

## **The Times of India**

**Title : ISL REPORT - Super Hume powers ATK into SF**

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### **Nets 2nd Hat-Trick Of Season As Champions Thump Pune City 4-1**

Atletico de Kolkata are looking like champions again.

Antonio Lopez Habas' defending champions decimated FC Pune City 4-1 at the Salt Lake Stadium on Friday in a clinical display that helped them become the first team to qualify for the semifinals of ISL-2. It was also their first win over Pune in two seasons.

Iain Hume starred in ATK's big win, scoring his second hat-trick of the tournament and taking his tally to nine - just a goal behind Steven Mendoza of Chennaiyin FC.

With 23 points from 13 games, ATK accomplished their primary target of sealing a knockout berth in style. Stuck on 15 points with two games to play, FC Pune City's chances are as good as over.

Following his hat-trick against Mumbai City FC on November 1, which signaled the turnaround for ATK's campaign, Hume devastated FC Pune City, providing finishes to some superbly-built counter-moves.

Former Romanian great Adrian Mutu pulled one back for Pune, when his side was already 0-3 down, but ATK's second-half sub Dejan Lekic put the icing on the cake with a brilliant solo run, which turned out to be the final move of the game. Pune can consider themselves unlucky as three of their attempts were denied by the woodwork, while ATK centre-back Tiri came up with a goalline save. But ATK were clinical, and had so much penetration and variety that Pune were left clueless.

Mutu was in the heart of every Pune move. The Romanian great saw his rasping left-footer bounce off the post in the 22nd minute, while on another occasion, his acrobatic volley from inside the box just missed the target.

ATK have developed a distinct pattern in their recent play, which allows them to take the opponents by storm with counter-attacks at breathtaking pace. Such moves usually start with a long, pinpoint cross from their own half, from either of defensive midfielders Borja Fernandez or Jaime Gavilan, and involve just three-four touches before the likes of Hume and Doutie enter the box threatening to pull the trigger.

ATK have been getting better with every game in executing this plan and Friday was no exception.

In the 16th minute, Doutie found Arata Izume with a superb through ball from the centre circle. As the FC Pune City defence took time to react, perhaps on seeing Hume standing in an offside position, Arata stormed the unprotected right channel of the box and laid it off coolly for Hume to bulge the netting.

Just when Pune were looking to regroup, ATK killed the contest with a second goal, two minutes after the break.

True to their attacking pattern, Borja played the role of a provider, finding Hume with a delectable ball and the Canadian finished the move beautifully - meeting it with a first-touch sidevolley which gave goalkeeper Arindam Bhattacharya no chance to react.

Within six minutes, Hume was again in the thick of action, this time in the role of a savior, as he at the right place at the right time to clear the ball from inside the box after Mutu's attempt came off the upright.

With Pune desperately looking to score, Hume sniffed the opportunity to get his second hat-trick. And Douthett made it possible in the 83rd minute, initiating another counter-move and releasing the ball perfectly from the byline for Hume to tap home and notch his ninth goal in this edition. When the imperious Mutu finally pulled one back, rekindling his old magic, it was too little too late for his team to change the script.

To add to Pune's misery, Lekic made it 4-1 deep in injury time as ATK ended their jinx against Pune in the most appropriate way.



Atletico de Kolkata's Hume celebrates after scoring his first goal against FC Pune City at the Salt Lake Stadium on Friday