

Sri Lankan import's exquisite display delivers outright win

MOONEE Valley top-order batsman Aoshtha Perera is an out-and-out star in the Victorian Turf Cricket Association north B1.

The Sri Lankan import produced a glorious 157 not out as the Valleys crushed Craigieburn outright at Ormond Park on Saturday to cement their position among the top four.

Perera's flawless knock, which included three sixes, prompted Valleys captain Mark Gauci to classify his teammate as

the No. 1 batsman in the division. "That was pretty awesome," he said.

"He was in total control and never looked like going out. He's all class."

Asked where he rated the first drop, Gauci left nothing to the imagination.

"He's definitely, in our eyes, the best batsman in the competition."

The Valleys are a team on the rise in north B1.

There is a real belief that finals are on the agenda — or, perhaps, even more.

"We believe we can go a long way this year," Gauci said.

The Valleys showed fighting spirit to extract maximum points.

The black and white caps were bundled out for 125 in the first dig.

They relied on No. 10 Kane Harding, who made 24 not out, to take the score beyond 100.

The bowlers were hellbent on making life difficult for Craigieburn, which made a dismal 93 in 29.3 listless overs.

Harding was the man to short-circuit the visitors with 5-36 in 11.3 overs.

Day two was all one-way traffic as the Valleys piled on the runs.

Perera was unstoppable and was offered assistance from all-rounder Rajan Aiyappan (63) and Gauci (43).

"I batted with Aoshtha for a fair bit of that innings," Gauci said. "My only call was when to declare."

The declaration came with the Valleys on 5-305 — a lead of 337.

The need for speed allowed Aiyappan to collect 5-17 off 10 overs as the Valleys stormed to a 220-run victory.

"He's an awesome all-round cricketer and gun fielder," Gauci said, attributing his fast bowling to the visitors' poor

second-innings score of 117.

Gauci said his side showed tremendous character to win with a low first-innings total. "It was pretty exciting and a memorable win."