

## **Pattaya CC lose to their nemesis, the Asian Stars CC, by 7 wickets after 78 not out from Hardik Prathod.**

This local derby was played at Horseshoe Point on Sunday 4 Feb on a searingly hot afternoon. PCC had high hopes of their first victory against the Asian Stars, but tragedy struck in PCC's opening overs and superb batting from Hardik Rathod and Dharmesh Mer combined to thwart PCC's aspirations.

A late start to proceedings, due to the previous games finishing late, saw Wez Masterton win the toss against Dharmesh and elect to bat first. Wez and Ryan Driver opened against Bilal Rana and Bharat Singh. Bilal was bowling with accuracy, pace and venom and the surface was offering hugely variable bounce. The first 2 overs produced 10 runs and Bilal's second over produced two no balls, the second of which lifted from a full length and, avoiding the grill on his helmet, struck Ryan under his chin and caused a nasty gash. Ryan retired hurt and went to hospital where he received 21 stitches. Luke replaced him and took the free hit for a boundary 4. Bharat struck in the next over when Wez was trying to force a boundary but didn't quite time the ball and it was well caught by Dinesh Kumar on the cover-point boundary. 16 for 1 in the 3<sup>rd</sup> over. Luke was joined by Mike Gerits and both batsmen had to contend with very accurate bowling from both openers and their replacements, Saqlain Mohammed and Prashant Bhatt. Boundaries were hard to come by and the score tottered along until the 10th over when Mike hit a ball to the boundary but was caught by Lakhwinder Singh off Saqlain for 15 with the score on 47 for 2. This brought Andre to the wicket. At this point Deepak Rawat (Bobby) and Dinesh were bowling and the run rate had picked up a little to 6.5 per over, but it needed to be appreciably more as the Asian Stars were known to be big hitters. Drinks were taken after the 15<sup>th</sup> over with PCC on 84 for 2 and a good 40 runs behind schedule. The run rate picked up to 8 per over until there was a mini collapse around the 20<sup>th</sup> over. The first to go was Luke Stokes on 51 with a soft shot to Bilal at point off Bobby's last over. 121 for 4. The next over from Hardik saw Roshan Perrera and Jainish Parikah bowled for golden ducks on consecutive balls but the hat-trick eluded him when Habby Singh took the crease, 122 for 6 in the 21<sup>st</sup> over. The last 4 overs saw a miraculous recovery as the Asian Star bowlers were battered by Habby and Andre with boundaries galore - 4 sixes and 4 fours. 59 runs were added in the last 4 overs but Habby fell for 31 from 14 balls with just 2 balls remaining, however Preet Singh still added another 8 runs. Andre finished 58 not out, but would 186 for 7 be enough without Ryan opening the bowling?

Bobby and Waseem Raaza (Sam) opened the batting for the Asian Stars whilst PCC opened the bowling with Preet and Andre. Bobby went for a golden duck as he got an edge to Andre at wide first slip. A miraculous start but would it last? Hardik replaced Bobby and although the bowling prevented the batsmen from a stellar start there were 8 extras in the first 4 overs. Both Sam and Hardik seemed content with the furious pace of Preet and Andre the run rate increased to 7 or 8. Sam was trying to slog every ball until Mike Gerits forced a top edge which was caught by Preet at mid-on for 26, 57 for 2 in the 8<sup>th</sup> over. This brought Dharmesh to the crease and the batsmen set about the PCCs all pace attack. Mike was punished with 45 runs from 4 overs and Terrence Conrad was his for 16 in one over. By drinks at 15 overs, Asian Stars had scored 121 and were cruising at 8 runs per over. Things continued much in the same manner after drinks, although there was a small glimmer of hope when Dharmesh skied a ball from Preet which he caught. 152 for 3 and Bilal took the crease to support Hardik who was still dispatching balls around the boundaries. PCC did their best to contain Hardik and Bilal, but the inevitable arrived in the 23<sup>rd</sup> over when Habby Singh was hit for a 6 and Asian Stars reached 187 for 3 and a well-deserved win by 7 wickets. Perhaps it might have been a tighter finish if PCC had not given away 26 extras. Bilal finished on 17 not out whilst Hardik scored 78 not out and took 2 wickets for 33 from 3 overs, which earned him another MoTM award.

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

If there are any persons of any ages and abilities out there in the Pattaya area who would like to get involved with cricket, please visit our website, our facebook page, the Outback Bar (the PCC home base) or contact Simon Philbrook at [pattayacc.chairman@gmail.com](mailto:pattayacc.chairman@gmail.com)