

## FISHERS. NOW JUST A LINE IN THE SAND

If you support a lowly and dysfunctional second division football team like I do (Swindon Town by the way), then trips to Stevenage on a wet Tuesday night in February are made more in hope rather than expectation. A win would be nice but so long as there are some comedy moments, perhaps a goal or two and something to discuss then we will come back for some more. So it was on the Longest Day, the team arrived in dribs and drabs on a lovely evening at the VSD and given the recent record and given the opposition, the game attracted a record crowd for Sads. Could we beat Fishers twice in a row, just imagine three in a row, we get to keep them. Perchance to dream dear boy, perchance to dream.

Williams won/lost the toss and we batted first on what was a typical VSD track, fast bouncy and true, the covers having only been taken off two hours before the game. The crowd gathered in the Auto Stand (they ought to do this, they ought to do that), all the seats were taken leaving the rest of us standing with slightly restricted views of mid on due to the nettles. The talk was of the newbies, Manny and Dave Ashton and whether Graham P could reach the millennium mile stone

Peel and Longers opened with the general consensus that we would need 130 at least to beat the foe. After nine dot balls for Peel and with Longers caught, no he's dropped it, on two, after what seemed an age, the boys finally got going and runs accrued to the point when, with a characteristic drive, Graham (M) Peel reached his 1,000 runs for the club. Cue mumblings in the crowd of he's playing for a new contract, what took him so long and if only he could bowl then he might be a half decent player. Both retired and with Manny and Dave A coming in they looked to carry on the good start. Manny heaved and smashed his way to five singles whilst Dave very politely defended a decent ball and promptly managed to kick it onto his stumps. Late entrant Tim W garnered ones and two nicely and with Manny eventually retiring, we looked quite good a 67 for 1 after 10 overs. Glenno entered and looked like he meant business, oh well Glenno, unlucky, maybe next time.

Laces checked, pads tightened, box adjusted, thigh pad, gloves, bat, right I'm ready as Padgett strides out. Standing at the non strikers end and dreaming of runs, Tim calls for a tight single and in a flurry of white like two Aylesbury ducks fighting, sadly Paggers didn't make it. No, not the line from TV's Casualty but rather a 'run out' casualty. Whoops ! The crowd chortled behind their cuffs that this is the first time we have seen a diamond duck and promptly went quiet as the crest fallen Rich P reached the pavilion and he was reminded that batting number seven is now the, not so lucky seven, as Jones's recent run out from that position will show. (Sorry to open old wounds Michael).

Chris batted beautifully (typo that should have read 'but awfully') and after he had unscrewed his feet from the pitch manged to accelerate to 15 before being caught behind and walking. The tail saw out the remainder of the overs with Williams getting an appalling LBW decision, at least that's what he said with Colin and WG getting us up to a respectable 137.

We all know not to walk behind the bowlers arm etc, but the chap along with his Moll who walked from third man, behind the stumps, to square leg with a view to leaving the pitch via cow corner, was taking it a bit far, especially as we were in the middle of an over. Longers who was in his post retiring mode as square leg umpire decided to have a word. I think the intruder had taken drink and went nose to nose and explained he can walk where he likes as he pays his council tax. After a short discussion, with James using some colourful language and with some encouragement from the stands, the post happy hour invader was encouraged to be on his way.

Lunch, the crowd in the Auto stand looked round for food only to see the collection of dogs eating sticks with the only sustenance being the share in a bag of Minstrels the oppo's handed round.

With clouds gathering and rain threatening, the crowd were now thinking of moving into the grandstand but Fishers had already bagged the spot under the tree. Nevertheless, off we set in defence of the gettable total. Rumbly in the stand as Williams opens with Longers with of cries of 'he doesn't know what he's doing' from the sidelines. Oh!, he bowled someone. Dipped, seamed and swung, the ball did none of those things. I think he missed a straight one was a comment from the back of the stand. Manny then promptly threw in a laser to get another out and then later took an important catch behind the nettles from us, to get their best player. WG bowled his normal miserly stuff, eventually getting 1-8 off three overs. Glenno bowled with his usual accuracy and Curtis fluked a bowled.

There come points in games when things are drifting, the crowd looking at the clouds and cathedral thinking this is all very pleasant when it starts to rain. I say this because what happened in the next few overs has to have some reason to it. Curtis's first ball I believe, was hit gently to mid on where, not wanting to embarrass him, (Williams) went to *take a dolly* (no no that's not his Saturday night entertainment) but dropped it not once, not twice but three times. Cue banter from the stands.

We might think better of Tim, but fielding in front of the Auto Stand did a 5.8 point Olympic routine in missing a gently rolling ball only to find it trickling over the boundary. Not to be outdone at the far end Curtis and WG chased a ball to the boundary only for it to stop short. I can only assume that they didn't fancy throwing the ball back that far so with the ball still in play WG went over the rope with the ball to conceded a four. Apparently it takes months of training. Curtis chased a lob in vain and whilst groaning in the stand, Peter went to put his head in his hands and you've guessed it, dropped it !!!

One slightly brighter light in our fielding was our erstwhile keeper who with about 15 minutes to politely knock off one bail to stump their number eight, promptly smashed all three stumps out the ground, before screaming owzat! Priceless.

With the grass getting wet and runs harder to come by, the run rate increased to ten per over and whilst they made a short term attempt to keep up, we managed to see the game out with little further ado. Victory was ours. Mention and thanks go out to our two loanees, Manny with the bat and Dave A with three wickets. You wait for one win and like the proverbial bus, two arrive at same time. Three times, we can only dream.

We retired to our sponsors pub for a post game dissection which reverted to the usual 'bants' and in a post victory glow on the eve of the longest day, it left Peel to wander off saying he was going to Stonehenge to find the Millenium Mile Stone and the rest of us singing "Can we play you every week".

Crowd – 5 plus two dogs, a family who kindly moved off the pitch at the start and James's mate who only did so after a friendly word.

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