Sooryavanshi smashes his way to the top of IPL 2026 Orange Cap table

RAJASTHAN: Vaibhav Sooryavanshi slammed 12 sixes to break Chris Gayle's record for most sixes in an IPL season, and was well on his way to scoring the fastest IPL century, also in Gayle's name (off 30 balls), before falling for 97 off 29 balls.

You'd think that he will get to that record too one of these days, but he has already climbed to the top of the run-getters' table at IPL 2026 (not for the first time) with 680 runs, 28 clear of second-placed B Sai Sudharsan of Gujarat Titans (GT).

Both of them, as well as third-placed Shubman Gill of GT, have at least one more game left to play in the tournament, as does Virat Kohli, the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) star who is in sixth place with 600 runs.

Dhruv Jurel, meanwhile, scored 50 off 21 balls against SRH, an innings that might have been the main attraction on another night, to get to 508 runs for the season and the 11th position on the table.

SRH's Heinrich Klaasen (624 runs), Ishan Kishan (602 runs) and Abhishek Sharma (563 runs) finished the season at No. 3, No. 5 and No. 8, respectively

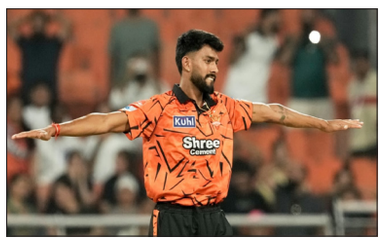
Purple Cap leaderboard

Jofra Archer has been having his most productive IPL season and he picked up three wickets for the second game running. While he was expensive against SRH, conceding 58 from his four overs, his three wickets were of the aforementioned big three, all inside the powerplay. Who can complain?

Archer is now on 24 wickets for the season. Ahead of him, though, are two bowlers who can add to their tallies: RCB's Bhuvneshwar Kumar and GT's Kagiso Rabada, who have 26 wickets each.

Moody wants SRH to invest in bowlers

HYDERABAD: Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) won nine of their 14 league-stage matches at IPL 2026, and placed third - Gujarat Titans (GT) were second - only on net run rate. "Overall we've had a really good season," their fast-bowling coach James Franklin said after SRH exited the tournament in the Eliminator, but Tom Moody, head coach at SRH when they won the title in 2016, feels the team is all about their big batters, and have been "left short with the finances to be able to build a strong bowling unit" as a result.



Travis Head was below his best this season, tallying 410 runs at a strike rate of 170.12, but Heinrich Klaasen (624 runs at 160.00), Ishan Kishan (602 at 182.42) and Abhishek Sharma (563 at 204.72) formed a formidable top order for the team, with Nitish Kumar Reddy an able fifth batter behind that top four.

With the ball, though, Eshan Malinga (20 wickets at an economy rate of 9.33) and Sakib Hussain (15 at 9.45) were the main success stories, with Praful Hinge and Shivang Kumar showing promise but still far from being finished products.

"It is a brand to admire but it comes at a cost," Moody said on ESPNcricinfo TimeOut after SRH were blown away by Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Jofra Archer. "They're yet to lift the trophy with this brand. Yes, they're giving themselves a window of opportunity. But the cost is also the fact that you need to invest to play that brand. And that investment is lost when it comes to the bowling side. So you're pouring a lot of money into the way you play as a batting unit. You're left short with the finances to be able to build a strong bowling unit to be able to support that."

SRH broke the IPL auction record for an overseas player when they bought Pat Cummins for INR 20.50 crore ahead of the 2024 season. But they don't have another really big name - and certainly no big spinner - in their bowling unit, with Malinga, Gerald Coetzee and Dilshan Madushanka the other overseas options. Harshal Patel, Purple Cap winner in 2021 and 2024, played just five games this season, didn't get a wicket, and went at 10.82.

"It's [about] trying to find that balance and I think that's what RCB [Royal Challengers Bengaluru] have got. They've got that balance right," Moody said. "So, I'm not against the brand but you've got to try to balance it out when you're talking about the salary cap and everything."

Ambati Rayudu agreed with Moody, saying, "They can be brilliant like this. They're very, very good on the eye. They're very exciting. But still, to win an IPL, you need to be smart as well as be powerful. I think that can only improve if you get that kind of personnel and also get the balance and also be able to play in different conditions. That's one area where they need to improve."

India lose 0-2 To Jamaica in Semi-final of Unity Cup, to face Zimbabwe in 3rd-place playoff

LONDON: The Indian men's football team lost 0-2 to Jamaica in the semi-finals of the Unity Cup in London, making a disappointing debut appearance in the four-nation tournament. The short competition, which features two semi-finals, a third-place play-off and the final, is being conducted at The Valley stadium, which is the home base of Charlton Athletic Football Club. On Wednesday night, Courtney Clarke's stunning early strike in the eighth minute and Kaheim Dixon's solo effort in the 78th minute ensured Jamaica's entry into the final.

India will face Zimbabwe, who went down to Nigeria in the first semi-final on Tuesday, in the third-place playoff on Saturday, while Nigeria will meet Jamaica in a repeat of last year's final.

The match marked several important individual moments. Noufal PN and Ricky Shabong made their senior national team debuts for Jamaica, while Edmund Lalrindika was handed his first-ever start for India.

India were playing their first match on British soil since 2002 and it did not go well for the side.

A quick Jamaican counter sliced through India's shape in the eighth minute, forcing Gurpreet Singh Sandhu into a sharp save from a tight angle.

India failed to clear their lines, and Clarke intercepted a loose pass before scoring in emphatic fashion. With composure, he shifted the ball onto his right foot before unleashing a breathtaking strike into the top-right corner beyond Sandhu's desperate dive.

Jamaica, placed 71st in the FIFA Rankings, continued to attack with confidence, stretching the Indian defence through the wings and exploiting spaces with alarming ease.

Dixon nearly doubled the advantage in the 17th minute when he burst through on goal, but Sandhu stood tall and made a brave stop to keep India alive.

As the half wore on, India slowly managed to steady themselves. There were flashes of neat passing and moments of controlled possession, but the Blue Tigers lacked creativity.

Ryan Williams, Chhangte, and Lalrindika struggled to influence the game, and India reached half-time without seriously testing Jamaica goalkeeper Coniah Boyce-Clarke.

After the break, India nearly found a lifeline in the 53rd minute after a mistake from the Jamaican defence and goalkeeper.

Roshan seized upon a loose ball and played Rahim Ali through on goal after the striker had replaced Lalrindika at half-time. However, Ali had strayed offside, so Chhangte's follow-up finish into the empty net did not count.

The chance, though, transformed the momentum of the match.

Khalid Jamil's men tried to make a match of it, pushing higher up the pitch and probing the Jamaican defence with far greater intent.

But just when India seemed capable of finding a way back, Dixon produced a moment of magic that put paid to all their hopes.

The Charlton Athletic winger, playing at his home stadium, collected the ball near the edge of the area in the 78th minute and danced past defenders with dazzling footwork.

With one quick drop of the shoulder, he created space before drilling a low shot through Akash Mishra's legs and into the far bottom corner beyond Sandhu.

Novak Djokovic fights through at French Open, Elena Rybakina dumped out

PARIS: Novak Djokovic extended his latest bid for a record-breaking 25th Grand Slam title with a four-set victory over Valentin Royer in the French Open second round, but women's second seed Elena Rybakina crashed out of the tournament. Elsewhere, four-time champion Iga Swiatek and Elina Svitolina both eased into the last 32 with straight-sets wins. Djokovic had to come from a set down in his opening match against Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard and was pushed hard again by another Frenchman in Royer, before finally sealing a 6-3, 6-2, 6-7 (7/9), 6-3 win after three and three-quarter hours on Court Philippe Chatrier.

"I hope I won't play any more French players for the rest of the tournament," said the third seed, who has been tied on 24 Grand Slam titles with Margaret Court since winning the 2023 US Open, with a wry smile.

Djokovic, who beat world number one Jannik Sinner in the Australian Open last four earlier this year, cannot meet the red-hot title favourite until the final at Roland Garros.

Djokovic powered through the first two sets, although world number 74 Royer, born just 5km from Roland Garros, showed much more resistance in the third before extending the match in a brilliant tie-break.

The Serb, who twice failed to consolidate breaks of serve in the third set, made no such mistake in the fourth as he belatedly booked his place in the next round on his fifth match point.

Czech Jakub Mensik, the only player other than Djokovic to beat Sinner this year, needed eight match points before eventually downing Mariano Navone 6-3, 2-6, 6-4, 1-6, 7-6 (13/11).

Rising Spanish star Rafael Jodar reached the third round of a Grand Slam for the first time, seeing off James Duckworth 6-1, 6-7 (5/7), 6-4, 7-5.

Rybakina stunned by Starodubtseva

Australian Open champion Rybakina blew a one-set lead to exit in dramatic fashion, slumping to a 3-6, 6-1, 7-6 (10/4) loss to Ukraine's Yuliia Starodubtseva.

It is Rybakina's earliest departure from any tour-level tournament since the 2025 Miami Open and first defeat in the opening two rounds of a major since the 2024 Australian Open.

"I couldn't find the balance. I couldn't find the right shot, and it was clearly just too many mistakes," said the Kazakh world number two.

Starodubtseva will face China's Wang Xiyu for a place in the last 16.

She has already matched her previous best run at a Grand Slam event, when she lost to Jasmine Paolini in the French Open third round as a lucky loser 12 months ago.

5 Simple Ways To Remember More and Forget Less

As a researcher investigating how electric brain stimulation can improve people's powers of recollection, I'm often asked how memory works—and what we can do to use it more effectively. Happily, decades of research have given us some clear answers to both questions.

Memory essentially operates in three stages, with different brain regions contributing to each one.

Sensory memory, which can last only milliseconds, registers raw information such as sights, sounds, and smells. These are first processed by the brain's five primary sensory cortices (visual cortex for sights, auditory cortex for sounds, and so on).

Working (short-term) memory holds and manipulates a small amount of information over several seconds or more. Think of this as your brain's mental workspace: the system that lets you do mental arithmetic, follow instructions, and comprehend what you're reading. So it mainly involves the prefrontal cortex—the front part of your brain that supports attention, decision-making, and reasoning.

Finally, long-term memory stores information more permanently, from minutes to a lifetime. This includes both "explicit" memories (facts and life events) and "implicit" ones (skills, habits, and emotional associations).

For long-term memories, the hippocampus and temporal lobes—located deep within the brain, around the sides of your head near your temples—contribute largely to memories involving facts or life events, while the amygdala (near the hippocampus), cerebellum (at the back of the brain), and basal ganglia (deep in the brain) process emotional or procedural memories.

Working memory often acts as a conscious gateway to long-term memory—but it has its limits. In 1956, the American psychologist George Miller proposed that we can only hold about seven "chunks" of information in our working memory at any time.

While the exact number is debated to this day, the principle holds: working memory is limited. And that limitation can shape how effectively we learn and remember things.

But you can also get your memory working more effectively. Here are five easy steps for improving both your working and long-term memory.

1. Put your phone away

Smartphones reduce your working memory capacity. Even just having a phone nearby—no matter if it's face down and on silent—can reduce performance on memory and reasoning tasks.

The reason is that part of your brain is still subtly monitoring it. Even resisting the urge to check notifications consumes mental resources—which is why researchers sometimes call smartphones a "brain drain." The solution is simple: put your phone in another room when you need to focus. Out of sight really does free up mental capacity.

2. Stop your mind racing

Stress and anxiety can take up valuable mental space. When you're worrying about something or are distracted by racing thoughts, part of your working memory is already in use.

Relaxation training and mindfulness practices can improve both working memory and academic performance, probably by reducing stress levels. And if meditation feels intimidating, try breathing techniques such as "cyclic sighing." Inhale deeply through your nose, take a second, shorter inhale, then slowly exhale through your mouth. Repeating this for five minutes can calm the nervous system and create better conditions for learning.

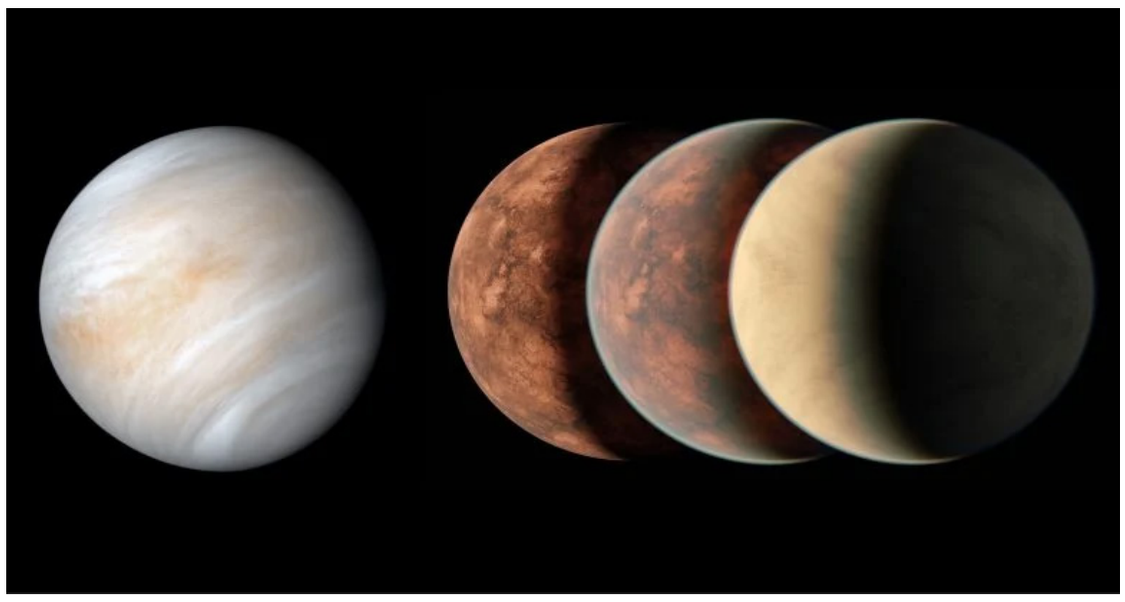
3. Get chunking

Everyone can expand their working memory using the technique of chunking—grouping information into meaningful units. In fact, you probably already do it to remember some phone numbers or lists of words—breaking long sequences into bite-size chunks that your brain can recall as a mini-group.

The same principles apply if you're delivering a presentation, to help your audience remember your key points more effectively. Chunking would involve grouping ten case studies, say, into three or four themes, each with a short headline and single key takeaway.

Earth's Secret Advantage: Why Most Alien Worlds May Be Too Dry for Life

New research suggests that many planets previously considered promising for life may, in fact, be far less hospitable.



A distant planet might sit in the perfect orbit for life, with temperatures just right for liquid water. But if that world is too dry, it could still be completely uninhabitable. New research suggests that many so-called "desert planets" may be far less promising than they appear. But new research suggests many of these dry worlds are far less likely to support life than previously thought.

A study from the University of Washington finds that an Earth-sized planet needs a surprisingly large amount of water, at least 20 to 50% of Earth's ocean volume, to maintain long-term surface habitability.

Astronomers have confirmed more than 6,000 exoplanets, with billions more expected to exist across the galaxy. Many fall within the habitable zone, where temperatures could allow liquid water. But being in the right location is only part of the story. A planet also needs stable climate controls, and those depend heavily on how water interacts with its geology and atmosphere.

"When you are searching for life in the broad landscape of the universe with limited resources, you have to filter out some planets," said lead author Haskelle White-Gianella, a UW doctoral student of Earth and space sciences.

Water Alone Is Not Enough

While water is essential, it does not automatically make a planet habitable. In this study, researchers took a closer look at planets with only small amounts of water to better understand their potential for life.

"We were interested in arid planets with very limited surface water inventory — far less than one Earth ocean. Many of these planets are in the habitable zone of their star, but we weren't sure if they could actually be habitable," White-Gianella said.

The findings, published in Planetary Science Journal, show that habitability depends on the geologic carbon cycle — a water-driven system that moves carbon between a planet's atmosphere and interior over millions of years, helping regulate surface temperature.

On Earth, carbon dioxide released by volcanoes builds up in the atmosphere before dissolving in rainwater. This rain reacts with surface rocks, and runoff carries carbon into the ocean, where it settles on the seafloor. Plate tectonics then push carbon-rich ocean crust beneath continents. Over long timescales, this carbon returns to the surface as mountains form.

If a planet does not have enough water to sustain rainfall, this cycle breaks down. Carbon removal through weathering slows, while volcanic emissions continue. As a result, carbon dioxide accumulates in the atmosphere, trapping heat. Rising temperatures cause remaining water to evaporate, triggering a cycle of warming that eventually makes the planet too hot for life.

"So that unfortunately makes these arid planets within habitable zones unlikely to be good candidates for life," White-Gianella said.

Modeling Arid Exoplanets

Although scientists can detect signs of surface water, rocky exoplanets are still difficult to observe directly. To overcome this, the research team used advanced computer simulations to study how water behaves on dry, desert-like worlds.

Earlier models of the carbon cycle focused mainly on cooler and wetter planets. These models included evaporation caused by sunlight but often left out other factors such as wind. White-Gianella improved these models to better represent dry environments by refining estimates of evaporation and precipitation.

"These sophisticated, mechanistic models of the carbon cycle have emerged from people trying to understand how Earth's thermostat has worked — or hasn't — to regulate temperature through time," said senior author Joshua Krissanen-Totton, a UW assistant professor of Earth and space sciences.

The study also highlights that the carbon cycle on arid planets has not been well studied. The results suggest that even planets that start with surface water can lose it over time, shifting from potentially habitable to uninhabitable as the carbon cycle becomes unstable.

Venus as a Nearby Example

A nearby example may be Venus. This planet is similar in size to Earth, likely formed at about the same time, and may once have had comparable amounts of water.

Today, however, Venus has surface temperatures similar to a wood-fired pizza oven. Standing there would feel like being crushed by 10 blue whales, White-Gianella said.

Scientists have long debated why Earth and Venus evolved so differently. White-Gianella and Krissanen-Totton suggest that Venus, being closer to the sun, may have started with slightly less water than Earth. This difference could have disrupted its carbon cycle. As carbon dioxide built up in the atmosphere, temperatures rose, leading to the loss of water and any possible life.

Future missions to Venus aim to uncover what happened to the planet and whether it ever supported life. These findings may also help scientists better understand distant exoplanets.

"It's very unlikely that we will land something on the surface of an exoplanet in our lifetime, but Venus — our nextdoor neighbor — is arguably the best exoplanet analog," White-Gianella said.

The team hopes that data from upcoming missions will help confirm their models.

"This has implications for a lot of the potentially habitable real estate out there," Krissanen-Totton said.