

### **A low scoring game against Asian Stars CC and a record number of LBWs keep Pattaya CC in the top 4**

Welcome back after the Christmas break. Just to re-cap, PCC were in 4<sup>th</sup> place with 2 wins and 2 losses with 4 more matches to play and needed to win at least three to remain in the top 4 for the finals group.

The format for this match on Sunday 19 at HSP against Asian Stars CC was reduced to 22 overs and the start delayed until 1330 by the BCL. It turned out to be a low scoring match where the ASCC were hampered by tight bowling from PCC in which Vishnu took 5 for 19 in 5 overs and PCC's leading batsmen failing to trouble the scorer due to getting their pads in the way of the ball with 3 LBWs.

Bharat Singh won the toss and decided to bat first, which saw Sam Razaw and Hardik Rathod open against Andre Human. Sam, normally a big hitter was undone by the second ball, a low full toss and lost his middle stump for a duck. This brought in Maz Murghal to face Habby Singh's first over, the final ball of which, a sure-fire 2 runs, but a superb throw from Karan Mehta on the boundary saw Maz run out for 3. 11 for 2 in the 2<sup>nd</sup> over was not the start ASCC were looking for and it got worse. Bilal Ahmed entered the fray and heard the clattering of woodwork on his first delivery from Andre and wandered back to the tent with a golden duck. Bilal Rana joined Hardik and steadied the ship for a few overs and managed the first boundary 6 off Habby. 23 for 3 after 5 overs. The 6<sup>th</sup> over brought a change of bowlers as Ben Walter and Vishnu BS took over. Vishnu was bowling with some venom, and a bunch of wides, as Bilal skied a ball to the mid-wicket boundary where Ben took an excellent catch. Bilal went for 12 and the score 4 for 29 at the 8<sup>th</sup> over. Vishnu was getting the balls to lift from just short of a length and Hardik got an edge which was gobbled up by Jainish for his first of 2 catches for the day. Hardik had faced 23 balls for his 3 runs which was a testament to PCC's accurate bowling. Ajay Bijwe and Bharat Singh occupied the creases but not for long as Vishnu's 3<sup>rd</sup> over created havoc. Bharat went for a duck, LBW, and drinks were taken early at 34 for 6. Upon resumption of play, Bunty Kumar only lasted 2 balls for his duck as Vishnu claimed another LBW and the wheels appeared to have fallen off the ASCC wagon. However, Ajay was having none of it, but Vishnu was not done. Another lifting ball got an edge and Inderpal Singh went for 4 at 48 for 8 in the 14<sup>th</sup> over. It looked like ASCC would be all out for 60 or so, but Ajay hit out. He managed to pick his shots when the bowling changed to Marcus Chaukley and Andy Emery, although he was lucky when Ben caught him on the boundary but stepped over the line. Ajay was batting well but running out of friends as Habby returned to the attack and broke Mohammed Saqlain's middle stump in two for 8 runs in the 21<sup>st</sup> over. 97 for 9. Andre took the last over and Ajay's luck ran out, caught by Habby at the long on boundary for a face-saving 40 runs and ASCC were all out for 103, with extras an unacceptable 28 including 21 wides. When will PCC learn to bowl straight?

PCC did not expect such a meagre run-chase to pose any problems, but ASCC had other ideas as the outcome looked uncertain at times. PCC opened with Luke Stokes and Ben Walter facing tidy bowling from Bilal Rana and Hardik Rathod. Ben got a top edge off Bilal which he caught and Ben went for 9. Disappointing and unnecessary. Hardik, a left-hand round the wicket bowler, managed to find some turn and get a ball to straighten, resulting in an LBW duck for Luke. 13 for 2. It was not going well and it got worse. Mike Gerits was in with Andre and he too fell in short order, LBW to Bharat Singh for 6 with the score on 27 for 3 in the 6<sup>th</sup> over. At least Mike was batting well against Mohammed S, but others kept throwing the wickets away. Jainish was the next to go with yet another hit that didn't get over the long on boundary, caught by Hardik for 7 on 50 for 4. Karan Mehta took the crease but only for 1 ball as he too fell LBW to a ball that was believed to have got some bat on it and PCC were struggling at 51 for 5 in the 11<sup>th</sup> over. Enter Habby Singh. Mike had some luck as a difficult chance was dropped by Bilal Ahmed

off Bilal R, and a few balls later hit a ball straight to Mohammed S at cover for a reasonable 30 runs. 61 for 6 and PCC needed someone to keep their wicket. Vishnu did a good job of supporting Habby who set about Mohammed S and Bilal A with 18 in one over, but they kept their wickets and passed 103 in the 18<sup>th</sup> over with 4 wickets to spare.

The MotM was awarded to Vishnu for his 19 for 5 from 5 overs, with honourable mentions to Ajay for his 40, to Andre for his 8 for 3 from 3.4 overs and Habby for 38 not out. 5 LBWs in one match was deemed to be a record.

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