

Ahmedabad win pro-team golf

Vinod Kumar Leads Way As Team Writes New Chapter In Gujarat Golf

R Satya | TNN

Bangalore: The narrow win on the final hole in the semifinals against Chennai on Friday seemed to have taken the wind out of their sails as Puravankara Bangalore came up short against unheralded Navratna Ahmedabad to go down without a whimper (0-3) in the final of the inaugural city-based Rs 1.24-crore Louis Philippe Cup team golf championship at the KGA on Saturday.

The team from Gujarat, without any big names in their ranks, has been getting better and better after an ordinary first round on Wednesday. In the title clash, Ahmedabad stepped up a gear to dash not only Bangalore's hopes but also that of the huge crowd – probably the biggest in a long, long time – and walk away with the winner's purse of Rs 36 lakh.

Delhi pro Vinod Kumar set the tone by blowing away his citymate Manav Jaini 5&4 in the opening tie. Abhishek Jha, Bangalore's hero in



(L to R) Ahmedabad team members Vinod Kumar, Vikrant Chopra and Mithun Perera with the Pro-Team Golf Cup at Karnataka Golf Association in Bangalore on Saturday

the semifinals the previous day, held his own for a while, but wilted under the in-form Mithun Perera's charge to lose 2&3.

Anirban Lahiri, on whom Bangalore's hopes rested, did begin well and kept his rival Vikrant Chopra at bay till the 13th hole. But poor iron-play in the 14th saw him go down for

the first time and it was all over bar the shouting on the 15th, where he saw his teammate Jha start his long walk back to the clubhouse from the 16th hole. Lahiri walked across to Chopra on the 15th green and offered his congratulations.

"It's a great feeling and we are delighted to win the first edition of the



new format," said Chopra as he walked off the course accompanied by his teammates Kumar and Perera. "I had confidence in Vinod and Perera, the two in-form players, and I was confident of taking on Anirban in the third tie."

Vinod, winner of the Tata Open last season on the PGTI Tour, didn't disappoint and got the team off to rollicking start. An amazing hitter who can go really low on his day – although those days have been few and far between – unfortunately for Bangalore, choose this day to go really low. Jaini bore the brunt of his charge. Although Jaini pulled one back on the third after Vinod birdied the second hole, it was a downhill ride from thereon for the Bangalore player. Vinod won the fifth, sixth and seventh, with a birdie, to go three-up at the turn and clinched the 11th and 12th holes as well to put the issue beyond doubt.

Perera took the cue and got down to work from the seventh hole onwards. Down 0-1 after the fifth, the

RESULTS

FINAL: Ahmedabad bt Bangalore 3-0 (Vinod Kumar bt Manav Jaini 5&4; Mithun Perera bt Abhishek Jha 3&2; Vikrant Chopra bt Anirban Lahiri 4&3 (conceded on 15th hole).

THIRD PLACE PLAY-OFF: Chennai bt Chandigarh 3-0 (SSP Chowrasia bt Harendra P Gupta 2&1; Gaurav Ghei bt Sujjan Singh 20th hole; Anura Rohana bt Gaganjeet Bhullar 20th hole).

FIFTH PLACE PLAY-OFF: Kolkata bt Delhi 2-1 (Chiragh Kumar lost to Shiv Kapur 1&3; Feroz Ali Mollah bt Rashid Khan 3&2; Shankar Das bt Om Prakash Chouhan 5&3).

SEVENTH PLACE PLAY-OFF: Lucknow bt West (Mumbai & Pune) 3-0 (Sanjay Kumar bt Ashok Kumar 1-up; Md Siddikur Rahman bt Mukesh Kumar 20th hole; Vijay Kumar bt Vivek Bhandari 2&1).

Lankan won three on the trot and didn't look back thereafter. The towering Jha, down 0-3, pulled one back in the 14th, but the writing was clear on the wall when he bogeyed the 15th to let Perera go 3-0 again.

Needing to win the next three to keep his and his team's hopes alive, all Jha could do was halve the 16th hole and trudge back to the hut. Lahiri, trailing Chopra at that stage, conceded the tie and walked back with Jha. The Bangalore trio took home for Rs 24 lakh for the week's effort.