

Syed is on a Jolly ride

S. BAGAWATI PRASAD
Deccan Chronicle

J. Syed Mohammed has been the hallmark of consistency in the TNCA first division league. The 30-year-old Jolly Rovers all-rounder has been on fire this season, scoring a century and two fifties besides claiming two five-wicket hauls.

A fifth round match against Triplicane SC at IIT-Chemplast not only brought out the all-round abilities of Syed (100* and match tally of nine wickets) but also the leadership qualities in him. Leading the side for the first time this season.



We entered the field with an intention of winning to remain in the hunt for a place in the semis

son in the absence of regular skipper C. Hemant Kumar, he inspired Rovers to pull off an outright win with a day to spare. Rovers had been desperate to get eight points against Triplicane SC after conceding the lead to Grand Slam in the previous match. "We entered the field with an intention of winning to remain in the hunt for a place in the semi-finals. I'm happy that things went our way. I never felt anything different with regards to captaincy. The team's duty was to execute our plans and everyone played his part to perfection," said Syed, who wore Tamil Nadu's colours in the Ranji Trophy in 2006. He now represents Assam in the premier national competition.

Syed attributed the team's current good form and, in particular, his excellent run with bat to the

stint in the English premier division earlier this year ahead of the season. "Sanmar Group's efforts are crucial to Rovers' success. During our tour to Stoke-on-Trent, we faced quality bowling. I found it hard to play strokes fluently under damp conditions. But the challenge helped me learn the art of staying at the crease longer," he added.

The left-arm spinner has proven himself in the high profile Indian Premier League. He represented Royal Challengers Bangalore in the last edition. Known for his accuracy, he gave a good account of himself while sharing the dressing room with Chris Gayle, Daniel Vettori and AB de Villiers. "Vettori is a wonderful character. He is always ready to share his knowledge with youngsters. The Kiwi identified some minor errors in my bowling run-up and rectified them. Vettori believes in backing one's ability. He encourages youngsters to do what they know best instead of asking them to ape others," Syed said.

An integral member of the champion side in the TNCA first division, Syed wants to concentrate on his fitness and polishing his skills. "I don't have a target for myself. Our goal as a team is to defend the Palayampatti Shield," he said.



J. Syed Mohammed