

Cricket 152

Chapter 152

Location: Dubai International Cricket Stadium

Occasion: IPL Qualifier 1 – RCB vs DC

The golden floodlights glisten over the magnificent Dubai stadium. All eyes are locked on the middle of the ground—because this is no ordinary game. This is Qualifier 1: a ticket to the grand finale.

Jatin Sapru: "Good evening, folks! The most awaited night of this thrilling IPL season is upon us. Welcome to Qualifier 1—where it's do or die for the teams, but a feast for the fans! Royal Challengers Bangalore, led by the fiery Virat Kohli, take on Delhi Capitals, a team that's danced between brilliance and breakdowns. I'm Jatin Sapru, and in the box with me are two legends—Navjot Singh Sidhu, the man who turns cricket into poetry, and Sunil Gavaskar, the voice of cricketing wisdom."

Navjot Singh Sidhu: "Oh, what a night, where stars align,

Two titans clash, with fate's design.

Fire and flair, spin and pace,

Only one shall win this race!"

Sunil Gavaskar: "Very true, Sidhu paaji. RCB has played like true champions this season, thanks in large part to a young prodigy—Aarav. He's not just topping the orange and purple caps, he's become the heartbeat of this team. If there's ever been a rising star tailor-made for a final, it's him. And tonight, we'll see how brightly he shines under pressure."

Jatin: *"Here come the openers—Shikhar Dhawan and Marcus Stoinis for Delhi. It's Aarav with the new ball! Kohli wastes no time trusting his talisman right from the first delivery."

Gavaskar: "Two slips in a T20? That's daring. Kohli and Aarav are plotting something fierce. They're strategizing like it's the final over of a World Cup final. That intensity—it's contagious."

Jatin: "Field set: deep square leg lurking, third man slips finer... mid-on slightly wide. Moeen Ali pushed to long-on. Kohli's orchestrating a chessboard here. They know exactly where to trap the mistake."

[Ball 1 – Aarav to Stoinis]

Jatin: *"The first ball of Qualifier 1. Aarav runs in, smooth as silk... short of a length... it shapes away! Stoinis swings... it's edged! Taken cleanly by AB de Villiers! First ball wicket! Unbelievable scenes here in Dubai!"

Sidhu: "The flame has lit, the fuse has run,

Stoinis gone, his job undone!

Aarav roars with fire and flair,

Delhi's hopes—floating in air!"

DC – 0/1

Gavaskar: "Absolute masterclass. Aarav anticipated the big shot, set the trap, and executed with surgical precision. The planning was meticulous—and it paid off instantly."

[Ball 2 – Ajinkya Rahane walks in]

Jatin: "Rahane takes a deep breath, adjusts his gloves, and readies himself. Aarav in again... good length... Rahane blocks it with a straight bat. Solid technique."

[Ball 3]

Jatin: "Another tight delivery. Rahane drives gently down the ground... Moeen Ali dashes across, makes a sliding stop! Two runs taken—but DC still feeling the heat."

Gavaskar: "That's smart running, but they'll need much more than that to swing this back. Rahane needs to play anchor and inspire confidence now."

[Ball 4]

Jatin: "Aarav with unwavering focus. Delivers again—bit of seam movement... defended again. Rahane is playing watchfully."

[Ball 5]

Gavaskar: "Beautiful discipline from Aarav. He's bowling like a veteran. Every ball landing on a dime."

[Ball 6 – Final delivery of the over]

Jatin: "Last ball... just straying onto the pads... Rahane attempts a flick... edge? Appeal! Given! He's out! Aarav's done it again! Rahane departs. Delhi in deep waters!"

Sidhu: "The beast arrives, the wickets fall,

Delhi backs against the wall.

Two wickets gone in sixty seconds,

RCB's storm—no one reckons!"

DC – 2/2

[Shreyas Iyer enters the field]

Jatin: "The skipper now has to rebuild. Delhi needs a captain's knock—not just to survive, but to inspire."

[Over 3 – Yuzvendra Chahal comes in]

Jatin: *"Chahal tossing it up fearlessly. Here comes the ball... Dhawan swings hard... misses... and that's the sound of timber! Chahal bowls him! Dhawan's stumps are in disarray!"

Sidhu: "He danced down blind, missed the call,

Chahal's web caught him in a fall.

Delhi crumbles, one by one,

RCB shines like the morning sun!"

DC – 22/3

[Rishabh Pant walks in]

Gavaskar: "Now it's a mental battle. Pant must fight fire with fire. This match is slipping fast unless he turns aggressor."

[Powerplay Ends – 44/3]

Jatin: "Six electrifying overs done. Delhi Capitals at 44 for 3. Aarav with two scalps, Chahal with a classic. This powerplay belonged to the Royal Challengers."

Sidhu: "In desert's heart, where tempers flare,

RCB hunts with lion's glare.

Aarav leads with shining might,

The orange-purple knight of night!"

Gavaskar: "This team looks hungry. Focused. Tactical. And most importantly, fearless. And Aarav—he's looking like a generational talent. This Qualifier is turning into his stage."

Jatin Sapru: "Welcome back, everyone! What a rollercoaster we've had so far. Delhi Capitals have rebuilt a bit thanks to Rishabh Pant's aggressive strokeplay, but the game is hanging in the balance. Aarav is back now for his second over—he was lethal in his first spell, but will the momentum shift again?"

Navjot Singh Sidhu: "The sword returns to the battlefield bright, To carve through the dusk with fire and fight. He comes with thunder, calm in his eyes, One more chapter in these cricketing skies!"

Sunil Gavaskar: "Pant has been the anchor, the engine, and the ignition switch for Delhi's innings so far. But don't count out Aarav. Even one tight over now could choke the flow. Let's see how this pans out."

Over 12: Aarav to Bowl

Jatin: *"Here comes Aarav, calm as ever, with the field spread out. Fine leg, third man, deep midwicket, long off and long on in place. Pant on strike."

Ball 1: Short and wide outside off – Pant slashes – single to deep point.

Ball 2: Fuller to Iyer, driven through extra cover – two runs!

Ball 3: Good length, on off – Iyer defends. Dot ball.

Ball 4: Slower one! Iyer misses the scoop – dot again.

Ball 5: Pulled away! Short ball, Pant swivels – two runs to fine leg.

Ball 6: Yorker, dug out – single taken.

End of the over. 8 runs from it. DC: 106/3

Gavaskar: "Excellent variation from Aarav. No wickets, but no big damage either. This is gold dust in the middle overs."

Sidhu: "A warrior rests, his spell is calm, Eight from six, yet full of charm. The dragon breathes, but keeps its flame, Aarav plays the silent game."

[Overs 13-13.5: Delhi Rotates the Strike]

Pant continues the momentum, rotating the strike with Iyer. A couple of boundaries from Iyer off Harshal Patel in the 14th over raise the heartbeat.

Jatin: "This is smart cricket by Iyer and Pant. They're choosing their bowlers, targeting the right deliveries. But look who's getting ready again... it's Aarav! Coming back for his third over!"

Over 14: Aarav Returns – The Breakthrough!

Ball 1: Length delivery, angled in – Pant flicks for one.

Ball 2: Slower bouncer, Iyer ducks. Dot.

Ball 3: Yorker, Iyer digs it out for a single.

Ball 4: Good length – Pant swings... IN THE AIR... AND TAKEN AT DEEP MIDWICKET!!!

Jatin: "GONE! Aarav gets the big fish! Rishabh Pant departs for 56 off 42 balls!"

Gavaskar: "What a timely wicket. Just when DC were looking to explode. Aarav's golden arm does it again!"

Sidhu: "Pant danced to a furious beat, But Aarav's trap, he couldn't cheat. He soared so high, to clear the wall, But down he came, like pride before the fall!"

Score: 124/4

[Hetmyer Walks In]

Jatin: "Shimron Hetmyer walks out now. Known for his finishing flair, but this pitch hasn't been easy for the new batters. Let's see how he adapts."

Ball 5: Aarav to Hetmyer – slower one – defended. Dot ball.

Ball 6: Back of a length – dabbed to third man for one. Hetmyer gets off the mark.

End of Over 14: DC – 125/4

Gavaskar: "RCB keeping the leash on. Brilliantly executed over again. Pant's wicket is a huge blow for Delhi."

Hetmyer struggles to rotate. Iyer tries to pick up pace. Two boundaries from Iyer in the 15th keep them alive, but Siraj bowls a tight 16th over.

Sidhu: "One blade swings, the other still, Pressure mounting, testing will. Delhi's fight is wearing thin, RCB's grip is sinking in."

Over 17: Siraj Strikes

Jatin: "Siraj to Hetmyer – slower short ball outside off... he tries to guide it... ohhh that's up... and TAKEN AT SHORT THIRD! Hetmyer falls trying to get cheeky. A soft dismissal!"

Gavaskar: "That's not what DC needed. Brilliantly disguised slower one. Hetmyer misread it completely."

Sidhu: "A whisper in the air it flew, To third man's hands like morning dew. The flash was late, the shot too cute, Another one bites the bitter fruit."

Score: 137/5

[Axar Patel Walks In]

Jatin: "DC are now depending on Iyer and the lower order for a good finish. 3 overs to go. Can they reach 160 or 170?"

Over 18:

Axar: tries to swing – misses.

Axar: flicks for a single.

Iyer: FOUR through cover!

Iyer: single to long-on.

Axar: dot ball.

Axar: pushes one to deep point.

DC: 144/5

Over 19: Aarav's Final Over

Jatin: "Here it is, folks. Aarav's final over. Final chance for DC to turn this into a big one. Can he finish strong?"

Ball 1: Slower ball to Axar— strikes for a four to long-off.

Ball 2: Short, wide... Axar pulls... IN THE AIR... STRAIGHT TO FINCH AT DEEP MIDWICKET! CAUGHT! ANOTHER FOR AARAV!

Jatin: "Another one bites the dust! Aarav with his second wicket of the night!"

Gavaskar: "He's not just a bowler, he's a finisher. Calm, composed and clinical."

Sidhu: "A trap set wide with ghostly hands, He pulled too soon on dusty lands. To Finch he flew, a gift so plain, Another falls to Aarav's reign."

Score: 148/6

[Rabada Walks In]

Ball 3: Dot. Fast yorker.

Ball 4: Single to deep cover.

Ball 5: Yorker – dug out – single to long-on.

Ball 6: FULL – leading edge – to long-off – THEY RUN TWO – THROW COMES – RABADA'S GONE! RUN OUT!!

Jatin: "It's a runout to end the innings! Rabada sacrifices himself! What a dramatic end! DC finish at 151/7 in 20 overs."

Sidhu: "They came to war, with dreams on fire, But Aarav rose, and raised them higher. With blade and ball, he writes his fate, Delhi ends with a challenging weight!"

Gavaskar: "151 is not a bad total, but RCB will back themselves here. Especially with Aarav in this kind of form. The pressure will now shift to DC's bowlers."

Jatin: "So there we have it, folks. 20 overs, 151 runs, 7 wickets down. Delhi had their moments. Rishabh Pant and Not-Out Shreyas Iyer was the standout. But it was Aarav's 4 wickets and superb control across 4 overs that kept DC from reaching 160 or more."

Sidhu: "In battle's heat, the stars align, Aarav's spell was sharp, divine. A force of nature, cool and proud, His roar still echoes through the crowd!"

Gavaskar: "RCB's fielding, bowling and game awareness has been top notch. Delhi will need early wickets if they want to make a match of this. Stay tuned—the chase promises to be a thriller."

Commentary Team POV

Live from Dubai International Cricket Stadium

Jatin Sapru: "Welcome back, ladies and gentlemen, to the electrifying city of Dubai, where the stage is set for the second innings of this epic IPL Qualifier 1 clash! The target for Royal Challengers Bangalore is 157. Not the tallest mountain to climb, but with pressure in the air and every ball a potential twist, nothing can be taken for granted. Joining me tonight, as always, is the poetic firestorm of words, Navjot Singh Sidhu, and the man who's faced it all, the legendary Little Master, Sunil Gavaskar."

Navjot Singh Sidhu: "Jatin mere veer, the night is young and the battle fierce, The blades are sharp, the minds are clear. Kohli and Finch, a pair so grand, With bat in hand, they'll make their stand!"

Sunil Gavaskar: "Well said, Sidhu. This pitch has settled a bit. It was slightly two-paced in the first innings but now should behave a little better. Marcus Stoinis will look to strike early, and with Finch on strike, the first over becomes all the more crucial."

[Start of the 1st Over – Marcus Stoinis to bowl, Aaron Finch on strike]

Jatin Sapru: "Here we go! Marcus Stoinis steams in like a thunderbolt—Finch facing the first ball."

Ball 1:

Marcus Stoinis bowls a perfect in-swinger, landing on a good length. Finch stretches forward but misses the timing. The ball thuds into the pads, no run.

Sunil Gavaskar: "Right in the channel! Marcus Stoinis is testing him right away. That ball jagged back in beautifully."

Navjot Singh Sidhu: "Like a cobra with venom pure, That ball had danger, of that I'm sure! Finch stood still, the blade held tight, But Marcus Stoinis's swing gave him a fright!"

Ball 2:

Another in-swinger, this one slightly fuller. Finch leans into it and blocks it with soft hands. No run again.

Jatin Sapru: "Two deliveries, two in-swingers, and two nervous pushes from Finch. Marcus Stoinisa is breathing fire!"

Sunil Gavaskar: "It's all about patience now. Finch needs to settle down and trust his defense."

Ball 3:

This time, Marcus Stoinis pulls off a masterpiece. An out-swinger! Finch thinks it's another inswinger and gets caught on the front foot. The ball kisses the edge, carries perfectly to Rishabh Pant who dives and clutches it safely.

Jatin Sapru: "GONE! Marcus Stoinis gets Finch! The plan worked! RCB are 0 for 1!"

Sunil Gavaskar: "Brilliant change of line. That's what world-class bowlers do. You show the same trick twice and then switch. The third ball, Finch thought he read it—but it was a completely different tale."

Navjot Singh Sidhu: "Three is the charm, they often say, And Finch has thrown his bat away. Marcus Stoinis's roar, the desert shook, One little edge was all it took!"

Jatin Sapru: "Here comes the man who's had a dream season—Aarav, the star of RCB and IPL this season, walking in with a jog and a beaming smile. Confidence oozing, energy surging!"

Aarav jogs in, helmet in hand, and reaches the pitch. He taps gloves with Virat Kohli who's standing calmly, nodding with reassurance.

Aarav (to Kohli, smiling): "Let's finish this early, bhaiya! I'm feeling little lazy tonight and need good night sleep."

Virat (grinning): "Let's give them a night to remember. Let's go, champ."

Navjot Singh Sidhu: "Two flames, one fire – they now unite, In Dubai's night, they'll show their might! Aarav's spark and Kohli's flame, this chase will never be the same!"

Sunil Gavaskar: "It's an interesting time. Aarav is young, fearless, and bold. But this is a knockout—nerves will be tested."