

Pattaya Cricket Club (PCC) defend their Chiang Mai Big Bash 8's trophy – Part 1.

The Tournament was held at the Gymkhana Cricket Ground at Chiang Mai on 10 and 11 April 2021. This has always been a hugely popular event in the Thailand cricket calendar, but the effects of the covid-19 pandemic and a recent third surge in cases reduced the number of competitors to four. PCC, current holders of the Trophy, would defend it against The Lords of the Beers (LotB) (effectively the Asian Stars from Pattaya), Lamphun and Lanna Cricket Clubs, so a South versus North battle of willow and leather.

The four teams would play three divisional matches and their final positions would dictate which pairs would play for 1st and 2nd, or 3rd and 4th places. There were 8 players per team. Each match was to be 10 overs, with no bowler bowling more than 2 overs. Wides and no balls counted as 3 runs and would not be re-bowled. Points were awarded for wins and ties and bonus points would be awarded for wickets taken and runs scored. Each team would play 2 matches on each day. This report will cover the events of Day 1 and another report will cover Day 2

The opening match of the tournament was PCC versus Lanna CC. PCC won the toss and chose to bat with the usual pair of Wez Masterton and Matt Harkness opening. They faced Ismail and Wez immediately showed his intent by whacking the 2nd ball for 6. Richie George followed with spin and Matt was bowled 2nd ball for a duck. Not the start PCC wanted. Wez did his usual and went for boundaries whilst Simon Wetherell tried to rotate the strike. Richie George returned and bowled Simon W for 2, so Simon Philbrook took the crease to steady the ship. Simon P got some boundaries and PCC were 32 for 2 after 4 overs. Wez was lucky to be dropped by Daniel Jacobs on the boundary but still got a 4. Walter (Wally) Persaud entered the Lanna attack with his West Indies spin and quickly had Wez caught by Daniel Jacobs (revenge) for 30. Trevor Moolman replaced him and got the scoreboard ticking along at 8 an over. Simon P started smashing the ball out of the park and 63 for 3 after 6 overs. Wally claimed another victim in his second over – that of Simon P for 22, caught by Ismail on the boundary and 70 for 4. Bernie Lamprecht replaced Simon and Leng replaced Wally. Boundaries from Trevor M and sloppy fielding from Lanna allowed a 7, plus a 6 from Bernie and the pace picked up. Ton had the last over which leached 12 runs and so PCC finished on 96 for 4 with Trevor on 21 and Bernie on 12 not outs. A par score for this ground and defendable. It could be close.

Daniel Jacobs and John Scales took the crease for Lanna and Wez took the cherry. Some singles from Wez's spin bowling and Matt dropped a catch. Jainish's bowling was a little wayward and Daniel capitalised – it was less than optimal. In Wez' final over he got obliterated by conceding 31 and Lanna were being allowed to run riot at 54 for 0 off 3 overs, whilst Daniel retired on 36. Bernie Lamprecht tried to stem the flow, but like Wez he was bowling too full. Trevor Moolman got bashed and the runs kept flowing, 84 for 0 at halfway and something needed to be done. Matt was the man, and bowled John Scales for 21, but was it too little too late? Only 3 off the over and Bernie bowled the 7th to Richie George with 7 needed. Only 6 obtained so Matt took the 8th and got hit for 6 by Ismail who retired on 34. Lanna CC won by 9 wickets. Not a good start for PCC.

PCC's next match was against another top team, Lamphun, and a win was desperately needed, but they would have to sharpen their performance to do so. Lamphun won the toss and decided to bat with Chanchai and Cher opening against Wez. He bowled a better length but still went for 10. Jainish was still a little loose and went for 12 with Cher doing the damage. Matt Harkness tried to contain the openers but Chanchai hit a 6 through Trevor's fingers for another costly error. 31 for 0 off 3. Ian Liddell started well but still went for 10 and Jainish went for 11 with Cher nearing

retirement. 53 at halfway and Lamphun were doing well. Bernie was given the ball and Chanchai assaulted him, but he was caught on the last ball by Matt for 25. Wez returned and Matt caught Cher in the deep for 28. Was the tide turning for PCC and could they keep the score down? Choo and Ton kept the scoreboard ticking over at 10 per over via Ian Liddell, Matt and Bernie to give Lamphun 100 for 2 from 10 overs. PCC would have to bat well and hope Lamphun were not at their best.

Wez and Matt opened against Choo who got battered for 12 and a similar fate was meted out to Feem. The onslaught continued in Choo's second over and Wez got a 6 and retired on 31 from 9 balls. Frame and Cher bowled spin, but both got the same treatment from Simon Wetherell and Matt who kept the pace high. 68 for 0 after 5 and PCC were comfortably ahead. A boundary for Matt and he retired for 31. Simon Philbrook took the crease and refused to let Chanchai dominate the proceedings by taking 11 runs and the two Simons cruised home to win by 10 wickets with 2 overs to spare. Simon W on 19 and Simon P on 10. Just what the doctor ordered and PCC finished the day in 3rd place and a match against LotB.

In other matches on Day 1, Lanna were held to a tie by LotB with 95 runs each and Lamphun beat LotB by 40 runs.