

Annales Verulamenses



Sad Fat Dads With Pads Vs. Gardenfields Legion

XXVII day of Junius, MMXXV - Verulamium Super Bowl

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A scroll chronicling the noble clash between the Sad Fat Dads With Pads and the Gardenfields Legion

Prologue - The Centurion in the Wrong Century

Long ago, in the waning years of the Roman occupation of Britannia, there lived a weary centurion named Lucius Scripto Ballicus. Having fought in far-off lands and retired with moderate honour (and even more moderate mobility), he found himself stationed in the outer reaches of the Empire-Verulamium, a place once noble, now mostly overrun by squirrels and dog walkers.

But the Fates had plans stranger than even Caligula's Tuesday afternoons. During a thunderstorm on Watling Street, Lucius was struck by a mysterious bolt and awoke in the year 2025.

Here, he encountered a new ritual. Not war. Not theatre. But cricket. A game of leather and willow, of baffling pauses, curious tea breaks, and elaborate fielding positions like 'backward square leg' and 'third man,' which he assumed to be military ranks.

Thus began his chronicles.

On this day, the tribes were two:

- The Sad Fat Dads With Pads, noble of heart, if not always of hamstring.
- The Gardenfields Legion, fierce and organised, with matching shirts.

Let this be his scroll of what transpired.

Act I - Of Fields, Faeces, and Flat Whites

The battleground was Verulamium Park-still sacred, though now overrun by joggers and artisanal coffee. The pitch itself was a cruel trick from the gods:

- Dry as Egyptian parchment, with bounce as unpredictable as a Roman census.
- Rabbit holes gaped like traps for careless ankles.
- Dog droppings, described euphemistically by locals as 'Number Twos on the Number One', created a minefield that turned quick singles into games of chicken.
- Stinging nettles, Britain's last surviving infantry, stood ready to lacerate the outer fielders.

Still, the brave Dads assembled.

Captain Dippers, noble of bearing and constitutionally incapable of winning a toss, naturally lost the toss. And so, they were sent in to field.

I took position upon a tartan blanket, borrowed biro in hand, and prepared to witness the modern games.

The Bowling Scroll - Sweat, Spin, and Stumbling Glory

The attack began with the Brotherhood of Swing:

- Dan, of supermarket fame and unexpected cake deliveries, struck gold in his first over-but the pitch, vengeful and capricious, soon punished him: 1-28.

- Patch, wiser or just luckier, bowled with the subtlety of a street magician: 1-14.

Then came the flanks:

- Tembras, stoic and symmetrical, bowled with the economy of a Roman tax officer: 0-8.

Jan, inspired by Tembo's hostile bowling, executed a magnificent run-out-hurling the stumps down with the flair of a disgruntled javelin coach.

- Shedders, who nearly decapitated Chenners mid-catch in what some say was attempted murder, claimed 1-15.

- Granty, distracted by cake logistics (his hands possibly still sticky from Mr Kipling's), produced a solid 0-12.

- Ruffers, courageous yet punished, took 0-17, while engaging in aggressive negotiations with a nearby patch of nettles.

Then the turning point:

Sir Winfield the Wheel-Legged, fresh from his 200-mile two-wheeled pilgrimage, strode onto the pitch with quads forged in Olympus and hamstrings held together by fate alone. He produced a wicket maiden, and finished with 2-4.

Tucker, after enduring a barrage, took a well-earned 1-18, his reward coming from a glorious edge expertly caught by Williams, the cat-like keeper whose vertical leap rivals that of the Emperor's pet lynx.

Tembo, a figure of mystery and apology, allowed two balls to slide under him for boundaries-blaming 'unholy bounce' and the spirit of the park itself.

The final overs were overseen by Chenners (0-13) and Dippers (0-7)-calm, steady, wicketless, but still noble.

Gardenfields Legion: 157 runs. A daunting total by any abacus.

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Act II - The Retired Warriors and the Collapse of Empire

And now: the chase.

- Granty, still digesting a pre-match chocolate roll from Dan's questionable cake bag, opened like a manneborn. He smote 27 runs, then retired before hubris could find him.
- Ruffers, never one for subtlety, hoiked one to mid-Forum and was gone for 5.
- Tembras, eyes full of vengeance, launched a mighty six-only to be dismissed by a rope-bound catch involving a tumbling fielder and what I suspect was witchcraft. Out for 10.
- Dan, fate's favourite chew toy, was bowled for 4 by a man named Dingo (which I assumed was either a marsupial or a warlock).

Then: our tacticians entered.

- Winfield, thighs still humming from his previous odyssey, carved a swift 25* and retired with a wink.
- Chenners, the smoothest of all, retired unbeaten on 23*, claiming to 'just want others to have a go.' Historians are still debating whether this was bravery or mischief.

Then... the collapse.

- Williams, keeper of cats and dot balls, produced three non-scoring efforts... then smote a six with the force of Mars himself-before being immediately bowled. He never ran. He never intended to.
 - Tucker, valiant, added 3, then was bowled by a man with a suspicious haircut.
 - Finally, Captain Dippers strode out needing 36 off the final over. He took guard. He swung like Neptune wielding a mop.
- And... missed every single ball. Out for 0. Noble. Beautiful. Entirely expected.
All out for 128. A loss by 29. But no man left ashamed.

Epilogue - Ale, Regret, and the Six Bells of Victory

As custom dictates, the warriors retired not to the barracks, but to the nearby temple of hops: The Six Bells.

There, beneath the twinkle of pub garden fairy lights and the gentle hum of post-match exaggeration:

- Sausages were consumed with the solemnity of temple offerings, their crispy skins split open like battle wounds.
- Golden chips were heaped like plundered treasure, passed between warriors still smeared with grass, sweat and pride.
- Tankards clinked, honouring dropped catches, surprise wickets, and that one shot no one saw.

As the moon rose over Verulamium, the talk turned to future campaigns-a tour match just one week hence, where fresh fields await and glory (or pulled hamstrings) beckon once more.

The scroll may close for now, but the saga continues...

-- faithfully chronicled by

Lucius Scripto Ballicus

Time-travelling Centurion of the XIV Legion,

Reluctant Witness to Midlife Cricket,

and Devoted Scribe of Verulamium Park