

# Sri Lanka in majestic win to take Asia Cup



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reporting from Dubai

The Sri Lanka team made a superb team effort to win the sixth Asia Cup cricket title when they beat Pakistan by 23 runs at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium yesterday.

The game was a do-or-die battle for both Sri Lanka and Pakistan. Sri Lanka chased the target and recorded their victory on Friday with three overs to spare. However, Sri Lanka batted first after losing the toss and made a comfortable total of 170/6 as they defended that total with a superb fighting spirit to clinch the title for the sixth time under the full capacity of Dubai grounds while most of them were Pakistani supporters ended up disappointed with back to back defeats from Sri Lanka.

Pakistan chasing a target of 171 runs managed to get 147 while wicketkeeper Mohammed Rizwan was the only successful batter scoring 55 in 49 balls with 4 fours and a six while Sri Lanka's Promod Madushan made a superb bowling spell of 4 for 34 to wreck the Pakistan innings after claiming two early back to back wickets.

Madushan the 28-year-old paceman



**Victorious Sri Lankan cricketers celebrate with the trophy**

from Hambantota Therapuththa National School played his second T20 game and finished with best figures while experienced leg spinner Wanindu Hasaranga finished with 3 for 27 and Chamika Karunaratne with 2 for 33, playing good supporting roles with the ball.

The winning Sri Lanka captain Dasun

Shanaka received the Champions Trophy.

Chamika Karunaratne said, winning after seven years this title made a good feeling while one and a half years ago we were nowhere. Now we are a different team with youngsters and are looking forward to doing well in the next T20 World Cup in October. The Player

of the Match was Bhanuka Rajapaksa and the Player of the Series award went to Wanindu Hasaranga.

It was a real comeback by Sri Lanka after being put into bat first, while Pakistan skipper Babar Azam won the toss. Sri Lanka were struggling at 58/5 in 8.5 overs and the next 11.1 overs saw them add 112 runs with the loss of only two wickets to finish with a fighting total of 170 for 6 wickets at the end of 20 overs.

The architect of the innings was Bhanuka Rajapaksa who smashed an unbeaten 71 in 45 balls with 6 fours and 3

sixes. He hit the last ball of their innings for a six to take the score to 170.

Earlier, Sri Lankan openers Kusal Mendis was dismissed for a first-ball duck by Naseem Shah on the third ball of the innings while Pathum Nissanka was sent back after facing 11 balls to score 8 which included a boundary. He was dismissed by Haris Rauf who was

the most successful bowler finishing with 3 for 29 in his 4-over spell.

Dhananjaya de Silva the experienced all-rounder, who played his second match in the tournament and as deputy skipper; coming in for Charith Asalanka for the final, played a very confident innings as a number three scoring 28 in 21 balls. Iftikhar Ahmed took a return catch off his bowling to send back Dhananjaya in the 8th over.

Danushka Gunathilaka was not playing confidently throughout the tournament as he was clean bowled for 1 run by Rauf bagging his second wicket.

Bhanuka Rajapaksa and Wanindu Hasaranga made a solid 58 runs partnership for the 6th wicket before skipper Dasun Shanaka was out for 2 runs in 3 balls and leg spinner Sadhab Khan took the wicket of Shanaka at 58 for 5 wickets in 8.5 overs.

The bowling all-rounder Wanindu Hasaranga played a good supporting role by collecting a very useful 36 in 21 balls with 5 fours and a six to build up a partnership with Bhanuka.

Bhanuka Rajapaksa hit 6 fours and 3 sixes while all-rounder Chamika Karunaratne also remained unbeaten

on 14 runs off 11 adding the most needed 54 runs to the 7th wicket to end the innings on a good note.

The paceman Haris Rauf made a hostile spell of 3 for 29 while Shadab Khan and Iftikhar Khan the two spinners and young paceman Naseem Shah took one wicket apiece.

Sri Lanka made an unchanged side from the last game against Pakistan while Pakistan brought back their two main bowlers Shadab Khan leg spinner and young paceman Naseem Shah to strengthen the bowling department after losing the super four game on Friday at the same venue.

**Chief scores**

**Sri Lanka:** 170 for 6 wickets (Pathum Nissanka 8, Dhananjaya de Silva 28, Wanindu Hasaranga 36, Chamika Karunaratne 14\*, Bhanuka Rajapaksa 71, Naseem Shah 1/40, Haris Rauf 3/29, Shadab Khan 1/28, Iftikhar Ahmed 1/29)

**Pakistan:** 147 in 20 overs (Mohammed Rizwan 55, Iftikhar Ahmed 32, Haris Rauf 13, Maheesh Theekshana 1/25, Promod Madushan 4/34, Wanindu Hasaranga 3/27, Chamika Karunaratne 2/33)