FC – 2 bt Odisha FC – 1 (Feb 21, 2022)

After going a goal down to Nandhakumar Sekar's seventh-minute strike, Bengaluru FC retaliated to clinch a 2-1 win at the GMC Athletic Stadium in Goa. Danish Farooq turned in Naorem Roshan Singh's corner at the back post with a towering header, and Cleiton Silva slotted in his ninth goal of the season from the spot to complete the turnaround.

SANKRANTI SPECIAL

Bengaluru FC – 3 bt Odisha FC – 1 (Jan 14, 2023)

The Blues dished out a Sankranti special two years ago when they steamrolled Odisha

FC 3-0 to kickstart their 10-match winning run. Rohit Kumar opened the scoring with a deflected effort. Sivasakthi Narayanan and Roy Krishna combined brilliantly on the counter to add in the second goal.

Diego Mauricio pulled one back for the Juggernauts from the spot, but substitute Pablo Perez put the contest to bed and opened his account in the Indian Super League with a composed finish.

BENGALURU'S BRIMMING BIODIVERSITY

Bengaluru is aptly called the 'Garden City', a metropolis where you get to see nature and urban life blend seamlessly. While many are familiar with the turf of the Sree Kanteerava Stadium, the city's greenery stretches far beyond that, filling up parks, roads and lakes with rare species of flora and fauna.

Once known for its wide variety of trees, birds and animals, Bengaluru is home to a rich natural world. The vibrant Tabebuia rosea, or Pink Trumpet Tree, blooms across the city in the late winter months, adding a splash of pink to the streets. These trees, though not native, have become a symbol of Bengaluru's welcoming, diverse environment.

The city is also home to many rare species of plants and animals. Birds like the Indian Peafowl and the Grey-headed Fish Eagle continue to grace the skies and thrive in Bengaluru's green corridors. The city's lakes and parks host a remarkable variety of birds, many of which are not found in the neighbouring states. The Ulsoor and Hebbal lakes are vital habitats for migratory birds like the Painted Stork and Spot-billed Pelican. Bengaluru is also home to the Slender Loris, a small nocturnal primate that once roamed freely but is now increasingly rare due to urban expansion.

Despite the pressures of urbanisation, Bengaluru's natural beauty remains a source of pride for its residents, offering a reminder of the city's rich ecological heritage. To ensure this legacy continues, conservation efforts are crucial. Simple actions like protecting green spaces, planting native trees, and supporting wildlife-friendly initiatives can make a big difference. With collective care and attention, we can preserve the unique biodiversity that makes Bengaluru such a special place to live.





Tale of The Custodians

Both Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and Amrinder Singh have 49 clean sheets in the Indian Super League, and the two goalkeepers will be vying to get to that half century tonight in a fascinating sub-plot.

Two quality goalkeepers are one clean sheet away from a significant League milestone. When Gurpreet Singh Sandhu and Amrinder Singh line up for their respective sides, they will do so with the knowledge that they are close to creating a slice of ISL history.

Gurpreet Singh Sandhu has been a one club man in the ISL. Ever since he joined the Blues ahead of the 2017-18 season, the 32-year-old has largely been first choice between the sticks, and it has taken him 153 appearances to reach the 49 clean sheets mark.

With 432 saves to his name, including four penalty saves in the ISL, he has pulled off many spectacular stops over the years for both club and country. Gurpreet opened the 2024-25 season off with five straight clean sheets but has not kept one in the Blues' previous 10 fixtures. Could tonight finally be his night? Amrinder Singh, who made 33 appearances for the Blues between 2016-2017, has had stints with ATK, Mumbai City, Mohun Bagan and Odisha FC across his career, and has featured 178 times totally in the ISL.

Odisha don't have a clean sheet in their last three fixtures, a run in which they have conceded nine goals. Bengaluru failed to score at home for the only time this season in their previous fixture against Mohammedan, showing how challenging it is to shut the Blues down at the Kanteerava.

The men at both ends of the pitch might be separated by acres of space, but they'll go forehead to forehead the minute the ref says 'play'.



AS IT STANDS*

	TEAMS	P	W	D	L	GD	Pts
1	MOHUN BAGAN SG	16	11	3	2	17	36
2	FC GOA	16	8	6	2	10	30
3	**BENGALURU FC**	**16**	**8**	**4**	**4**	**8**	**28**
4	JAMSHEDPUR FC	15	9	1	5	-1	28
5	NORTHEAST UNITED FC	17	6	7	4	9	25
6	MUMBAI CITY FC	16	6	6	4	-3	24
7	ODISHA FC	16	5	6	5	5	21
8	KERALA BLASTERS FC	17	6	3	8	-1	21
9	PUNJAB FC	15	6	2	7	1	20
10	CHENNAIYIN FC	16	4	5	7	-4	17
11	EAST BENGAL FC	16	4	2	10	-6	14
12	MOHAMMEDAN SC	16	2	5	9	-16	11
13	HYDERABAD FC	16	2	4	10	-19	10

*Updated as on 21st January