

## **The Times of India**

**Title : ATK are the Manchester United of ISL**

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As the Hero Indian Super League comes down to its final stage, picking the leader from the rest isn't difficult anymore. Atletico de Kolkata are growing in confidence with every day and it won't be off the mark to state that they have gained the stature of Manchester United of Indian Super League.

For debate's sake, let's ignore the league table. But how can you ignore ATK's consistency and character culminating into sterling performances?

Atletico, at the moment, look the most balanced side. Mind you, the balance is not just on paper. Rather, it has been struck on the field with both Indians and their foreign recruits contributing for the cause.

Their last two performances where they completely outplayed -first Chennaiyin FC and then FC Goa, both very strong contenders -have been convincing to say the least.

The best thing for Atletico is the form of their foreign recruits. They have taken time to settle down but are now making the difference. A lot was spoken about Ian Hume as he had struggled a bit to find the back of the net in the initial stages. But he is back to his usual self.

Add to that the support from Sameehg Douthie has been exemplary. The guile and experience of Borja had always been their strength and at the back, Tiri has struck a chord with the others.

If you go back to the initial stages, the Indians had taken over the mantle which gave the foreign recruits the cushion and the time to settle down. That's the perfect balance a team can pray for. And now as the foreigners come into their groove, the Indians have continued their good run too.

That has been the highlight of the league so far: ATK's perfect conglomeration of Indians with the foreigners. Other teams may have had exceptional days but ATK scores in terms of consistency and the balance which they have strived hard to achieve.

So much so, that Kolkata have already scored 20 goals so far while conceding 13. If you compare it to the last season, that's already a marked improvement although I feel defensively, they might just need to do a bit more to get it perfect.

Arata Izumi and Amrinder Singh stay two of the best Players in the entire edition so far, foreigners included. All of that has contributed to the results coming on a daily basis. They seem to be peaking at the right moment. After all, their character and records speak for themselves.

Not to forget all of this has been achieved without their marquee Player. Helder Postiga was injured in the first match and hasn't taken the field since. In the forthcoming matches, Postiga featuring either in the Starting XI or maybe coming in as a sub will add more power to their strike force. They look in great shape.