

Pattaya CC dig deep for a 4 run win in the Play-off Eliminator against Bangkok Blues CC.

Readers may recall that PCC were in second position last week and looking forward to a playoff in the Final Qualifier. However, Kerala Strikers had their final table match against The British Club and managed to squeeze a victory mainly due to excessive extras by BCCC (where have we heard that before) and forced PCC back into 3rd place and an Eliminator against The Bangkok Blues CC.

The Eliminator was played at AIT University in Bangkok and gave the Bangkok Blues an opportunity for revenge for the previous week's drubbing by PCC. Sneaky tactics were employed by BBCC by bringing in ringers and illegally using the 12th man, but it was to no avail. Overnight rain on the grass wicket produced a low, slow track and some swing with the new ball, but the outfield was very fast. BBCC's bowling was very tight and PCCs runs came in splurges from the big hitters but PCC were all out, the first time since May 2023, for 157, a defendable score but also a chaseable one. It was neck and neck throughout the innings, but the momentum changed in the 20th over as BBCC were stifled by superb bowling from Habby Sing and Vishnu BS. However, poor catching nearly cost PCC the match as Anwar was dropped twice in his superb 95. The game went down to the last ball as BBCC lost the run chase by 4 runs.

Andy Emery lost the toss against Kamlesh Singh, as witnessed by umpires Irfan Shaukat and Tamim Chowdhury, and PC were asked to bat. PCC opened with Luke Stokes and Mike Gerits against the bowling of Hasnain Bukhari and Vivek Yadav. Ben Walter was unavailable due to illness. The bowling was very tidy and runs were hard to get. Hasnain struck first with a dubious LBW decision and Luke went for 1. Jainish Parikh was promoted to No 3 and both he and Mike slowly added runs, 17 for 1 after 5 overs. Pradeep Maurya bowled the 8th over and had Jainish playing across the line and the ball clipped the leg stump. Jainish out for 13 and PCC 36 for 2. Andre Human took the crease, but only lasted a few overs as Masud Anwar entered the attack and Andre went back to a ball he should have gone forward to and was bowled for 5, 48 for 3 off 10 overs and a slowish start but too many wickets lost. Habby Singh joined Mike and was dropped by Hasnain at extra cover – a costly mistake. The run rate picked up to 8 per over as Habby late cut boundaries and Kamlesh changed the bowling attack. 92 for 3 at drinks. Shantanu joined the bowling attack and had immediate success by inducing a top edge from Mike who was caught for 36 by Manish Sexana at extra cover. This brought Karan Mehta to the field, another impact batsman and he did exactly that with the first 6 of the match. Karan and Habby assaulted Shantanu and Kamlesh as they pushed the score to 126/4 off 18 overs. Habby finally fell for 42 from 32 balls when was caught by Shantanu at mid-on from Kamlesh, 130/5 from 19. Karan was the next wicket to fall, again to Kamlesh, LBW for 19. The run rate fell a little as wickets tumbled and Kamlesh continued to hamper PCC's progress. Andy Emery was caught by Kamlesh off Pradeep in the 21st over and 138/7. Marcus and Vishnu provided a little stability for a few overs as the PCC tail end scored a few runs, but finally succumbed 4 balls short of 25 overs on 157 all out. Kamlesh had taken 4 for 28 and a catch.

PCC would have to bowl and field well to keep an accomplished batting team in check. Masud and Vinay Rao opened against Andre and Habby. Once again, few runs were available and LBW came into play early with Vinay going for 2 to Habby. Raghvendra Yadav went out but was told to return to the tent as he was a restricted player, so Manish went out instead. Tidy bowling except for 12 from the fifth, 25/1 from 5 overs. Habby was bowling well but Vishnu was rather loose in his first over but did well thereafter. Marcus Chaukley joined the attack and struck first ball when an outswinger got an edge for Jainish to snaffle, Manish dismissed for 14. Raghvendra came back out and Masud set about Marcus. 56

for 2 from 10 overs. Vishnu had a weird over with 5 wides and 6 dots – it would have been better without the wides and they may prove to be crucial. Marcus struck again in his next over, trapping Raghvendra LBW for 2 and 64 for 3 at the 12th over. Kamlesh arrived to assist Masud who passed 50 in the next expensive over from Andy Emery. The pair reached 96 for 3 at drinks and appeared to be taking charge amid some rather wayward bowling. Marcus bowled better and Terry Pavia's spin bowling was lucky not to take a wicket as Marcus dropped Anwar twice in the same over when Masud was in the 60's. BBCC were slightly behind with wickets in hand at the 19th over on 124/3, but then the heroes of the moment arrived, Habby and Vishnu. Habby gave nothing away and Vishnu had Kamlesh caught at mid-off by Luke for 15 and Pradeep bowled for 1 run. 130 for 5 off 21 overs and things were looking interesting with 28 needed from 4 overs. Mohammed Umar went for a golden duck, caught behind off Habby and only 1 off the over. Vishnu bowled well as Habby dropped Vivek at deep square leg and the pressure was mounting. Andre bowled his last over, an awful one with 13 given away, 149 for 6. 9 needed as Andy bowled the last over. Masud lost his stumps on the second ball and the death was left to Vivek and Shantanu. No boundaries were forthcoming and 5 were needed off the last ball. Shantanu was run out and BBCC finished on 153 for 8 and a win to PCC by 4 runs.

What a match. PCC showed great strength of character and dug deep to secure a hard-won victory. PCC will play Kerala Strikers next Saturday at AIT in the semi-final and hopefully Kerala Tuskers in the final the following day.

The MotM was awarded to Habby Singh for his 42 and 2 for 13 from 5 overs.

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