

Parthiv powers Gujarat Giants to second win

Lucknow, September 19: Parthiv Patel proved that he still retains his reputation of being a pocket-sized powerhouse as he played a sparkling knock on Monday to help the Virender Sehwag-captained Gujarat Giants claim a thrilling two-wicket victory over Harbhajan Singh's Manipal Tigers in the fourth match of the SKY247.net Legends League Cricket (LLC).

With this win, the Giants have now won two out of two to occupy the top spot in the points table.

On a challenging pitch at the BRSABV Ekana Stadium in Lucknow, Parthiv treated the fans with some breathtaking stroke-play. The former India wicketkeeper-batter, who boasts a T20 strike rate of 123.84, changed the complexion of the match after the Giants struggled at the beginning of their chase of a 121-run target.

Chris Mpfu, a former Zimbabwe pacer, dismissed Sehwag and Tillakaratne Dilshan in the second over of the Giants' chase. But Parthiv took the attack to the opposition camp by hitting three consecutive boundaries in the third over, bowled by Englishman Ryan Sidebottom.

Parthiv followed that up with a six and three more fours in the next over, bowled by Mpfu. The left-handed batter was finally out for 34 off just 17 balls, but by then he had made the Tigers bowlers shaky.

The Tigers tried to claw their way back late in the match with master spinners Harbhajan (2/23) and Muttiah Muralidharan (2/10) picking up four wickets between them.

The Giants were pegged back, but Graeme Swann hit two fours in the 17th over to release the pressure.

The Giants finally won in 17.2 overs when Murali bowled a wide ball. After the Gujarat Giants won the toss and chose to field, Sehwag's bowlers, almost all of them, bowled an impeccable line and length to make the life of the Tigers difficult.

The pace trio of Ashok Dinda, Mitchell McClenaghan and Rayad Emrit

continuously kept up the pressure on the Tigers' batters.

The Tigers lost three wickets within the Powerplay and lack of boundary balls meant they could not get too many runs either. After six overs, they could manage only 24/3, losing the wickets of Shivakant Shukla, Swapnil Asnodkar and Tatenda Taibu.

Mohammad Kaif (24) was expected to bail the team out and he did his best sharing a 55-run partnership with Ravikant Shukla (32).

Tigers' skipper, Harbhajan, connected a few meaty blows in the death overs, hitting two sixes and a boundary, to propel the total. But clearly that was not enough on the day.