

On another lovely evening laid on for us by Carol the weather girl, 11 Saddos gathered at the VSB in the hope of arresting an alarming slump in form, seeing us lose 3 on the bounce, against a Gardenfields team that had already tasted defeat against us earlier in the year.

Bowling first, Rupert opened up with his sunglasses on and after a slightly expensive opening over, finished his spell with an excellent over conceding only one – and may have had a wicket if Curtis at mid-on had not been running in treacle. Winfield opened at the other end, and again after an expensive-ish first over, finished with a wicket, trapping Dover in front.



1Chris Curtis attempts a catch off Rupert's bowling

Colin and Dippers then took up the attack during a period that saw runs flowing as well as one of the season's highlights in the field – a full-toss from Jan rifled flat and hard by the dangerous Dingo proved no match for a tumbling Buckets Roberts, who held a one-handed screamer.

Full of confidence from his fielding effort, Mark was next up, bowling an excellent spell conceding only 5. Although controversially called wide a couple of times, the scorers clearly agreeing with Mark having not recorded them against his figures. Captain Church took up the cudgels at the other end, clean bowling Shep and tying the batsmen down after the early flurry of runs – he could have had more had he held on to a sharp return catch.

The next 4-over spell of play saw the Saddos pull the game right back with only 15 runs conceded. While the father of the Pointer Sisters bowled a tight and teasing line at one end, Head of Cross Rail 3, started with doing his best Glen McGrath impression by hitting the top of off with his first ball, soon followed by the plumbest of LBWs. Had the 2 catches that were dropped in his second over (which also featured a run out by Glenno) been held, a commemorative plaque may have been commissioned.

Bringing up the rear, as it were, Glenno and Harsha bowled tightly – the only boundary coming from overthrows that saw 3 backers-up fall about like nine pins. A run out by Rich was soon followed by a smart stumping by him in Harsha's second saw Gardenfields set Saddos a target of 137.

Opening up, Captain Church started steadily whilst his partner Harsha and No 3 Glenno were out cheaply – no doubt in sympathy with their fellow countrymen at Edgbaston. Winners soon steadied the ship with the Skipper but saw his stumps disturbed to a Corporal Jonesesque hoick. This brought the Dippers to the crease who started cautiously while Peter retired for a well compiled 28 that saw him take more singles than his lungs could possibly handle.

With the required run rate around 10, Chris, still on a high from his bowling exploits, joined Dippers at the crease. Dippers quickly moved through the gears with a couple of lusty sixes into the trees – retiring on a dapper 25. In the fading light, Tim P joined Chris to chase down a total that was now within reach, thanks to Dippers' efforts. Both batsmen looked comfortable and were hitting the loose ones while batting conditions were at their worst.

With the game in the balance, Gardenfields' decision to bring on their quicker and better bowlers on for their 3rd overs in the fading light proved to be a canny and winning move. Chris & Tim batted with aplomb, but fell 13 short of a winning total. Tim finishing on 10 and Chris undefeated on 24 – both possibly Saddos career bests.

A loss on paper, but taking into account our previous encounter against the Men of Fields, aggregating the scores over the 2 legs sees Saddos run out convincing winners with 261 against 250.