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Golf Louis Philippe Cup

Navratna Ahmedabad emerge champions

BENGALURU: Mithun Perera's love affair with the Louis Philippe Cup continued as his team Navratna Ahmedabad pulled off a coup to emerge champions for the third time here on Saturday.

Trailing by five shots overnight and struggling with the conditions on the opening nine, Ahmedabad, led brilliantly by Perera and his fellow Sri Lankan Anura Rohana, fought back in fine fashion on the inward journey to retain their crown at the Karnataka Golf Association.

While the ever-smiling Perera reserved his best for the last, firing a sizzling five-under 67, senior pro Rohana, perhaps, sank the putt that helped them stay champions, holing out a nerve-wracking 10-foot birdie on the closing 18th hole for a fighting 71.

That final putt made sure Ahmedabad finished level on scores with pace-setters TAKE Chennai on 419 and with neither Khalin Joshi nor S Chikkarangappa able to muster anything special on the closing stretch, Ahmedabad were declared winners by virtue of better final round scores.



JUBILANT Navratna Ahmedabad team members Mithun Perera, Anura Rohana and Shankar Das (from left) pose with the Louis Philippe Cup in Bengaluru on Saturday. DH PHOTO

Although it was a very disappointing day for Chennai after having led the tournament for most part, it was nevertheless a happy homecoming for Joshi, the 22-year-old winning the individual title with a score of 12-under 204 (69, 65, 70).

Perera, who started off with a disastrous 74 before carding

a 70 on Friday, endured terrible beginning with a bogey on the third hole. Struggling to come to terms with the windy conditions, the 29-year-old finally made his first birdie on the eighth hole.

Thereafter, his putter turned red-hot as he birdied the 10th, 11th and 14th holes to bring

Ahmedabad into contention. Sensing something special, he then holed out an eight-foot birdie on the 17th hole before sinking a 15-footer birdie on the closing 18th.

Rohana started off with a birdie on the opening hole itself but then suffered a crippling blow with a hat-trick of bogeys

from the fifth. A pro tour winner here, Rohana turned around his and team's fortunes in remarkable fashion by birdieing the 12th, 16th and a trophy-winning birdie on the 18th hole.

"Although we were trailing by five shots, we never stopped believing in ourselves," said a delighted Perera after winning a third LP Cup with Ahmedabad.

"We knew if we played a solid round we had a chance. It was extremely tough on the opening nine but Anura and I played some superb golf on the back nine. It feels great to post such a win."

DH News Service

The scores (third round, only the two best individual scores of the day was considered for computation):

419: Navratna Ahmedabad (Mithun Perera 67, Anura Rohana 71, Shankar Das 75). **TAKE Chennai** (Khalin Joshi 70, S Chikkarangappa 73, SSP Chowrasia 73). Ahmedabad adjudged winner on virtue of better final round score. **421:** Dev-Ellora Pune (Sanjay Kumar 68, Om Prakash Chouhan 69, Md Siddikur 78). **422:** Zion Hills Bengaluru (Rahil Gangjee 69, C Muniyappa 71, Abhijit Singh Chadha 74). **425:** Jaypee Greens Greater Noida, Laqshya Mumbai; **431:** DLF The Crest Gurgaon.

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