

SFDWP vs FCC Thursday 27th May 2021, Clarence Park

After the criminal debacle of two days earlier, it was time for a revamped, new-look squad (aka the "A Team") to take on the might of FCC at the very site of that earlier debacle. Some of the Flamstead 6, Killigrew 11 and Colts Turkeys were present, hoping to make amends for their shameful performances.

A sense of urgency and professionalism exuded from the Captain, Longbottom. Indeed, so organised was he, that he had chosen his bowling order prior to our batting innings. Clarence Park was looking delightful in the sunshine, when we were treated to the sounds of a band warming up. Not the Harry Connick Jr /Glenn Miller strains of Tuesday, but a funky, jazzy group. Lots of upbeat numbers were performed to the obvious enjoyment of the players (judging by the surreptitious jigging of hips and quiet murmuring of the song lyrics by many of them).

Longbottom and Church (aka "the bionic man") shimmied out to the crease to begin their innings. Longers made his intentions clear, as did Church. Different intentions, obviously. Bottom swiped and dominated the bowling whilst Church was saving himself for the bowling and got a thick edge to the keeper without troubling the scorer. "Keep your trigger finger down!" he had warned me beforehand, but the edge was so loud it could be heard all the way back to the boundary, even over the sound of the band. To his credit, he walked...slowly...very slowly, back to the pavilion. Matt joined the scene being informed by his batting partner that he had a sore groin, so no quick runs. There then followed some considered batting with Longbottom looking to move the scoring along and Matt keeping him company. This was ended by Matt's belief that he could outspurt Usain Bolt for a second run.

Busted to the crease. He wasn't wasting any time. Bash, crash. Longbottom hit the retirement number, shortly followed by Busted who got 3 sixes and 3 fours as part of his 33. To be fair, some of the pie-chuckers were on at this stage. Paggers in. Fresh from the success of his last innings, being top scorer...with 4 runs (and that was a lucky outside edge!). This time he managed 5 runs, only to be caught as he leathered the ball down the throat of one of the fielders. Wilson accompanied him until the catch, playing a studious innings. Straight-bat Wilson. Kept a straight face as well as a straight bat whilst the Corporal was out CBW. That is, "Chest Before Wicket". Jones was most indignant about this. "How can I be out LBW when it hit my chest?", he said pointing to the bruised part of his body. "Because you were sprawled on the ground when it hit you" came the reply. "But it wasn't even my leg", he muttered as he stomped back to the pavilion. Still, another run added to the total and, more importantly, another anecdote that will live with the Saddos for years to come.

Bond strode in. Mean, thoughtful, determined. Unfortunately, he was shaken, not stirred as he was clean bowled for a single run. Desperate times call for desperate measures and so it was the moment to wheel out WG (after his exceptional batting performance two days earlier...well it would have been had he not been given out LBW, first ball, by that rat, Pip). This time, WG was playing with gay abandon, knowing that the cream of the batting was yet to come (Pointer and Clampers...oh, and Longbottom and Busted). Unfortunately, with only 8 balls to face all he could manage was to try to kill both himself and Wilson (yes, he was still there!) by running ones and twos. A reasonable total of 136 looked like it would be tight but defensible.

Time to take to the field. Captain Longbottom barked his orders. "Finer! Finer!"... "No, the other finer, urmm, yes squarer". With millimetre accuracy he placed the fielders. Church to open the bowling (from the best end). Dot. Dot. Wicket. Dot. Dot. One. Superb first over. WG joined in with some ok line and length before Church's second excellent over: dot,one,dot,dot,one,dot. This was

the start we needed! Hey, we could win this! Wilson and Clampers next up. Pretty tight again and a wicket to Clampers. Sadly, the oppo were getting into their stride.

Our supporters were on-hand to give their encouragement. Curtis was offering some advice to players at the boundary. This seemed to rile the captain, who was trying to move said players several millimetres at the time. "F-off Curtis!" came the cry.

In the meantime, Michael bought (!) another wicket and Bondy kept a lid on the runs with some tight deliveries. It was looking finely balanced. Pointer and Paggers had some problems with the radar in the fading light. Even the endless field-setting changes were struggling to keep a lid on things. Matt and Busted were the last pair. Matt was suffering with the same low-light radar problems of Pointer and Paggers. It was now tight. Very tight. Busted was going to save the day. One. Dot. Dot. Dot. Dot....Damn, Six. Matt's radar was starting to come back. He was settling into the groove, but it was too late. A well-struck four ended the chase before Busted had the chance to work his magic in the last over.

It was all over. The fat lady had sung (actually, I don't think she was a fat lady, but the band had certainly packed up and gone home). A quick beer or two on the steps of the pavilion and a reflection of what might have been. I've missed this over the last year.