

Legends League Cricket: India Capitals on sole lead after crushing victory over Manipal Tigers

Cuttack, September 29, 2022: Hamilton Masakadza's blazing bat, with able support from fellow Zimbabwean Solomon Mire (28) and New Zealander Ross Taylor (29), helped the India Capitals inflict a seven-wicket defeat on the Manipal Tigers in the 10th game of the SKY247.net Legends League Cricket (LLC) on Thursday.

Masakadza's explosive knock of 68 not out off 39 balls (seven fours and four sixes) was crucial as the Capitals chased down a 162-run target with 16 balls to spare. That innings from the 39-year-old overshadowed the effort of Jesse Ryder and Mohammad Kaif from the rival team earlier in the match.

Ryder and Kaif played like they never went away from competitive cricket as they shared a 126-run partnership to help the Tigers post 161/5. While the left-handed Ryder made 76 off 56 balls with five fours and an equal number of sixes, Kaif's contribution of 67 off 48 balls was no less important. Kaif hit nine boundaries and a six.

The win at the Barabati Stadium took Gautam Gambhir's India Capitals to the sole top position in the League standings with 7 points, while Harbhajan Singh's Tigers kept languishing at the bottom of the table with just 3 points.

It was Gambhir who won the toss and elected to bowl first. Ryder opened the Tigers' innings along with Tatenda Taibu. The New Zealander looked comfortable during his stay at the crease, but the same could not be said about the former Zimbabwe captain.

Former Australia speedster Mitchell Johnson ended Taibu's stay at the crease in the first ball of the fifth over. That was when Kaif joined Ryder in the middle.

The next 13-odd overs saw the Capitals try their best, but the pair of Ryder and Kaif remained unconquered.

The Tigers did not get too many runs in the Powerplay Overs — 46/1 — and thereafter Ryder and Kaif concentrated on building their confidence at the crease. They did not get too many big shots, but perhaps that was their ploy — to preserve their wickets before launching the offensive in the last few overs.

Till the 15th over, it seemed as if the Capitals bowlers had done a fine job by keeping a tight leash on the Tigers, who could make only 117/1 after 15 overs of play.

But Ryder and Kaif upped the scoring rate a bit in the last five overs, before both of them were dismissed in the 19th over bowled by Englishman Liam Plunkett.

However, the Tigers failed to make use of the final over of their innings, scoring just 4 runs

and losing two wickets to medium pacer Rajat Bhatia.

From Cuttack, the action now moves to the Barkatullah Stadium in Jodhpur, where the Gujarat Giants will take on the Bhilwara Kings on Friday.