

Press release

April 10, 2006

Rest of the World and Pak-Afghan Under 18's crowned inaugural Commonwealth Bank Cricket Masala Champions

The inaugural Commonwealth Bank Cricket Masala was played yesterday and a crowd of over 3000 at Bankstown Oval witnessed the Rest of the World led by Southern Stars vice captain Lisa "Shaker" Sthalekar, defeat the NSW Aboriginal Allstars in a thrilling final to become the Open Commonwealth Bank Cricket Masala Champions. In the Under 18's tournament the Combined Pakistan-Afghan team downed fellow underdogs Bangladesh in a see-sawing struggle.

In a frenetic day of action, a total of 64 sixes were hit and the NSW Aboriginal Allstars fell 4 runs short of the mythical 100 run total against India. (Off 5 overs)

Geoff Coates, Executive General Manager - Business Development, International Financial Services today said "We are very happy with the outcome of the event and the way it was conducted. We are happy to be involved again."

In a compelling final, the Rest of the World team, avenging an earlier pool loss to the Allstars, unleashed their bombers Kevin Pillay and Richard Chee Quee who rained down the sixes to post 71. Man of the tournament, NSW Aboriginal Allstars Captain Daniel Christian led the chase valiantly with power hitter Jeff Cook but following the key dismissal of Christian by Rest of the World Captain Lisa Sthalekar, the Allstars fell just short with a reply of 65.

Both Cook and Christian tied for the highest number of sixes with 7 each but the day belonged to Sthalekar and the Rest of the World team "When we first started playing it was all a bit of fun but as the day went on we got serious as we started to think we could win it and I can't believe we won. A big thanks to all of my teammates, particularly Kevin Pillay and Richard Chee Quee and also to Mel, Ardil, Brad and Vilen and everybody involved. Thanks to the organizers and also to Commonwealth Bank for their ongoing support of cricket."

In the individual honours Jeff Cook topped the batting with 131 runs closely followed by Richard Chee Quee, Jay Poria of India Sports Club and Daniel Christian. NSW 20/20 rep, Sri Lanka's Jarrad Burke won the bowling award with a miserly 4 for 30 from 4 overs.

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Mark Waugh, ex Australian batsman and Event VIP said "What a fantastic day and thanks to the organisers. The South Asian passion for cricket now has an outlet in Sydney and the more community events like these the more our communities will come together."

In the Under 18's final a star was born in Bangadeshi allrounder Kurab Akhter but even he could not stop the Pakistan Afghan Juggernaut led by captain Riz "Shiz" Amir Khan and Auburn's Afghan Australian dynamo Abdul W. Kherkhan as together they posted an imposing 80 run total. In a compelling run chase Akhter almost pulled off a sporting miracle with Bangladesh Under 18's falling just short with a reply of 73. In the individual honours both Abdul W. Kherkan and Akhter tied for the most sixes hit with 3 each, Akhter and Junaid Alamgir took the most wickets whilst Akhter was head and shoulders above the rest with a total of 126 runs in 4 games followed by Rizwan Amir Khan with 69.

Gambhir Watts, president of Bhavan Australia was thrilled with the event. "Bhavan Australia is delighted with the response to the first Commonwealth Bank Cricket Masala. The cricket was of a high standard, the variety of entertainment was excellent and the food was sumptuous. Our special thanks to our partners Bankstown Cricket Club, Bankstown City Council and partner sponsor Commonwealth Bank. Also a big thanks to our major sponsors SBS, Dilmah Tea, Milo, Panglobal TV, India Tourism, New South Wales Government through the Community Relations Commission, Bankstown Sports Club, Kingsgrove Sports, Cumberland Newspapers, and Indian Link."

In Bankstown Gardens, Kamahl, Gulam Abbas, Guinn Ragel, Avijit Sarkar, Jazba, Raga Rocks, and Farah Shah's Mango Dance Bollywood troupe entertained the crowd while a variety of South Asian food and drinks stalls looked after their palate.

Team Reports

Rest of the World

Captained by Lisa Sthalekar, the Rest of the World captured the first Cricket Masala open title. With Randwick Petersham Powerhitter Richard Chee Quee's plane from Bali over an hour late, the bare 6 players took the field for the first pool game against the NSW Aboriginal Allstars and in what was a thrilling tie at 79 each, the Rest of the World were unlucky to lose on countback. Gordon's Brad Rasool assumed the hitting role with 30 runs and he was ably supported by Campbelltown Camden's Ardil Domingo with 20. Of the bowlers UTS Balmain's Vilen Sithloo was most effective with a wicket and only 10 runs off his over. Chee Quee had arrived by game 2 versus India and he had an immediate impact with a thunderous 31 including 3 sixes and was ably supported by Brad Rasool with 33 including 2 sixes. The skipper Sthalekar then stood up with 1 wicket for only 7 runs and combined with excellent ground fielding, the Indians could

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manage only 54 with no Rest of the World bowler conceding more than 12 runs per over. In game 3 and with momentum in their sails, the Rest of the World faced the unlucky Combined Universities team and in a tight one prevailed 61 to 59 highlighted by a brutal 48 by Richard Chee and tight bowling. Onwards to the semi finals versus India Sports Club and the previously under the radar Kevin Pillay led the way with 22 and combining with Chee Quee pushed the total to 65. India Sports Club could only muster 57 in a spirited chase with Mel Singh and Lisa Sthalekar conceding in single figures for their overs. Then to the dramatic final in which St George's Kevin Pillay stamped his authority with a clean hitting display to post 42 including 4 big sixes. He was ably assisted by Chee Quee and the Rest of the World set an imposing target of 71 which proved too much for the NSW Aboriginals who posted 65 in reply. Lisa Sthalekar starred with the ball with figures of 2 wickets for 11 including the prize scalp of Daniel Christian.

Individual Highlights

2nd Most runs – Richard Chee Quee: 122

5th Most runs – Brad Rasool : 76 7th Most runs – Kevin Pillav

Equal highest wicket taker - Mel Singh: 4 wickets

Equal 2nd highest wicket taker – Lisa Sthalekar : 3 wickets

Equal 3rd highest wicket taker – Richard Chee Quee: 2 wickets

Equal 3rd Most sixes hit – Kevin Pillay: 5

Equal 4th Most sixes hit – Richard Chee Quee and Brad Rasool : 4

NSW Aboriginal AllStars

Captained by UNSW' Daniel Christian, the NSW Aboriginal Allstars played athletic and powerful 6-a-side cricket to narrowly lose in the final. Their first game against the Rest of the World was a sign of things to come with the 3 Amigos hitting trio of Daniel Christian, St George's Jeff Cook and La Perouse's John Duckett pounding a total of 7 sixes to reach 79 and secure a tie with Daniel Christian starring with the ball with 1 for 7. In game 2 the Allstars beat Combined Universities with Ballina's Andrew Gordon and Jeff Cook contributing with the bat and Josh Lalor with the ball restricting the total to 63. Game 3 was one for the 6-A-Side purists with the Allstars ending India's tournament and setting the Cricket Masala innings record with a total of 96 including 8 sixes. Jeff Cook scored the equal highest individual batting performance with 48 runs including 5 massive He was supported by Daniel Christian and John Duckett with 20 and 22 respectively. India were never in the hunt replying with 44 with Christian, Duckett and Cook all returning single figure overs. Leaving the shellshocked Indian team in their wake, the NSW Aboriginal Allstars left the Group of Death to face pre tournament favourites Sri Lanka in the Semi final. Led by Daniel Christian with 25 and assisted by Andrew Gordon and Jeff Cook the Allstars posted 65. In a nail biting finish the Sri

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Lankans went tantalizingly close only to lose by 2 runs however tight spells by Duckett, Cook and Christian ensured passage to the final. In the final the Allstars fell short replying with 62 to the Rest of the Worlds total of 71. Jeff Cook, Bankstown's Ryan Donovan, John Duckett and Andrew Gordon all worked hard with the ball and the hitting duo of Christian and Cook with the bat.

Individual Highlights

Player of the Tournament : Daniel Christian

1st Most runs – Jeff Cook: 131

4^{th h} Most runs – Daniel Christian : 111

10th Most runs: John Duckett: 61

Equal highest wicket taker – Mel Singh: 4 wickets

Equal 2nd highest wicket taker – John Duckett : 3 wickets Equal 3rd highest wicket taker – Daniel Christian : 2 wickets

Equal 1st Most sixes hit – Daniel Christian: 7

Equal 1st Most sixes hit – Jeff Cook: 7 Equal 3rd Most sixes hit – John Duckett: 5 10th Most sixes hit – Andrew Gordon: 2

Sri Lanka

Captained by St George's Hamish Solomons, Sri Lanka played strong cricket and were unlucky to lose in the semi finals. In Game 1 led by the Penrith's Beadle brothers Ahillen and Cosikan who scored 23 and 21 respectively, they ambushed Bangladesh to post a solid 65. In reply the Bangladeshis could only muster 49 with Jarrad Burke starring with 2 wickets for 5 runs and tight overs from Blacktown's Wendel Delpechitra and Ahillen Beadle. In Game 2 Sri Lanka were surprised by India Sports Club with 1 run separating the 2 teams with Campbelltown Camden's Jarrad Burke starring with both the bat and the ball with 13 and 2 for 8 and Cosikan Beadle top scoring with 16. In a must win 3rd game for both Sri Lanka and Pakistan it was Sri Lanka triumphing by one run led with the bat by Jarrad Burke (27) and Cosikan Beadle (22) and with the ball by Blacktown's Sutharson Sivapalan (1-11) and Ahillen Beadle (2-10). Both Western Suburbs' Kish Nadesan and Jarrad Burke bowled tightly conceding 5 and 7 runs respectively. Onto the Semi Final against the NSW Aboriginal Allstars with the Sri Lankans led by Ahillen Beadle with the bat (29) and skipper Hamish Solomons with the ball (2-15) fell short by 2 runs to score 63, chasing the Allstars 65.

Individual Highlights

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6th Most runs – Ahillen Beadle: 70 9th Most runs – Cosikan Beadle: 61 10th Most sixes - Cosikan Beadle: 2

Equal highest wicket taker – Jarrad Burke : 4 wickets

Equal 3rd highest wicket taker –Hamish Solomons and Ahillen Beadle: 2 wickets

Equal fastest bowler: Kish Nadesan: 121 kmh (soft ball)

Bangladesh

Bangladesh were captained by ex Bangladesh test captain South Sydney's Aminul Islam and after a disastrous start played quality cricket and were unlucky not to make the Semi finals. In game 1 versus Sri Lanka Mosman's Naiian Yazdani led the bowlers with 1 for 5 and Blacktown's Ash Ahmed with 8 off his over to contain Sri Lanka to 65. In reply the Bangladeshis were out of the hunt early with Mosman's Taz Yazdani and ex first grader Naimul Chowdhury the only ones to reach double figures in the disappointing reply of 49. Game 2 versus Pakistan featured a vastly improved performance with Western Suburbs' Shariful Islam stepping up with 21 runs supported by Taz Yazdani with 13 in a total of 53. In a great team bowling performance the Bangladeshis managed to contain Pakistan to 46 in reply led by Shariful Islam 1 for 4, Western Suburbs' Deep Mostak 1 for 10 and tight bowling from Aminul Islam and Ash Ahmed. Game 3 was a do or die game for both Bangladesh and India Sports in which Bangladesh's semi final hopes were dashed in a 2 run loss. Starring Naiian Yazdani with 42 runs including 2 sixes and miserly bowling from Aminul Islam and Shariful Islam the Bangladeshis were desperately unlucky not to go through to the next round.

Individual Highlights

Equal 5th Most sixes: Naiian Yazdani

India

Captained by UTS-Balmain's Manjot Singh the Indian team suffered an early setback with the withdrawal of ex Indian test cricketer Subroto Banerjee with a bad back. Grouped in the "Pool of Death" India, reduced to its bare 6 players from the outset took on Combined Universities in Game 1 and suffered a terrible start to the tournament posting 38 with only Blacktown's Gurdev Singh posting double figures with 14. To their credit they did not give up and although losing they made a game of it through tight bowling from the captain Manjot Singh (2 for 1), Western Suburbs' Mandeep Oberoi (0 for 6) and Western Suburbs' Vaibhav Rastogi (0 for 7). In game 2, a crucial game versus the Rest of the World, India confronted a rampaging Richard Chee Quee conceding an imposing 66 runs with only NSW Tamils' Danny Batra (0 for 10) and Vaibhav Rastoghi (0 for 10) able to contain the onslaught. In reply skipper Manjot Singh stuck to the task with a valiant 40 as wickets fell around him but to no avail as they

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totaled 54 in reply. Onto Game 3 and one that India won't forget in a while as Jeff Cook opened his shoulders and showed his county cricket pedigree by blasting 5 sixes in a tournament best 48. No bowler was left untouched with Gurdev Singh the best with 0 for 13. In reply the Indian team could only manage 45 with Manjot Singh on 23 and Blacktown's Rohit Ramanathan scoring 14.

Individual Highlights

8th Highest Runs – Manjot Singh: 66 Equal 3rd Most Wickets – Manjot Singh: 2

Pakistan

Pakistan were captained by Randwick Petersham's Usman Khawaja and in the first game of the day suffered a tragic loss to India Sports Club in which North Sydney's Salman Malik was the only batsman to reach double figures. In game 2 they rebounded to compete against Bangladesh but failed to chase 53 after an excellent bowling performance. Notables with bat include Usman Khawaja and UNSW' Faisal Afzal and ex Randwick Petersham's Kamil Khan starred with the ball with 1 for 7. With their backs to the wall in the final game against pre-tournament favourites Sri Lanka, the young Pakistani team almost pulled off a major upset to go down by 64 runs to 63 with Usman Khawaja hitting six sixes ably supported by Salman Malik with 15. Pakistan are sure to learn from their slow start and will be better for the experience next year.

Individual Highlights

2nd Most Sixes: Usman Khawaja:6

India Sports Club

Captained by ex Ranji Trophy player Ravi Shankar and shrewdly managed by Subodh Patil, the India Sports Club upset a number of more fancied opponents to go through its pool undefeated only to be stopped in the Semi finals by a surging Rest of the World team. In the first game, a victory against Pakistan UTS Balmain's Jay Poria started his excellent run of power hitting with 26, ably supported by Jai Shankar with Gagan Deep and Varun Seth starring with the ball. In Game 2 against Sri Lanka it was Poria and Jai Shankar again leading with the bat and UTS Balmain's Sanjiv Dubey (1 for 6), Gagan Deep (0 for 5) and Varun Seth (0 for 7) combining to restrict the powerful Sri Lankans to 57 runs. In the third game against Bangladesh, a must win for both teams, Jay Poria went into a class of his own with 40 runs including 2 sixes and he was aided by Gagan Deep with 20. Restricting Bangladesh to 58 and booking a passage into the finals, India

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Sports bowlers again excelled including Varun Seth (2 for 8) Sanjiv Dubey (1 for 7) and Gagan Deep (1 for 3). The underdogs run came to an end in the semi finals vs Rest of the World with Jay Poria (29) and Varun Seth (26) unbeaten but unable to haul in the Rest of the Worlds 65.

Individual Highlights

3rd Highest runs – Jay Poria : 118 Equal 4th most sixes – Jay Poria : 4 Equal 2nd Most wickets – Krishna : 3 Equal 3rd Most wickets – Gagan Deep : 2 Equal 3rd Most wickets – Sanjiv Dubey : 2

Combined Universities

Combined Universities captained by Sydney University's Roshan "Roshi" Jayawardena had a desperately unlucky tournament in which 2 key games were lost by a margin of less than 5 runs. In game 1, a victory vs India, UTS Balmain's Sreenivasan "Puru" Purushothaman led with both bat (20) and ball (1 for 6) ably supported by captain Roshi with 1 for 7. In game 2 versus the NSW Aboriginal Allstars quality innings of 17 from Jayawardena, 24 from Puru and 18 from Indo Fijian Prasant Rai were not enough to secure the victory with Puru again economical with the ball (1 for 7). In the third game, a must win game against Rest of the World, the Combined Universities team fell short by two runs led by Western Suburb's Arun Nadesan with 19 and UNSW' Gavin Pereira with 14. Puru bowled economically yet again with 1 for 6.

Individual Highlights

Equal 2nd Most wickets: Sreenivasan Purushothaman: 3 wickets Equal fastest Bowler: Sreenivasan Purushothaman: 121 kph (soft ball)

Under 18's

Combined Pakistan Afghan

Captained by Western Suburbs Rizwan Amir Khan, the combined Pakistan Afghan team played excellent 6-A-Side Cricket to win the first ever Cricket Masala Under 18's tournament. In a true team effort the Pakistan Afghans got off to a sensational start against favourites India in the first game of the day posting 49 with skipper Rizwan contributing 15 and Waqas Quadrat adding 23. Led by the irrepressible Afghani Kherkan brothers Abdul H (1 for 7) and Abdul W (1 for 2) the Indians were held to 38 runs in reply. Rizwan Amir Khan also shone with the ball with 1 for 4. Game 2 was one of the matches of the tournament against heavy favourites Sri Lanka with Abdul W Kherkan blasting 3 sixes on his way to 31 and then holding the Sri Lankans off by 1 run with

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excellent line and length from Rizwan Amir Khan (0 for 6), Najeeb Azzimi with 0 for 9 and Naveed Khan with 0 for 6. Lapping up the pressure the Pakistan Afghan Combined team moved onto the final match with undefeated Bangladesh. In a nail biting thriller the Pakistani Afghans went down by 2 runs with Najeeb Azzimi scoring 23 runs and Rizwan Amir Khan scoring 22. Leading the bowlers was Abdul W Kherkan with 0 for 9. In the final the Combined Pakistan Afghan team were again up against arch rivals Bangladesh but it was second time lucky as they posted an unbelievable 80 run total in a power hitting display from Rizwan Amir Khan (32) and Abdul W Kherkan (31). In a titanic struggle Bangladesh came close but tight bowling spells from Najeeb Azzimi, Naveed Khan and Abdul H Kherkan ensured Bangladesh's brave effort ended at 73 runs.

Individual Highlights

2nd Highest runs – Rizwan Amir Khan: 69 3rd Highest runs – Abdul W Kherkan: 65 6th Highest runs – Najeeb Azzimi: 42 7th Highest runs - Waqas Quadrat – 35 Equal 1st Highest sixes – Abdul W Kherkan: 3

Bangladesh

Captained by Tazneef Rahman the Bangladeshis proved the surprise packet of the tournament winning all pool games and losing the final in a thriller. For their first game they had a hair rasing 48-48 tie with Sri Lanka but won on countback with Kurab Akhter (25) and Junaid Alamgir (12) starring with the bat and Alamgir (1 for 5), Zafrul Ahmed (0 doe 6) and Akhter (0-9) with the ball. Incidentally Kurab Akhter hit a six from the final ball of the innings to tie and it was the most number of sixes that swayed the countback in Bangladesh's favour. In Game 2 versus pre tournament favourites India, Bangladesh again squeaked home by one run with skipper Rahman scoring 21 and Akhter scoring Excellent bowling led by Kurab Akhter (1 for 3), Himadri Sarkar (1 for 10) and Zafrul Ahmed (2 for 12 ensured victory for Bangladesh. By Game 3 versus Combined Pakistan Afghan team, eventual Man of the tournament, Kurab Akhter had found his groove with an elegant 38 including a 6 and supported by Zafrul Ahmed, the Bangladeshis posted 59. Led by Rafio Khan (1 for 7) and Junaid Alamgir (1 for 7) the Bangladeshis prevailed by 1 run. In a see sawing final the Bangladeshis had a tough time trying to contain the Combined Pakistan Afghan team with only Kurab Akhter (1 for 11) and Sageb Tadveen (0 for 10) returning respectable figures. In a glorious run chase Akhter posted the largest individual score of the day with 49 but Bangladesh was unable to run down the Pakistan Afghan score of 80, falling short with 73.

Individual Highlights

Player of the tournament – Kurab Akhter 1st Highest Runs scored – Kurab Akhter : 126 runs

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Equal 1st Most 6's – Kurab Akhter: 3

Equal 1st Most wickets – Junaid Alamgir, Kurab Akhter & Zafrul Ahmed : 2 each

Equal 2nd Most wickets – Himadri Sarkar & Rafio Khan : 1 each

Sri Lanka

By far the most credentialed team in the Under 18's tournament, Sri Lanka were desperately unlucky not to progress to the Final. Game 1 was against Bangladesh and ended in a 48-48 tie with Sri Lanka losing on countback. The batting was underpinned by 22 from Lasantha Muthumudalige with 22 and supported by Western Suburbs' Viyanak Sasitharan with 17. Muthumudalige also starred with the ball with 1 for 6 whilst Gayan Withanage was miserly with figures of 0 for 4. Game 2 was another heartbreaking tight loss (by 1 run) vs Combined Pakistan Afghans with Vinayak Sasitharan again starring with 34. In Game 3 the Sri Lankans faced India with pride on the line. Sri Lanka posted a total of 60 which proved too much for the Indian youngsters. The batting was anchored by Nath Rankothge (27), Kolitha Wimalaweera (12) and Thilina Vitharana (10) with tight bowling by Gayan Withanage and Kolitha Wimalaweera.

Individual Highlights

Equal 4th Most Runs - Viyanak Sasitharan : 51 9th Most runs – Lasantha Muthumudalige : 30 10th Most runs – Nath Rankothge : 27 Equal 2nd Most 6's – Viyanak Sasitharan : 1

India

Managed by Deepak Sharma the young Indian team started well in their first game restricting the Pakistan Afghan Combined to 49 runs with great bowling from Varpreet Batra (1 for 8), Varun (1 for 9) and Ronit Lotliker (1 for 11). Unfortunately the chase let the Indian team down with only Daniel Patane hitting double figures with 16 runs. In Game 2 the Indian team ran into a red hot Bangladesh going down again by 54 to 49 runs with Deeshveer Singh Pawar (14) Daniel Patane (15) and Varun (11) contributing with the bat and Ronit Lotliker (0 for 9) and Varun (0 for 4) contributing with the ball. In Game 3 the Indians put together their most respectable performance going down to the Sri Lankans who chased the total of 59 with 4 balls remaining. Deeshveer Singh Pawar starred with the bat with 18 runs and Daniel Patane top scored with 20.

Individual Highlights

Equal 4th Most Runs – Daniel Patane : 51 8th Most runs – Deeshveer Singh Pawar : 34

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Equal 3rd Most 6's – Deeshveer Singh Pawar : 1 Equal 2nd Most wickets – Ronit Lotliker, Varpreet Batra & Varun : 1 each

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