

Commonwealth Bank Cricket Masala Event Report

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



Geoff Coates presents the winning trophy to Lisa Sthalekar

The inaugural Commonwealth Bank Cricket Masala, a project of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia and Offstick Productions, was held on April 9 and a crowd of over 3,200 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.



Gambhir Watts & Patrick Skene opening the presentation ceremony.



Firaz Cheema

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 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.



Pakistan's Usman Khawaja on the front foot



Rest of the World's Kevin Pillay on the attack



Srilanka's Jarrad Burke—Bowler of the tournament

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



NSW Aboriginal All Stars' Daniel Christian attempts a one hander



Bangladesh Captain Aminul Islam



Jay Poria - India Sports Club

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.

Of the other Senior teams, beaten semi finalists and pre tournament favourites Sri Lanka can count themselves unlucky not to have contested the finals with both Beadle brothers from Penrith CC getting amongst the runs, NSW 20/20 star Jarrad Burke leading the way with ball and bat and Western Suburbs first grader Kish Nadesan timed as the fastest bowler on the day. The Bangladesh seniors were unable to match the feats of the Under 18's but gave an excellent account of themselves. Led by

ex test cricketer Aminul “Bulbul” Islam the Bangladeshis came close but not even the power hitting of Mosman's Naiian Yazdani could pull them through. Pakistan and India, heavily favoured before the tournament both left the tournament winless but a number of their losses were very close and both squads will benefit for the experience. As expected both captains and first graders Usman Khawaja (Pakistan) and Manjot Singh (India) showed their pedigree by each topping the batting averages for their teams. India Sports Club produced a hero of their own with UTS Balmain's Jay Poria the backbone of their giant killing run which landed them in the semi finals without a loss only to come up short against the Rest of the World. Combined Universities were desperately unlucky not to go through to the Semi Finals with UTS Balmain's Sreenivasan Purusothoman and Western Suburbs' Arun Nadesan starring.

Mark Waugh, ex Australian batsman and a special guest 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 grow together.”

In the 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 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



Indian captain Manjot Singh



Fastest bowler of the day Sri Lanka's Kish

69. Another notable high pressure performance from Akhter came earlier in the day in the pool game against Sri Lanka in which Bangladesh needed 6 to tie off the final ball and Akhter dispatched it over the boundary to secure a tie and win for his team on countback. The unlucky Sri Lankans who won one pool game and lost the other by 1 run had many shining lights including Vinayak Sasitharan who came equal 4th in the batting honours. The Indian Under 18 team had bright patches but were outgunned on the day with Daniel Patane and Deeshveer Singh Pawar starring.



Lisa Sthalekar leading the Rest of the World team



Rest of the Worlds' power hitter Rishard Chee Quee

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, Pangoal 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, Ghulam 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.



U 18 Champions the combined Pakistan Afghanistan

- Report prepared by Patrick Skene





Player of the tournament Daniel Christian presented his award by Dr Harry Harinath



Kamahl crooning in Bankstown City Gardens



Mark Waugh
Key Note Speaker



Tony Stewart MP for **Bankstown** representing Premier of NSW



Geoff Coates, Executive General Manager, International Finance, Commonwealth Bank



Ezel Jupiter, Commissioner, representing chair Community Relations Commission NSW



Helen Westwood, Mayor of Bankstown



Gambhir Watts, President, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan Australia



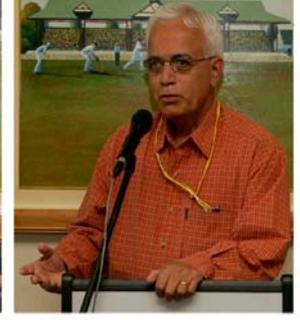
Brian Freedman, President, Bankstown Cricket Club.



Hon Sujan Chinoy, Consul General of India, Sydney



HE Babar Malik, Pakistan High Commissioner in Australia



Dr Harry Harinath, Director Cricket Australia & NSW

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