

Pattaya CC snuff out the Kerala Strikers in the A Division Semi-Final.

Pattaya CC having won their Eliminator match the previous week, traveled to AIT University to play the semi-final match against the Kerala Strikers CC who had lost their Qualifier against the Tuskers. KSCC had beaten an understrength PCC earlier in the year by 8 runs and this gave them an unjustified sense of confidence which was about to be shattered.

A hot and airless morning on a flat track and fast outfield saw Andy Emery and Shanaz Shajahan conducting the toss at 0915, as witnessed by umpires Tamin Chowdury and Robin John. Andy won and decided to bat first.

As usual Luke Stokes and Mike Grits opened the batting, against Asif Thacoli and Shanaz. Honours were fairly even in the first 6 overs as the bowling attack was fairly tidy and the batsmen niggled way with the occasional boundary. 30 runs off the first 5 overs brought a bowling change and Aju John's spin. Aju was replaced by more spin from Suraj NS as he was too expensive. Suraj didn't help either. 64 for 0 from 10 overs was a very productive start for PCC. Luke was taking the majority of the strike and when Navaneeth Vinod arrived, he was able to increase the run rate by another notch as he passed 50 runs in the 11th over. The 12th over saw Navaneeth hit for 3 boundary 4s by Luke and he was replaced by Aju. 95 for 0 after 13 overs. Aju was duly given the treatment by Luke as KSCC's all spin attack was not getting results. Drinks were taken at 15 overs with the score on 110 for 0 with PCC in control and looking at a 190-200 score. Naveen Varghees (Hulk) got smashed for 3 boundary 6s by Luke who passed 100 in the 17th over with another boundary 4. Runs were now coming at 10 or more per over, irrespective of who bowled and KSCC were being taken to the cleaners. The 20th over saw the score at 166 for 0. Mike Gerits had been steadily plugging away all game and was approaching his 50 when he was caught on the long on boundary by the Sub (Rosha) for 46 off Hulk. 176/1. This brought Ben Walter to the crease who decided he needed to make a mark in the final 4 overs. Both Ben and Luke (twice) were dropped in the closing stages as both batsmen battered 6s all around the ground. Ben hit 21 runs off the last over and denied Luke his 150 as he finished 149 not out and Ben on 32 from only 11 balls. The final score was 233 for 1 from 25 overs. KSCC realized they had almost zero chance of chasing 234 to win.

Shanaz and Amal Devraj opened against Andre Human and Habby Singh and disaster struck with the very first ball as Shanaz lost his off stump and a wicket maiden to open. 0 for 1. Disaster had a brother, as Habby's first ball bowled Amal for another golden duck. 4 for 2. That was it, the game was lost at this point, barring a miracle. Somewhat loose bowling from Andre followed, but Habby remained very tidy. Mohit Upreti and Jidesh Aravind provided some resistance as they passed 28 for 2 from 5 overs. Loose keeping leached boundary byes as Habby decided to bowl wides and no balls as Extras became the highest scorer as KSCC passed 51 for 2 at the 7th over. A bowling change brought Ben and Vishnu to the attack. Ben struck on his 3rd ball when Mohit was LBW for 19 and Jainish missed a chance as Aju got an edge. 64 for 3. Vishnu left the field to repair his shoes which brought Animal Slater on for a cameo appearance and Marcus Chalkley to bowl. Success was immediate as Ben held a good catch at point to dismiss Jidesh for 20. 74 for 4 in the 11th over. A good score but wickets were becoming an issue. The Hulk went in, but not for long as he was dismissed by the most amazing catch, so amazing it had bells and whistles on it, from Luke at Long-off, for 1 off Ben's bowling. 78 for 5 in the 12th. There was still time to take a wicket before drinks as Aju was caught by Ben for 21 off Marcus. Drinks were taken early at 99 for 6. Marcus decided he wasn't finished taking wickets in the remainder of the over as he bowled Suraj for 15. 100 for 7 after 15 overs. Andy Emery joined the bowling attack to mop up the tile enders which

he did by having Asif caught by Luke for 5. Tezza finished off the Strikers by using his spin bowling skills to skittle out Suvesh and Navaneeth for 4 and 2 respectively, bowled and LBW. KSCC were all out for 124 in 19.2 over and PCC won by a significant margin of 109 runs. PCC would play Kerala Tuskers the next day for the Final in a confident and bullish mood. They knew the trophy would be theirs. They could feel it.

Marcus Chalkley had bowled well with 3 for 21, but the MotM ward went to Luke Stokes for his 149 not out and 2 catches.

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