

Tanzania finished the International Cricket Council (ICC) Men's Twenty20 World Cup Sub Regional Africa B Qualifier with a flourish, as they thumped Cameroon by 184 runs on the final day of action in Kigali.

The margin of victory ensured that they snuck past Nigeria, who had led the table throughout the week, to take tournament honours courtesy of a better Net Run Rate (NRR), 4.891.

Ivan Ismail Selemani's brutal 71 from just 40 balls and captain Abhik Ramesh Patwa's 16-ball 33 saw Tanzania bring up the 100 under nine overs. At the end of the innings, there was a 19-ball 44 not out from Kassim Mussa Nassoro that provided the impetus for Tanzania to reach 218 for six.

They knew that a big margin of victory was their only chance of usurping Nigeria's NRR, and their bowlers duly delivered by running through Cameroon, bowling them out for just 34.

Teenager Yalinde Maurice Nkanya wrapped up an excellent week with the ball by snatching five wickets for just 2 runs, to pick up a third Player of the Match award. He also finished as the leading wicket taker in the competition with 16 scalps for only 73 runs at an enviable economy of 3.11 and average of 4.56 from just 23.3 overs.

Meanwhile it wasn't Nigeria's problem that their captain Sylvester Okpe lost the toss and was asked to bowl first against Ghana in the final game of the tournament – a West African derby. Luck at the toss would have seen the 'Big Ogas' bat first and pile on the runs in an attempt to maintain their superior NRR. But it wasn't to be.

Rexford Bakum's stoic 41 from 27 balls lifted Ghana to 127 for seven, as paceman Peter Aho again got amongst the wickets with four for 15. The Nigerian chase was measured rather than manic, led by Ashmit Shreshta's 47 not out, and Akhere Iselele's fluent 44 from 25 balls. The Yellow Greens won with 20 balls to spare, but they couldn't boost their equally superb NRR of 3.739 to hold off Tanzania.

Their consolation is that they are through to the Africa Qualifier alongside Tanzania, in Namibia next year.

Already qualified from the Group A event two weeks ago are the East African nations; Kenya and Rwanda, with the reward for the quartet being pitting their wits

against the higher ranked trio of Zimbabwe, Namibia and Uganda.

There were heart-warming stories in the other matches on the final day, as Mozambique sealed third place with a five-wicket victory over Sierra Leone, and inexperienced Gambia defeated Cameroon to avoid the wooden spoon.

Mozambique's win was built on tight bowling yet again. The normally aggressive John Bangura was throttled to a 59-ball 32, as Sierra Leone could only reach 116 for nine. Francis Damiao Couana led the way with figures of three for 19, and he got solid support from Joao Huo (two for 10) and Jose Bulele (one for 12 in four overs).

Couana then continued his excellent week with the bat, chalking up 32 from 36 balls upfront. After he fell, it was left to skipper Filipe Antonio Cossa to see the team home, with a hasty 29 not out from just 14 balls.

Mozambique continue to punch above their weight in these tournaments, and their experience in Rwanda bodes well for future tournaments. Not only is the third-place their biggest take away from the event but also the fact that their all-rounder Jose Bulele scooped the Player of the Tournament award.

The 19-year-old not only crossed 500 T20I career runs this week – now at 612 – but also scored 210 runs at an average of 42, picked up nine wickets from 23.2 overs and held onto one catch for an unequalled haul of 958 MVP points.

Another side who left Kigali heartened was unseeded Gambia. They have learnt some strong lessons over the past week, and they applied them in an emotional 11-run victory over Cameroon on Friday morning.

Mohammed Manga carried his bat to score a crucial 59 not out, which was the glue that held the innings together. Cameroon skipper Julien Nyoma Bienvenue Abega returned fine figures of four for 18, as wickets kept falling for Gambia, but their total of 115 for eight was always going to be a big test for struggling Cameroon.

And so it proved, as Aniru Conteh delivered an inspired spell (four for 10) and Musa Jobarteh picked up three wickets to keep the pressure firmly on Cameroon.

Ultimately, they were bowled out for 104, with more than two overs still remaining. The pressure and determination from Gambia was relentless, and they celebrated a famous victory with justified gusto.

Mercifully, the final day in Kigali was not affected by the weather, and African cricket was the winner as several, intriguing narratives played out over the course of the day's action including one fairytale that saw Ghana's Samson Kwesi Awe Awiah take home the Best Batsman's trophy with 227 runs at a strike rate of 132 and average of 37.8 per innings over the seven matches the 32-year-old played.

This brings down the curtain on another strong year for cricket on the continent with all nations looking to build on this progress come 2023.

The competitiveness on show this past month in Rwanda was a joy to watch after years of struggling with poor administration and mismanagement.

It promises to be a year like no other, with cricket being included in the Africa Games, to be hosted in Ghana for the very first time and the small matter of 2 nations progressing directly to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup in 2024 to be played in the West Indies and USA!