



Big 3 Cricket Challenge Cup – 2008

(26th July – 27th July)

(Sriram Chandramouli- MichCA Secretary)

The once English sport, Cricket, is considered the second most popular game in the world, just after soccer. Yet not many in the United States are aware of Cricket. With the mission of creating awareness and spreading the sport, Michigan Cricket Association, a premier cricketing league amongst others, started this Big 3 Cricket challenge competition in the year 2003.

The name of the tournament, as it suggests, started with teams from the Big 3 Auto Company. In the year 2004, Altair, a Tier I supplier to the Big 3 joined this, weekend tournament. It was in year 2008 that the Big 3 had a mile-stone with 2 more teams joining the tourney. One team from Peoria, Illinois viz. Caterpillar and another from the west side of our state, Sprint. These 6 teams were slated to compete for the 2008 Big 3 Cricket Challenge Cup over the weekend of July 26th and 27th.

Just a couple days before the tournament happened, a prominent cricketer and captain of GM cricket team, Mr. Chandran Navaratnam unfortunately died in a car accident in Canada. The organizing committee managed to over-come the deep sorrow and went ahead with the tournament. With obvious reasons team GM could not participate in the tournament.

The 6 teams were initially separated into 2 pools and were scheduled to play 2 round robin games. The top 2 teams from each pool would then compete in the finals. Altair, Chrysler and Sprint were part of pool B while Caterpillar, Ford and GM were part of Pool A. Since GM did not participate Ford and Caterpillar played against each other twice. Pool B games went as planned. The relatively new team Sprint, lost both the games to Altair and Chrysler in the round robin. One has to give credit to Sprint for their spirited participation in the tournament.

This left with the game between Altair and Chrysler as almost a semifinal game as the winner of the two would automatically qualify for the finals. And sure enough it was a gripping semi-finals in which Chrysler held its nerve to defeat Altair to reach the finals for the 3rd consecutive time.

Pool A which comprised of just Ford and Caterpillar, saw some fabulous cricket. The first game went down to the wire in which Ford emerged victorious. The second game was a bigger nail-biter and Ford still came out on the top qualifying for the finals.

Ford and Chrysler, hence, were the finalists. This is second time in a row that the two teams are meeting in the finals. Ford was considered favorites for this one unlike the last year in which Chrysler beat Ford with relative ease. The finals game turned out to be one of cricket lover's favorite games of all times. Chrysler came from behind to beat the formidable Ford in a thriller. The crowd was stunned, let alone the Chrysler team itself with their feat. Shahid Ahmed the captain of team Chrysler was the main run getter for Chrysler while Goutham Nedunuri of Ford shared that honor for his team. But it was Pankaj Mahajan of Chrysler who took away the MVP of the finals after claiming a hat-trick of wickets, part of his 5-fer. The Chrysler team was elated after the win. This was the 3rd consecutive victory for the Chrysler team but this one in particular will stay in the memories for-ever.

The MichCA (Michigan Cricket Association) governing body is expecting more participation from corporations in this tournament. Eventually they are also considering a name change from Big3. Visit www.michca.org for further details regarding the Big 3 Challenge cup and other cricketing activities.