

AHMEDABAD NAVRATNA lifts India's first pro-team title

Vinod, Mithun & Vikrant win their respective matches to beat Bangalore 3-0

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In the end, it turned out to be a one-sided affair as Ahmedabad cruised to victory winning by a handsome 3-0 margin against Bangalore in the final of the inaugural Louis Philippe Cup at the KGA golf course in Bangalore on Saturday. The Ahmedabad team comprising Vikrant Chopra, Vinod Kumar and Mithun Perera took home prize money worth Rs36,00,000 beating

Bangalore team consisting of Anirban Lahiri, Manav Jaini and Abhishek Jha.

Ahmedabad's Vinod Kumar saved his best for the last as he shot his best score of the week so far, a three under over 14 holes, in his match against the reigning All India Matchplay champion Manav Jaini of the Bangalore team. Vinod went ahead on the second hole with a birdie before Manav made it all square with a birdie on the third. Vinod

then went on a roll as he pocketed the fifth, sixth and seventh to build a lead of three at the turn. He sank a mammoth 35-foot putt for birdie on the seventh. The 32-year-old inched closer to victory with wins on the 11th and 12th holes. His approach shot landed within six feet and set up a birdie on the 12th. Vinod sealed the match 5 & 4 after both the players halved the 14th.

"I kept up the intensity through the week since I shot a total of eight under in four rounds. My hitting was spot-on on all days and I saved a lot of pars. This win could be a turning point in my career as it has instilled a lot of self-belief in me. I would like to thank our team captain Vikrant for giving me a lot of invaluable advice," said Vinod, who won his maiden professional title last year.

Mithun Perera's 3 & 2 triumph against Abhishek Jha gave Ahmedabad an unassail-



ONE FOR ALBUM: Ahmedabad Navratna players pose for a photo, team owner Devang Shah (3rd from left)

able 2-0 lead over hosts Bangalore in the final encounter and helped them win the Louis Philippe Cup 2012. Perera won the first, seventh, eighth, 13th, 15th and 16th holes while Jha bagged the third and fifth holes. The highlights of Mithun's round were a couple of amazing sec-

ond shots on the first and seventh that helped him knock-in birdies.

Vikrant Chopra overcame local favourite Anirban Lahiri in the third match. Anirban won the first hole with a birdie but Vikrant came back strongly to claim the sixth and 14th with pars to go one up. Lahiri

conceded defeat to Chopra on the 15th hole immediately after Ahmedabad won the second match of the encounter to take a 2-0 lead. Ahmedabad thus made a clean sweep with a 3-0 score-line. Chopra said, "I played solid, regulation golf today and won with a par score. I hit it really close through the

week. I wasn't putting well on the first few holes today but my caddie advised me to hang in there and not lose focus. There is a different kind of pressure in team events since one does not want to let his team down at any stage. However, I was confident of our team's chances going into the final day. I knew I could take on Anirban as both of us are long-hitters.

"This win means a lot to me. I would like to thank my teammates Vinod and Mithun for making it a total team effort," added Vikrant, who is yet to win his first individual professional title.

In the face-off for third and fourth place, Chennai won all three matches against Chandigarh to finish third. Kolkata bagged fifth place after they beat Delhi by a 2-1 margin. Delhi had to settle for sixth position. Lucknow and West (Mumbai & Pune combined) finished seventh and eighth respectively after the former defeated the latter by a 3-0 margin.