



Kings XI crush Super Kings to enter IPL final

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Sehwag in his vintage form at Wankhede in the second qualifier of IPL 7

Riding on high hopes and reputation Chennai Super Kings, five time IPL finalists walked into Wankhede yesterday to claim their usual spot in the IPL final, only to be trampled on by Kings XI Punjab. Labelled as the most consistent team of IPL across seven seasons, Chennai Super Kings faced their third consecutive defeat at the hands of Kings XI Punjab in this season, superbly orchestrated by Virender Sehwag. In the crunch game, the Super Kings fell short by 24 runs to let Kings XI Punjab reach their first ever final.

Sehwag, a formidable addition to Kings XI Punjab has had a quite season scoring 326 runs in 15 innings and had given solid starts to the new and improved KXIP. But yesterday was his day and CSK had to pay. He took everybody's breath away with his 122 runs off 58 balls blasting 12 fours and 8 sixes. Wankhede turned into a sea of red, overshadowing the yellow of CSK to cheer on KXIP to reach the finals.

Posting an impressive total of 226, bolstered by the century of Sehwag with good support from Vohra and Miller, KXIP looked all set for entering their first final in seven seasons. But Suresh Raina all but crushed the hopes of victory from the minds of the Punjab players with a blistering 25-ball-87 knock.

In no time, CSK had reached a 100 in the power play, the highest power play score in the history of twenty20 cricket. And what seemed to



Raina raced to 87 runs in 25 balls, but failed to secure CSK a win.

be a tall order to chase at the beginning of the second innings now came down to a chase able equation of 127 runs from 83 balls with 8 wickets in hand. A very achievable target for CSK with their scoring machine batsmen. Especially Raina, who looked like he wonâ??t rest until 227 was chased down. At the brink of claiming the highest successful chase in T20 history, CSK stumbled badly, losing four wickets for 33 runs between 12th and 17th over. Two run outs and two catches saw CSK losing all of their middle order batsmen cheaply.

Skipper MS Dhoni scored 42 runs and finished the match with a six, but this time it wasnâ??t a celebratory six. It was KXIP who were celebrating their first entrance to the IPL final in seven seasons.

Across the seasons, bowling has been a major setback for Chennai Super Kings, and in the words of Dhoni, they didnâ??t disappoint this time either. â??I had belief in my bowling that they will let them [KXIP] score more than 200 runsâ?? remarked Dhoni in the post match presentation. Ravinder Jadeja played one of his worst innings of this season, giving away 48 runs for no wickets in his allotted four overs. Ashwin R closely trails behind him with 44 runs.

Commenting on a loss, with a victory that was so reachable, Dhoni said in the post match presentation, â??I think definitely it was something we could have achieved, the reason being Suresh [and] the way he batted.â?? He held the middle order batsmen responsible for the loss and said, â??I think in the middle overs there was some very irresponsible cricket by some of the most experienced international cricketers, so I think definitely we need to have a look, in a game like this when the stakes are high, you canâ??t really commit mistakes.â??

Dhoni was all praises for Virender Sehwag, the man who paved way for this victory. â??I think Viru pa, once he gets going hardly any bowler can stop him, and in our bowling attack also there is hardly any quick bowler who can push him onto the back foot,â?? Dhoni said. â??I think he batted really well, took the challenge to the spinners, dominated the spinners, never really let us get back into the game, they scored 25 runs more. The way Suresh batted, it was within our reach.â??

Sehwag was awarded Man of the Match, and in his speech he said, â??I had a chat with Sachin Tendulkar as well, put the conscious effort to stay till the 10-12th over. I promised someone that there is one innings I have to play, maybe it will come in the play-offs, today is Ness Wadiaâ??s birthday, I told him I will give him the best birthday gift. Whenever I got out, my son kept telling me, â??papa you are not scoring runs,â?? I told him hold on, there is still time.â??

The final of IPL 7 will be played between Kolkata Knight Riders, who are into their second finals in seven seasons and Kings XI Punjab at Bangalore on 1 June, 2014 from 8 pm.

Photos courtesy: espncricinfo

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