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## CSK continue their dominance over MI – MSD's heroics seal the deal



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On Sunday, it was a clash of the two most successful teams in IPL – Chennai Super Kings (CSK) vs Mumbai Indians (MI), both had been IPL champions for 5 times each. Normally you will see a Sea of blue in Wankhede stadium but whenever CSK is their opponent, there is always more of yellow shade in the ground. Moreover since this could probably be the last appearance of the legend MSD in Wankhede, where he created history by winning the finals of 2011 ICC World Cup with a

masterly 91 not out, there was more of CSK and MSD fans in the ground. Oh Boy, he didn't disappoint his fans, and gave a perfect gift on Tamil New Years Day for all the Chennai supporters, with 3 brilliant sixes out of the last 4 balls of CSK innings scoring 20 not out off 4 balls. Ufff what a knock it was.

Hardik Pandya, captain of MI won the toss and put CSK in to bat who had a new pair of Rahane and Rachin to open the innings. I was perplexed with that decision as Rithuraj and Rahane are similar type of batsmen, and had the question as to why they should go for a change in the opening pair who were doing a decent job so far in the tournament, but I really loved hearing the reason from captain Rithuraj in the post match conference when he said Rahane was carrying a small niggle and he wanted Rahane to have some quick runs in power play instead of running hard later which he could do himself coming in one drop. Superb thought process from the captain and the team management. Unfortunately the decision didn't help CSK as Rahane got out in 2nd over itself going for a cross batted heave scoring just 5 runs. Rachin played some good shots before getting out for 21 and CSK were 60 for 2 in 8 overs.

But captain Rithuraj and the star performer for CSK this season so far Shivam Dube batted brilliantly, with regular hits to the fence – both scored more than 60 runs at nearly 175 % strike rate and then the climax was nicely scripted by Thala Dhoni in the last over with 500% strike rate. As

always Jasprit Bumrah was the pick of the bowlers for MI giving away just 27 runs in 4 overs, but he couldn't give any breakthroughs which normally he does. Hardik's captaincy had a lot to be desired and no wonder he has come under lot of flak in social media.

Chasing a formidable score of 206 runs, MI batsmen started off with a flourish, with the classy Rohit and the pocket rocket Ishan Kishan finding the boundary rope with great regularity and in 7 overs they scored 70. But the 8th over bowled by Junior Malinga M Patheerana brought 2 wickets including one from a brilliant catch at third man boundary by Mustafizur, and from then on batting became difficult for MI. Rohit played superbly to score 105 off 63 balls but lacked support at the other end. Also CSK bowlers bowled well in the 2nd half of the innings, exactly to the plan of Thala Dhoni and their bowling coach DJ Bravo of taking the pace off the balls, and also bowling wide of off stump with a packed offside field. MI finally managed to score just 186, and fell short by 20 runs which was what MSD scored off the 4 balls he faced.

Overall a clinical performance from CSK in all departments of the game and they continue their good rhythm in IPL 2024.