

“From the ashes, a phoenix shall arise”

Michael Jordan once famously said “I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times I’ve been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed and that is why in the crucial moments I succeed” A fitting quote that perfectly describes the week Dan “on me head son” Lewis has had, but more on that later.

A cool and slightly damp Sandpit Lane was the setting for 11 brave Saddos to face the mighty FCC. The toss was done and Saddos elected to field first, with the moisture in the air and the ground getting damper by the minute we knew this would play into our favour once it was our turn to bat. The stage was set and up stepped James Nairne who wasted absolutely no time in bowling a beauty which sent the FCC opener back to the pavilion with a golden duck. A superb bowling spell from both James Nairne and James Tucker kept FCC to single digits after 4 overs.

Next up to bowl was Clampers and Patch, Clampers unfortunate not to secure a stunning LBW, the appeal had everything but Billy Bowden didn’t raise his crooked finger of doom. Patch stepped up and with a misjudged swing of the bat the batsman sent the ball high into the St Albans night sky, nothing to worry about as the ball was heading in Andy “safe hands” Nobles direction, a slight juggle kept the fans on the edge of their seat, but he calmly brought the ball in and the Saddos had their second wicket, 8 overs in and we’d conceded about 30 (ish) runs.

FCC knew they needed to put some runs on the board and what followed was a solid partnership with both the opener and fourth batsman retiring on 25 a piece.

A quick pause in play saw Pip and Dan Lewis swap wicket keeping duties and the players were stunned to see Dan trotting back to the stumps sporting a brand new helmet he had purchased that very same day, proudly explaining the titanium support was ample justification for the £150 spent, if only you’d worn that on Tuesday!

What followed was a sublime bowling display by Chenners, some confusion as to how many wickets he took, some thought 4, some 5 and some 3, from where I was fielding all I could see was the FCC tailenders frantically looking for spare pads as the wickets were flying. A smart turn of pace by Andy Noble saw the final batsman run out and the Saddos were set 118 to win.

With 118 the target, Pip and Lalit headed out, Pip battling on from a sore shoulder after a tough slip in the field and Lalit playing just his second game for the Saddos opened the batting. A fantastic cool calm display from both building a very strong opening partnership of 55 ish, Pip being retired first. In stepped Fraser who continued the momentum until he was cruelly given LBW, facilities at sandpit lane don’t allow for any form of review, but on another day it was missing the stumps by a mile.

Adam was next to head in and proudly showing off his new bat, a bit like Triggers broom, it was a fair few months old and hadn't scored any runs (yet!) but it certainly looked the part. Well that same bat kept the Saddos momentum going with some beautifully struck boundaries and crisp singles. Lalit continued his fine display before also being retired. This point the Saddos needed 25 off the final 7 overs and we were set for a very exciting finish. Patch was next into the crease, not before some final words of wisdom from Clampers "if you don't score runs early then get yourself out" But alas Patch's technique of shutting the eyes and swinging was paying off who slotted a 4 and a few singles followed, Adam continued to spray the ball round the park before cruelly being given out for LBW, that new bat certainly had some runs on it now!

In stepped Dan Lewis, sporting his new helmet, with 5 needed off the final 2 overs could Dan and Patch see the Saddos home or make it a tense finish. The first two balls drew a blank before Patch tried to end the game with a glorious 6, as per standard Patch batting he completely misjudged the timing of the ball, it caught the edge of the bat and straight up into the night sky it went, the hopes of an Undertaker & Kane "Brothers of destruction" sealing the victory looked to be over only for the bowler to drop the ball and 2 runs were added to the total. 3 needed off 9, a single from Dan before another single from Patch meant the Saddos needed just 1 run from 7 balls.

After the scenes of Dan Lewis attempting to play headers and volleys on Tuesday, unbelievably Dan Lewis had the chance to bring the Saddos home with 1 needed off 7 balls could Dan lead us home? Just like Michael Jordan, with the game on the line, he stepped up and slotted a beautiful single to bring home the victory with 6 balls to spare just like a phoenix rising from the ashes!

Honourable Mentions

- Lalit playing just his second game for the Saddos building a sublime partnership with Pip
- Chenner's ripping through the FCC middle order
- Frazer doing the chip run and bringing back an array of sauces and prawn crackers!

But POTM has to go to the man of the hour Dan Lewis, after passing concussion protocols, purchasing a new £150 titanium support helmet, he stepped up and secured the win in fine style.

