

Pattaya CC start the new season with a 75 run victory over Kerala Strikers CC at HSP on 21 Jan 2024.

After the disappointment of losing in last year's final, followed by the news that Wezley Masterton and Luke Stokes would be leaving the Club, things were looking gloomy for PCC and the 2023-24 Bangkok league season. So, this was just the start that a revamped PCC needed. The revamp arrived in the form of three all-rounders, Andre Human (South African), Mike Gerits (Australian), Roshan Perera (Sri Lankan), and two more pace bowlers, Terry Conrad (UAE-Sri Lankan) and Koustav Bhasin (Indian). The cricket gods then smiled on PCC as Wez and Luke amended their plans and decided to play for PCC. The net result is a very capable side.

This match revolved around who could maintain a furious run rate and who were the best fielders. PCC were allowed to score quickly because too many catches were being dropped, two of which cost KSCC 90 runs from Wez and 50 from Luke. In addition, PCC's all pace attack and better fielding steadily took wickets until a final flurry from Gustav (The New Mop) ended the match 2 balls early.

Wez and Shanaz Shajahan conducted the toss with umpires Clive Rogerson and Tamim Chowdury which Shanaz lost and Wez decided to bat first. Wez opened with Ryan Driver against the accurate pace of Asif Thacholi and Shanaz. Boundaries flowed with monotonous regularity from Wez's bat as Ryan hit ones and twos, much to the disgruntlement of Wez who hates running. Wez got a top edge in the second over and was dropped by the keeper and Ryan was dropped at Mid-on. Their luck allowed the run rate to reach 13 per over and a 250+ record breaking score looked possible. The score reached 56 in the 5th over when Ryan, on 9, allowed a jaffa of a ball from Aju John to come back through the gate to scatter the woodwork. This brought Luke Stokes to the crease, whereby he immediately set about Abu with 3 boundaries. Luke was dropped in the 6th over when he skied a ball from Suraj and the KSCC woes continued as Luke went on to score 62. Suraj proved to be expensive and he was replaced by Prasad Nair for another expensive over. By the 10th over the score had reached 116 with Wez and Luke, literally in full swing. At this point the run rate slowed a little as the spinners, Navaneeth Vinod and Neveen Varghees were brought into the attack and KSCC finally managed to hold a catch as Navaneeth had Wez caught by Amal Devraj for 102. Mike Gerits took the crease as a debutant and kept up the run rate with Luke either side of drinks which saw 149 for 2 at 15 overs. KSCC swung the changes, using 8 bowlers, but Luke and Mike blazed away at a steady 10 runs per over. Luke survived a caught and bowled chance from Rohit Nikam with the score on 170 as he plundered more runs. The Keeper, Amal, took his second catch, another skier from Luke in the 21st over from Naveen with the score on 211 and Luke on 62. Andre took the crease, but not for long as a lifting ball got an outside edge and went through to Amal for his 3rd catch, 228 for 4 after 23 overs. Jainish Parikah only lasted 2 balls as he gifted Amal with his 4th catch for just 2 runs. Roshan closed out the innings with 6 not out and Mike on 48 not out and the score on 245 for 5. The best of KSCC bowlers was Naveen with 4 overs, 28 for 2. K

KSCC would have to bat extremely well against a spicy pace attack. They opened with Shanaz and Amal against Ryan. Both batsmen seemed to be content against pace and 7 runs were scored until Amal was superbly caught by Andre at extra-cover with a low diving catch. An excellent start. Andre bowled next with very lots of aggression but pitched a little too short. Roopesh took the crease but Shanaz hogged the strike and scored fairly free from Ryan who bowled his 5 overs straight through for 1 for 35. Mike Gerits relieved Andre in the 6th over where his 2nd ball had Roopesh superbly caught at backward square by the debutant Koustav for 2. KSCC were 34 for 2 and setting a pattern. In the same over, a no ball by Mike gave Naveen a free hit, which Terry caught at deep mid-wicket, knowing Naveen could not be out,

he almost managed to run out Shanaz. Shanaz then survived a difficult caught and bowled chance to Ryan. Mike's 2nd over, the 8th, became a wicket maiden as he bowled Shanaz for 34 and KSCC were 46 for 3. The loss of Roopesh and Shanaz saw Naveen and Aju John continue the chase, albeit somewhat sedately at 6 runs per over. They needed to pick up the run rate. Andre bowled his 3rd and final over at 0 for 24. Mike Gerits took a break whilst Terry and Habby Singh carried the bowling attack. As usual Habby was a little wayward, but it was Terry that struck first when Aju skied a ball and was caught by Andre at cover for 8. Drinks came at the 15th over with the score on 91 for 4 and KSCC 58 runs behind. It was beginning to look like a lost cause. Habby and Terry continued after drinks with Habby striking first, with Luke catching Naveen on the long-on boundary during an expensive over (15). 111 for 5 in the 17th over. Zafir Ahmed and Suraj steadying the ship in a spirited partnership of 40 runs against Terry and Habby until Koustav and Mike entered the fray. Zafir was the first to go on 28 when Koustav had him caught, another skier, by Habby. His replacement, Asif, only lasted 2 balls for his 1 run when Koustav removed his off-stump. 153 for 7 in the 21st over. Mike bowled another tidy over and Koustav took the next with a wicket first ball, that of Suraj, well caught by Wez for 18 and a hat-trick on the cards. A dot ball. 158 for 8 and PCC were giving no quarter. Mike's final over, his 5th, yielded only 1 run and he bowled Prasad Nair for 5. The final wicket was that of Rohit Nikam, bowled by Koustav for 3 with 2 balls to spare and KSCC were all out for 170. PCC had won by 75 runs. Mike Gerit had figures of 5 overs, 3 for 14, whilst Koustav Bhasin had 2.4 overs, 4 for 20. A strong performance from and confidence boosting start for PCC but still too many extras – mainly wides (17).

The Man of the Match medal was awarded to Wez Masterton for his 102.

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