

### **PCC win a place in the BCL finals with a calculated and clinical defeat of Bangkok CC.**

Saturday 6 May saw PCC travelling to the Terdthai Cricket Ground after a late change of venue. This grass wicket was known to be slow, with little bounce and a well-manicured, moderately paced outfield. PCC were still licking their wounds from an awful performance against Asian Stars on Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> and were told to focus and sharpen up in all areas or face the possibility of being pushed into a semi-final against Asian Stars CC or Pakistan CC. Well, they got most of it right by adapting to the batting conditions and bowling really well with very extras. Catching the ball remained an issue.

Wez Masterton and Abijit Kulkarni conducted the toss before umpires, Sanjeev Jaya and Harminder Singh, with Wez losing again and being asked to bat first. Wez and Ryan Driver padded-up to face spin from Walter Persaud and pace from Tamim Chowdary. Walter went for 10 in the first over and very nearly had Wez run out, but he was saved by a poor throw from Midwicket. In the next over Tamim bowled 3 wides for 9 extras and was withdrawn from the attack and replaced by Subrarto Ghosh. Both Wez and Ryan plugged away at 6 runs per over and the occasional boundary 4. BCC fielded with a great deal of energy in the outfield with some fine saves, but PCC were giving nothing away. BCC rang the changes by bringing on 8 bowlers but Wez and Ryan adjusted well, with Manish Argawal getting punished for 19 in his first two overs. PCC appeared to be in control until the 14<sup>th</sup> over when Wez was adjudged to be LBW for 29 from Vishal Patkar's first over and drinks were taken early at 92 for 1. Luke was the next man in, but despite getting the only 6 of the innings off Vishal, he was undone by a slower ball from Manish where Walter snaffled a good low catch to remove him for 16. 118 for 2 from 19 overs and Jainish took the crease. A single from Jainish put Ryan on strike where he was caught and bowled by Manish for a hard fought 53 and PCC were suffering a mini-stumble at 119 for 3. Habby Singh took the crease. The stumble threatened to morph into a collapse when Jainish went for 3 as he was cramped for room by Sounder Krishnasarry and skied a ball to mid-wicket to be caught by Manish. 126 for 4 in the 20<sup>th</sup> over. On marched Trevor Moolman with a sense of purpose and that Yarpie sense of belligerence. He made his mark and steadied the ship with quick running between the wickets and finished with 16 not out. Meanwhile his partners were falling by the wayside. Habby went for 9, LBW to Kanchan Shastri and Rapreet Singh went for 1, bowled by Kanchan in the 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> overs respectively. This left Trevor and Simon Philbrook to see off the final 1 and a half overs which they did in style by bashing Subrarto for 15 with Simon getting a 4 off the last ball to remain 6 not out. PCC completed their innings with 155 for 6, which the scorer (me) overheard BCC saying that it was a good score and hard to beat as 125 was considered par for this wicket. Game on.

The very capable Wayne Atkinson and Pravin Dagle opened for BCC against Ryan and Rapreet. Ryan's first over yielded an uncharacteristic 8 runs, including a wide, but he was unperturbed and struck in the 3<sup>rd</sup> over when Pravin was caught by Rapreet Singh in the deep and 14 for 1 off 3 overs. Apart from the first over, BCC really struggled for runs up until the 10<sup>th</sup> over at 3 per over and this continued until the 15<sup>th</sup> at 4 per over. In the meantime, BCC continued to lose wickets. Rapreet struck in his second over when Subrarto was caught by Jainish, who kept one in his hands for a change, for 1, and 17 for 2 after 4 overs. Crunch (Steve Christie) replaced Rapreet and he quickly made inroads into the BCC batting order by bowling Vishal for 1 and 23 for 3 in the 8<sup>th</sup> over. Crunch bowled his 5 overs straight through and ended with figures of 20 for 1. Andy took over from Ryan, who finished with 5 overs 16 for 1, and he also took wickets early – this time the highly valued wicket of Wayne, caught in the deep by a magnificent catch from Rapreet. Wayne was very, very annoyed and trudged off with 12 from 26 balls and PCC were 36 for 4 from 11. If BCC didn't pick up the pace and retain wickets, they were going to be

made to look very silly indeed. Well, Captain Abijit Kulkarni took charge and steadied the ship with Kanchan Shastri in a partnership of 52, but luck was on their side as PCC's catching abilities vanished in the hot and humid afternoon. Habby dropped Abijit and then bowled him on a No Ball. Rapreet and Habby then got buttery fingers off Andy's bowling and Habby missed a caught and bowled. Had the catches held, the teams would have been home for an early bath. Drinks were taken in the 15<sup>th</sup> over with BCC on 56 for 4 and needing 10 per over to win and on this slow wicket - the odds were against them. Nonetheless, Abijit and Kanchan forged on at 6 per over until the 20<sup>th</sup> over when things went horribly wrong as the Singhs turned on the devastating tap. Habby had Abijit stumped by sharp work from Wez for 29 and two balls later Habby bowled his replacement, Manish, for a duck and BCC were 88 for 6. Next to go was Kanchan, caught by Wez off a slight nick, bowled by Habby for 34 on 95 for 7 in the 22<sup>nd</sup> over. As PCC had forgotten how to catch, Habby and Rapreet decided to knock over bits of wood. Next to go was Walter Persaud for 3, bowled by Rapreet, 102 for 8. Sounder Only lasted 2 balls before he became Habby's fourth and final victim for 2 runs, 105 for 9. The last wicket, that of Tamim who went for 8 to Rapreet for his third of the day and BCC were bowled out for 108 from 24.1 overs and lost by 47 runs. They lost their last 6 wickets for 20 runs and if it was not for the spirited fight from Abijit and Kanchan and dropped catches from PCC, it could have been a very sorry looking scoreboard. Superb bowling figures from Rapreet and Habby who took 3 for 18 and 4 for 28 respectively.

Next Saturday is the semi-final between Bangkok CC and Pakistan CC, with the losers taking 3<sup>rd</sup> place and the winners up against PCC in the final at AIT on Sunday 21 May.

PCC would like to thank their sponsors; the Outback Sports Bar, the Magic Bar, the Ayen Bar and The Pattaya Sports Group for their continued support which is greatly appreciated.