



AUSTRALIAN ARMY TEAM SKIPPER CAPTAIN MATT SUEN SAID THE DROP AT SECOND SLIP EARLY ON WAS AN UNFORTUNATE MISTAKE THAT COST DEARLY

Army team skipper Captain Matt Suen is clean bowled by Mahyudin



WORDS AND PHOTOS BRIAN HARTIGAN

ADF stumped

Beaten by minnows in cricket challenge

Defending champions of the International Defence Cricket Challenge – the Australian Army – were soundly beaten in this year's final in Canberra on 26 November thanks to a polished performance from a minnow of the game.

Sent in to bat, the Royal Malaysian Air Force set about building a total worthy of any international 50-over game.

In what proved to be a decisive mistake, Army dropped a catch off the Malaysian's best batsman early in the game, allowing Suharril to contribute 123 runs to the eventual total of 7-313.

Australian Army team skipper Captain Matt Suen said the drop at second slip early on was an unfortunate mistake that cost dearly.



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Army bowler Corporal Don Mander in full flight

"That century, plus their skipper [Anwar] scoring about 60-odd as well, was what they built their big score around," Captain Suen said.

"Our boys toiled really well in the field, but I can't say anyone in particular really stood out today.

"The boys stuck together and gelled very well as a team all tournament, but we didn't have any standout superstars."

He said the deck at Canberra's famous Manuka Oval was pretty slow and pretty flat for the final and he thought his side might get the better conditions in the afternoon session, so, after winning the toss, he decided to send the Malaysians in to bat first.

The Royal Malaysian Air Force got off to a shaky start, losing both openers – Razman for 11 and Rosman for 17.

But this only opened the floodgates as far as the visitor's run rate was concerned, with Suharril sending the ball to the boundary 13 times on his way to 123 off 122 balls, while Anwar supported him valiantly with five boundaries of his own off 67 balls for a creditable personal tally of 64.

Reflective of the spirit the game was played in, Suharril received handshakes and back-pats from most of the Army team when he was eventually dismissed – caught by the Aussie skipper off the bowling of Mander.

However, the crowd, comprised mainly of the other participating players from the tournament, were 100 per cent – and very vocally – behind the Malaysians.

"Both sides worked hard out there today, but, of course, it was all played in the best cricketing spirit," Captain Suen said.

"Being the defending champions, the crowd's reaction was bound to happen," he added with a laugh.

"It was all good fun though."

Unfortunately, after playing in very hot, humid conditions for most of the day, a cool change and rain brought the game to a premature end in the 33rd over of Army's innings.

With the Aussies on 6 for 164, requiring another 150 runs off 97 balls, and with just four lower-order wickets in hand, the prospective result was unquestionable.

"Chasing 313 was always a pretty big task," Captain Suen said.

"So, while we would have liked to have a crack at finishing it, we certainly weren't expecting to be 6 for 164 at this stage.

"So, well done to them."