

Pattaya CC outshine the Asian Stars CC in the semi-final of the Bangkok Cricket League.

Saturday 11 May saw what was proposed to be a titanic struggle between PCC and their nemesis, Asian Stars CC, at the AIT ground in Pathum Thai. The loser would earn the honour of being third in Division A and the winner would play Bangkok Blues in the final on the following day.

PCC had never beaten Asian Stars and not having Luke Stokes (he was playing in the Premiership Final for The Southerners), Mike Gerits (injured calf muscle) and Trevor Moolman, was not helping. To compensate, Preet Singh was back in the team and Simon Philbrook and the World's largest 12th man, Animal, were given a run.

The weather was warm and overcast as Andy Emery and Dharmesh Mer conducted the Toss as witnessed by umpires Tauseef Khalid and Robin John. Andy won the toss and decided to bowl first. Thus Waseem (Sam) Raza and Prashant Bhatt occupied the creases and Ryan Driver took the new ball. Success for Ryan was almost immediate the third ball kept low and ducked into Sam's pad, out for a duck and 1 for 1. Andre Human bowled the next over and he too claimed a scalp, that of Prashant bowled for 1. This was a dream start for PCC but the hedonism was not over. Ryan's second over, a wicket maiden, had Deepak Rawat caught behind by the new slip supremo, Ben Walter, for another duck and 3 for 4 in the 3rd over. Dharmesh was providing some resistance with well-timed boundaries from both bowlers, but he could not get any support from his team mates. Hardik Rathod only lasted 4 balls as he went for the 3rd duck of the day (he would not be the last), bowled by Andre, 24 for 4 in the 6th over and a disastrous start by the Asian Stars. Ryan usually bowls his allotted 5 overs straight through and his 4th over also met with success as another wicket maiden, with Dharmesh trudging back to the tent having skied a ball to Habby Singh at cover for 18. Preet Singh took over from Andre and he earned a wicket maiden by removing Bilal Rana for another duck, caught behind by the keeper, Jainish Parikh. Ryan's final over did little to soothe Asian Stars' nightmare as Mazhar Mugal was caught behind by Ben diving low to his right. 25 for 7 in the 9th over. Ryan finished with 5 overs, 4 for 10. At this point Asian arrested their cricketing capitulation via Amit Chaturvedi and Ronik Sony whose dogged determination lifted the run rate from 2.5 per over to 3.5 until the 20th over, but it was too slow to be a threatening recovery. Rony was the first to go with the score on 68, well caught and bowled by Habby in his first over, for 19. His wicket was the beginning of another mini collapse that finally dimmed Asian Stars lights. Lakhvinder Singh was at the crease for a brief 4 before he was bowled by Steve Christie and Asian Stars were in the death throws at 79 for 9. Sunil Saqlain faced 1 ball before Amit brought the innings to a conclusion at 79 all out when he lost wicket, caught by Ryan at cover off Habby's bowling with his score on 19. The innings had only lasted 21.1 overs with six zeros on the board.

The wicket was providing a smidgen of assistance to the bowlers so the PCC bowlers needed to be alert as the Asian Stars bowling attack was very capable. Roshan Perera had been promoted to opening bat alongside Ryan and started with a boundary 4 against Bilal. A leg bye took Ryan to the facing end which proved to be his undoing as Bilal clattered the woodwork and Ryan departed for a duck. So many ducks and so little water!!! It was hoped that this would not instigate a collapse as Andy, promoted to No 3, took the crease, but it was averted by some superb batting from Roshan and excellent support from Andy. Roshan had some luck when he was on 26 and a ball from Bilal was looped down to Dharmesh at Third man who then dropped the straightforward catch. Some rash fielding from Asian Stars led to boundary overthrows, giving Andy a 5 and a 7. The Asian Stars bowlers bowled accurately and economically, but they were never going to keep the run rate down to 3.2 per over without taking many

wickets. They were unable to achieve either of those aims and Roshan scored the winning runs with a boundary 4, finishing on 47 not out in 13.2 overs. Andy was 27 not out. Bilal had the best figures for Asian Stars with 5 overs, 28 for 1.

Asian Stars went home in 3rd place and a little shell-shocked having been beaten so comprehensively, whilst PCC yearned for revenge and the opportunity to defeat Bangkok Blues in the Final.

PCC would like to thank their sponsors, the Outback Bar, the Magic Bar, and the Pattaya Sports Club for their support and assistance.