

# A Suryakumar Yadav knock of two parts, restrained at first before breaking free

Suryakumar Yadav stars with an unbeaten 73 while Jasprit Bumrah, Mitchell Santner on target as Mumbai seal fourth and final playoff berth with a 59-run win over Delhi

Synopsis: Bumrah-Santner pair's song of fire and ice, Surya-Naman's death-metal riffs turn out to be the end notes for Delhi Capitals.

The capacity to produce tournament-defining moments has been a hallmark of Mumbai Indians' IPL supremacy. Assured of the knockouts, they would reflect on the last two overs of their innings on a sluggish track, wherein Suryakumar Yadav and Naman Dhir scythed 47 runs off 12 balls to reverse the game's tide irreversibly to their side. Entailed a 59-run cruise, after Jasprit Bumrah and Mitchell Santner tightened the noose on Delhi Capitals' necks, ending their playoff ambitions.

Naman Dhir walks with brisk, purposeful strides, as though the dugout was a prison he had escaped. A largely under-utilised batting all-rounder, he has offered only fits and flashes of his exhilarating stroke-making. But late in the Mumbai Indians' innings, with the home-side praying for an injection of pace, he strode in with brisk, purposeful strides and rattled out 24 off only eight balls, in the company of Suryakumar Yadav, himself hitting violent riffs at the end, to power Mumbai Indians' total to 180/5.

Until the 19th over of Mukesh Kumar that Naman alone ransacked 20 runs (Suryakumar added seven), batting was a laborious exercise. The ball gripping, turning and holding off the surface, the wrist-spin pair of Kuldeep Yadav and Vipraj Nigam consigning them to a spin-swamp. MI had stuttered to 133 for 7 in 18 overs. Then, just like that, Naman fired his ammunition, transforming the surface to a belter.

The first swipe was the most elegant one, him balancing on his toes and driving over extra cover, with scarcely any violence imparted on the ball. Savagery would wait for the next ball. Mukesh's yorker went awry, but the low full toss still needed some propulsion to the stands. He whirled his wrists furiously, imparting it a helicopter-shot hue. Not quite MS Dhoni like in flourish, but hit with riveting power.

Next, he impersonated Hardik Pandya. The shot-ball sat up. There was barely any impetus on the ball to pull it fine or ramp over the keeper. So he stood on the front-foot and threw the kitchen sink at it, as the ball flew flat over long-on, his legs air-borne in the body-crushing intensity of the shot. An exasperated Mukesh, his body flailing, bowled a tired length ball next, which he creamed through extra cover, the strong wrists again providing the power.

The onslaught woke up Suryakumar, who had just completed his half-century with a brutal six over extra cover off Mukesh's 19th over, off the 37th ball he had faced. More conservative than usual, playing to the situation on a treacherous surface, he broke free in the last over. Dushmanta Chameera's waywardness helped. A slower length ball was smoked over extra cover for a six. The next, a slow full toss was whippaged through deep mid-wicket. Chameera's retort — a yorker outside the off-stump — was laser-guided to third-man fence, his first shot behind in the reverse 'V'.

It was not a quintessential Suryakumar knock of improvised wizardry, but one of considerable restraint. Realising the sluggishness of the surface, he eschewed the shots behind the stumps and relied largely on singles. The effort was satisfying, he later said: "Waiting gives you a lot of fruits in life. This is one innings which I was hoping for a long time: a difficult situation, to bat through to the end." The 47 runs the pair looted in the last two overs was the perceptible difference between the

sides. But DC would rue on the list of prominent absentees—Mitchell Starc and Axar Patel, the captain — as they find themselves out of the play-off race.

Jasprit Bumrah and Mitchell Santner are the oddest pair for a batsman to face in tandem. Bumrah bursts from his spring-loaded steps, a saunter suddenly becomes sprint, his bowling arm tracing paths than no bowling arm had ever imagined tracing, the shoulders tilting, the ball zipped from directly above his head, and the hyper-extended elbow delaying the release for a crucial fraction of a second. Then the heat, the rage, the deception, the fear in the batsmen's eyes, the inevitability of doom, an inspired Bumrah is one of the most edifying sights on any cricket field.

DC's batsmen were caught in a Bumrah-storm, which usually blows in clutch moments. Captain Hardik Pandya brought him as late as the seventh over, because he knew precisely that he could bring on his lead act any time of the innings. He is situation and condition proof. Deepak Chahar and Trent Boult are most lethal with the new ball. Hardik himself is best deployed in the middle overs. But any time is a good time for Bumrah. And so he did, hurrying, harrying, confounding batsmen for time, space and width.

Immediately, the batsmen have to retrain their eyes to Santner's poetry in (slow motion). He is all ice, ambles to the crease, smooth and serene, pauses in his release and tosses the ball like he is throwing a chew bone to his pet dog in a park. But the slow, benign ball suddenly acquires streaks of evil in the air. It drifts in, drops suddenly and breaks away viciously past the right-handed batsmen. The batsmen are caught in a hypnotic web — still limbs, frozen eyes and dazed mind.

Whenever DC found a ray of hope, Santner stubbed it out. Their start was horrible, losing three wickets for 27 runs. But when Vipraj Nigam and Sameer Rizvi found some momentum, Santner ejected Vipraj. Later, Tristan Stubbs and Ashutosh Sharma contributed 38 runs. He returned to consume them both in four balls, effectively settling the game and sealing DC's fate. Bumrah then flicked on the afterburners to complete a remarkable turnaround.