

Sensational Pathan secures Rajasthan Royals hard won victory over the Delhi Daredevils

A sensational innings of 62 not out by Yusuf Pathan helped the Rajasthan Royals to their second victory in Season 2009 of the DLF Indian Premier League in South Africa and in the process inflicted a first defeat on the Delhi Daredevils in Centurion on Tuesday night.



Pathan came to the crease with his side in a spot of bother after they had lost two wickets in the over following the strategy break. The Rajasthan Royals were making hard work of their pursuit of the Delhi Daredevil's rather modest target of 144, when they fell to 64/5 in the 11th over.

Delhi Daredevil's Amit Mishra had struck a double blow removing Ravindra Jadeja and Rajasthan Royals captain Shane Warne within three balls off each to leave the defending champions floundering.

However with Graeme Smith playing the anchor role at the other end, Pathan attacked taking 19 runs off Daniel Vettori's first over including two massive sixes over midwicket.

That 13th over changed the momentum of the innings, and Pathan with his confidence boosted later smashed 18 runs off an Amit Mishra's last over to effectively seal the deal.

Pathan's 62 came off 30 balls and included three fours and six sixes. His match-winning partnership with Smith realised 83 runs, with the South African captain mimicking Herschelle Gibbs effort in batting through the innings. Smith made 44 off 46 balls with five fours.

The Delhi Daredevils though under Sehwag fought hard to defend their small total of 143/7. Mishra picked up 3/34 and left-arm seamer Ashish Nehra took 1/23, but they had insufficient runs after a top order collapse had reduced them to 49/4 by the eighth over.

It's certainly not what the Delhi Daredevil's skipper Virender Sehwag would have wanted after choosing to bat upon winning the toss. He and fellow opener Gautam Gambhir were dismissed in the third over by Dim Mascarenhas, and the Delhi Daredevils innings never recovered properly.

Tillakaratne Dilshan and Dinesh Karthik made seven and four respectively as the Rajasthan Royals quickly gained the upper hand. AB de Villiers, scorer of the tournament's only hundred thus far, made another fine half-century, but the loss of early wickets meant that the Delhi Daredevils were not really able to push the scoring rate to make the Rajasthan Royals feel under pressure.

His 50 came up off 39 balls, but one delivery after reaching that landmark he was trapped leg before wicket by Warne - his innings included five fours and one six.

Vettori made a useful run-a-ball 29, but 143 never looked enough on a pitch that while two-paced was still very good for batting. Munaf Patel starred for the Rajasthan Royals with the ball, bowling a maiden and claiming 2/14, while Mascarenhas ended with 2/28 in his four overs.

Warne afterwards was full of praise for Smith and Pathan. "Graeme Smith showed all his experience out there, we needed someone to take responsibility at the top of the order. Pathan was just very strong," he said.

The Rajasthan Royals' next match is on Thursday when they play the Chennai Super Kings also in Centurion while the Delhi Daredevils will also tackle the Chennai Super Kings at the Wanderers on Saturday.

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