

Jolly Rovers Emerge Champions



Jolly Rovers celebrating their win in the TNCA First Division League in Chennai on Friday | D Sampathkumar

Express News Service

Chennai: Vijay CC top-order made heavy weather of a simple target and handed over the crown on a platter to Jolly Rovers at the end of the final day's play of the final of the TNCA First Division League here on Friday.

Vijay were all out for 280 and Rovers, by virtue of their 127-run lead from the drawn game, were declared champions. Requiring a modest

score of 264 runs from 90 overs, Vijay began in earnest but lost the plot when the cream of their batting line-up fell to the guile of Indian leg-spinner Piyush Chawla. Chawla (7 for 77) was in his element as his perseverance paid rich dividends. He bowled a tight line and length and built up the pressure, which the Vijay batsmen found too hot to handle.

Chawla, who has been playing in the league on and

off for a while this season due to his international commitments, reserved his best for the final and came out with a match-winning performance.

Once the duo of Abhinav Mukund and S Badrinath perished, the task for Rovers became all the more easy. The duo raised 146 runs for the second wicket in 42.1 overs. Abhinav (63) was the first to get out, caught in the covers by Satish off Chawla.

Later at the stroke of lunch, Badrinath (95) fell leg before to Chawla. Thereafter, none of the batsman, be it Suresh or Vasudeva Das, had the grit to take the fight to the opposition and surrendered meekly. Jolly Rovers bagged the title after a gap of two years.

Brief scores: Jolly Rovers CC 407 for 9 decl in 134 overs drew with Vijay CC 280 in 91.1 overs (Abhinav Mukund 63, S Badrinath 95, Piyush Chawla 7-77).

Jolly Rovers dethrones Vijay CC

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: Piyush Chawla turned around the TNCA first-division final on the third and final day to help Jolly Rovers unseat Vijay CC and become the 2012-13 champion.

The leg-spinner's seven-wicket haul was instrumental in Rovers securing a 127-run first-innings lead, which ensured that the side would lift the Raja of Palayampatti Shield for the third time in five seasons.

Under pressure

Vijay, which had resumed on 144 for one, requiring a further 257 from 90 overs, succumbed to the pressure of the chase. Rovers captain C. Hemant Kumar said his plan was simple — to attack with Chawla from one end and get his seamers to bowl a run-drying line and length from the other. It worked like a charm.

"I knew it would be difficult for them on the final day," said Hemant. "Badrinath's was the big wicket because he was the one who could take the match away.

"The others don't have his



WINNING SMILES: The Jolly Rovers team after winning the TNCA first division final in Chennai on Friday. PHOTO: K. PICHUMANI

experience, so I knew that if he we could get his wicket, we could put them under a lot of pressure."

Collapse

Badrinath was the fourth man out for 95 when he was adjudged 'lbw' while trying to sweep a Chawla delivery from around the wicket. Abhinav Mukund (63, caught in the covers) and Rohan Prem ('lbw')

had earlier fallen to Chawla. From 178 for one, Rovers had slipped to 208 for four.

Captain S. Suresh Kumar and K. Shri Vasudeva Das (21) added 34, but the former toe-edged an attempted paddle sweep off Chawla and the latter exited a run later, flashing outside the off-stump at J. Kaushik's medium-pace.

Wicketkeeper R. Rohith wasn't expected to bat because

he had suffered a family bereavement, but came out to resist Rovers before being the ninth man dismissed.

Fittingly, Chawla ended the contest with his seventh wicket.

The scores (final day): Jolly Rovers 407 for nine decl. drew with Vijay CC 280 in 91.1 overs (Abhinav Mukund 63, S. Badrinath 95, Piyush Chawla seven for 77). Rovers wins title by virtue of first-innings lead.