

35th Intl Chiang Mai 6s – The Drifters Part 1 – Preliminary Stages

This very well-known and well-attended cricketing extravaganza took place at the Gymkhana Ground at Chiang Mai from Sun 30 March until 5 April 2025 inc. The ground had made a remarkable recovery after the floods due to the efforts of the Committee and ground staff and although not at its best, it will be in peak condition by next year.

There were 31 teams, including 3 ladies teams from 10 countries from such far-flung places as; England (5), Australia (13), New Zealand (1), UAE (1), Greece (1), Finland (1), Thailand (5), Laos (1), Bangladesh (1) and Japan (2). The Drifters had a 100% attendance record but their original team of Tim Peters and John Pike was supplemented by Luke Stokes, Habby Singh, Mike Gerits and Simon Philbrook (also a previous Drifters member) from Pattaya CC and finally Abaid Ullah from The Southerners.

The 6's format is a far cry from the limited-over matches that you see around the world with 5 overs per innings with each player bowling one over, except the wicket keeper. Wides and No Balls accrue 3 runs each and are not re-bowled and there is no free-hit. Batsmen who score 30 have to retire and cannot return. A par score would be 60-65 and a good score over 75. The teams were divided into Players and Gentlemen Divisions and their positions after 3 matches would determine which trophy they would play for. There were 4 points for a win, 2 each for a tie and bonus points for scoring certain amount of runs or taking a certain number of wickets.

The Drifters' first match was against the Lanna Purple Helmets (LPH) who had won the toss and decided to bat first. This led Paul Jeffels and Richie George to the batting creases to face bowling from Luke Stokes which was somewhat erratic and cost 17 runs for the over. Tim, on temporary loan as Mike Gerits and Ubaid were unavailable, was a little less expensive off the bat but a No Ball 9 brought the total to 26 after 2 overs. Habby Singh and Tim Peters both bowled well and kept the score to 38 from 4 overs. John Pike got knocked around the ground and was unlucky not to claim a wicket when Luke dropped a catch – a rare event. Richie retired on 34 and LPH finished on 63 for 0.

The Drifters did not expect too much difficulty in reaching 63. Luke Stokes and Habby Singh took the crease and immediately assaulted Martin Peters with boundaries. All the LPH bowlers got the same treatment and Habby retired on 31 from 8 balls. Luke continued the assault and remained on 28 not out having added more boundaries (a total of 6 fours and 4 sixes). The Drifters reached 66 in 3 overs and 5 balls to record a win by 6 wickets and 6 points for the table. A good start to the competition.

Day 2, Monday 31, was a match against the Divine Felons. The Drifters won the toss and decided to bowl. Abaid bowled the first over and was taken to task by Asim Rana and Shiv Shankar for 20 runs. Luke bowled Asim for 16 and only gave away 8 runs, 28 for 1 after 2.

Habby further tighten the screws when he forced a top edge from Shiva and took a caught & bowled for 10. 36 for 2 off 3 with Andy McLean in. John Pike took the last over and managed to have Andy run out courtesy of a good throw. Dave Watlin finished on 22 not out and The Devine Felons were 63 for 3 and looking at their first defeat.

Ubaid and Luke commenced the run-chase against Asim. As a spectator, it was great to watch. As a bowler, it was painful. The players' tents and the boundary rope were peppered with 4s and 6s and the crowd applauded. Abaid retired on 34 after 8 balls and Luke was 22 not out, assisted by Habby who reached 12. Asim, Dave Shiva and Ross all suffered the Bowling Figures Blues as The Drifters reached 68 via a 6 off the last ball in 3.2 overs and another 6 wicket win with 6 more points.

Day 3, Tues 1st, saw Mike Grits join the team having been delayed by events in Bangkok and he was ready to join the run-fest. His opportunity arose when The Drifters won the toss against the Finnish Ducks and decided to bat first. He opened with Ubaid against Chalam. Mike got Ubiad on strike and the fireworks commenced. 20 off the first over. Abaid gave Simon Dillsworth the same treatment and retired on 33 off 7 balls. Luke went in at No 3 as Mike continued in the same vane against Paul Swann. 77 for 0 after 3 overs and Mike retired on 30. Luke took over the mantle against Mikael Berglund who had a quiet over for 16. 93 for 0 after 4. Luke retired on 32 with a 6 as Habby got a few and The Drifters scored a convincing 109 for 0. The highest score of the tournament.

The Finnish Ducks were already under water. Chalam and Mikael went out to face Mike Gerits who struck in the first over as Habby held a catch at the long on boundary as Mikael went for a duck. 7 for 1. Abaid bowled widely again with more wides for 20 runs, mainly to Chalam. 28/1 off 2. Habby bowled well and Tim induced Chalam into slashing a wide (ish) ball where he was caught behind for 15 by Luke. 36/2 after 4. John Pike took the last over for a tidy 5 runs and The Finnish ducks sunk out of sight for 41 for 2. The Drifters won by 68 runs and earned 7 points for the table.

With the First Round complete, The Drifters headed the Players Table with 19 points and a NRR of 10.737. As a result, they have progressed to the Cup Group A with the Lamphun Lion Kings and Six Pistols 1. Final positions in that table will dictate selection for the semi and finals for the Cup.