

SFDWPs Vs Killigrew, Greenwood Park, Tuesday, 11th May 2021

Match Report by Phillip Cowen

Killigrew won...comfortably; or, rather, we Lost.....convincingly

Prologue

It was around 2009 or so that I got involved with the Saddos in slightly strange circumstances, but that is a story for another day; for now, my point is that after a dozen or so years of careful shirking I had finally been named as a match-manager. Add to this the ill-fated decision to also pick up the Saddos captaincy gauntlet for the first time, which, in the absence of The Corporal had been lying, ignored on the floor for several awkward moments as the game neared its start. The way it happened was thus: having travelled out West, picking up one of our late stand-ins en route, we arrived at a gloomy Greenwood Park to find several of the Saddos already there - eager, no doubt, for the challenge of the last un-conquered team, now that Fishers had been vanquished. Having around half-a-dozen or so wicket-keepers in the team was always going to cause some minor squabbling, but I have recently come upon an ace card, my own brand new set of keepers gloves! These I brandished triumphantly at Paggars and Pointer, only for them to counter in an admittedly good-natured fashion: "*We only take this sort of decision from the Skipper!*" Decision made then, and I picked up the captaincy gauntlet and WK gloves to boot! I should add, in the interests of fact, that such a selection has probably more to do with the likely-worst bowler more than anything else!

Anyway, to the 'match':

We lost the toss, which was probably just as well for our oppo as it guaranteed them a whole 20 overs of batting! So we strode out to the field and I asked who had "a reasonable arm?" and despatched these poor fellows to the boundary, including Chenners and WG and our two stand-ins, James T and Rob R. In actual fact, James had played for the Saddos in the 2020 match vs Scratchers in a rare glimpse of sporting fun that year, when the Saddos were a man short; Rob R (Roffers?) also made his debut for Scratchers in the same match. Both these fellows had jumped in last-minute due to a bereavement (big condolences to Robbo); and another late drop-out due to something else far less understandable (work commitments, or some such rubbish! Priorities, fellas!)

Glenno opened the bowling with some fast-ish and reasonable fayre, keeping them to just a couple or so for the first over. Chenners came into the attack at the other end and kept things similarly tight and also bowled his man to nab an early wicket; things were looking okay..... Our opening pair of bowlers continued to keep things pretty ship-shape; and Glenno had a couple of good LBW shouts turned-down - but as the Oppo were to find out later, things have to be pretty damned plumb to be given around here.

WG came into the attack and they started to find some gaps, it was almost as if we were a man down....ah, here comes Jonesy; I'd forgotten he'd said he was going to be late. On he strode with plenty of advice about fielding positions as he settled into the cover position. At one point he pointed out that successive boundaries had gone to long on and maybe we should "double up" there; I'm not quite sure what this meant, perhaps someone astride Chenners' shoulders!? No matter, we ploughed on and new lad Roffers came into the attack...There was some wayward stuff, as the bowling-cobwebs were blown away, but also a few decent balls, one of which trapped the man and another wicket was notched up. Unfortunately, both WG and Rob ran into some big hitters who seemed to know what they were doing -dashed unsportsman-like really. Anyway, their opener carried his bat, to be replaced by an equally competent fellow; who in turn also carried his bat having reached 25+; as did their next chap.

Meanwhile, there had been the usual antics in the field, including a few trademark mis-fields to help the already healthy run rate keep cracking along. At one point, a less-mobile-than-he-used-to-be Peter C, who'd been doing sterling work at square leg inexplicably swapped himself with Glenno, who had been chalking up the miles cutting off balls a-plenty down at deep backward-square. As if scripted, the next ball raced past Churchy's despairing out-stretched hand, only to be fielded 20 yards on by a dog, keen to enter the fray! Jonesy also continued to display his Captaincy credentials by replacing WG in the deep after he'd failed to gather a speeding exocet on the boundary, much to everyone's bemusement.

James Tucker (Tuckers?) came on to bowl and was pretty tidy; whilst at the other end, Jonesy was attempting to bamboozle their batsmen with plenty of flight. Indeed, his first ball was sailing down leg, but the batsmen conspired to turn it into a wayward yorker and announced that he "wasn't expecting that!" Despite some reasonable stuff, the Corp' ended up on 0-21; similarly, Tim P battled hard but managed none for 20 runs.

Paggers did marginally better, conceding a mere 18 for his two overs and bowled pretty well overall; but in truth there were some very competent batsmen in the middle order and we were hardly putting on much pressure in the field!

Simon picked up a wicket in his first over care of James T taking a good catch out in the deep. He did spill another effort, but he was running hard and it was a tough chance; overall I'd say he was amongst the pick of the fielders, along with other new boy, Roffers and Glenno. Church might have been commended if he hadn't placed himself on the boundary! Yours truly missed a sharp chance behind the stumps, although only 3 byes/leg-byes in total was okay leakage, I reckon.

Churchy also picked up a wicket, bowling his man in the last over; but they strode off having amassed 164 for their 20 overs, with plenty of fire-power left in the locker. We trudged off in the increasing gloom and hopes were not high.

The Saddos were bouyed at this point by the support of a cycling Curtis who had appeared, resplendent in lycra. I had always thought that this stuff was supposed to be tight-fitting, but Chris obviously has other ideas and is clearly pioneering the move towards 'baggy lycra'; we Saddos are nothing if not pushers of envelopes!

The fine array of snacks (sausages, olives, crisps, fudge and chocolate) I'd provided raised the spirits a touch, but I think it is fair to say that we were less-than-hopeful about the chase. I do not know the batting form of the team especially well, but was keen to make sure the new boys who'd stepped in to help us out at least got a knock, so I suggested me and Tuckers open, with Roffers coming in at 3. No, no, countered Jonesy, Glenno & Chenners are your opening men! Fair enough, I said as Chenners looked aghast and Glenno (unusually) excused himself. So Chenners and I strode out to the middle and I asked him if he'd like to face first? His face gave me his answer and I took up strike. The first ball was despatched to the boundary with what could have been mistaken for nonchalance, although this would have been far from the truth. A further boundary meant that we were only just short of the required run rate by the end of the first over and perhaps things were looking up. Unbeknown to us, this was to represent the zenith of the Saddos innings! Chenners ran a well-struck 2, but then was then clean-bowled. I asked him later at the pub why he thought Jonesy was so keen that he should open? *"I've no idea,"* he replied, *"I'm a bowler!"*

When I greeted Glenno on his way in he rasped "I've *forgotten my contacts!*" Hence his reluctance. And it was immediately apparent that he was not his usual self, as the ball thudded into his back leg in a plumbish sort of way, "Not out!" answered WG.

The next ball struck Glenno on his back foot.... "Not out!" thundered WG, then added "That one was closer" as if to cheer up the bowler who answered, "Oh, I've got to get even closer, have I?" Meanwhile, Glenno was busy taping his back leg to the middle stump, which the bowler duly hit and the finger went up; gone for a single.

Tuckers did not last long and was bowled for one.

Church had made some uncharacteristic forward defensives and was settling in, when he went for an almighty hay-maker, missed and was left around 1.5 metres short of his crease as he was stumped for one.

Roffers was bowled for one.

Meanwhile, the Skipper thought it time to accelerate and was clean-bowled looking for a big heft; gone for 17. As I trudged off I remarked to the waiting and discarded batsmen that I was thinking of lodging a complaint against Killigrew for fielding a spinner who could actually spin! Jonesy clearly thought this was aimed at him, as he offered a single, middle finger in answer as others chortled!

Tim P was looking pretty good, but holed out to the fielder at mid-wicket for five. Pagers was also caught for one.

Wilson and WG were caught and bowled respectively for nought; the first of which brought in Jones who announced that there was nothing to play for and he'd be protecting his average; he slumped back with WG and the fielding team, without having troubled the scorers.

Tim W had joined us by this time, clearly expecting to enjoy a bit more batting, but made some suitably supportive remarks!

There are times when the scorecard does not reflect the true nature of the game. This is not one of those occasions - all out for 39!

We repaired to the King Harry pub for the lock-down customary 'freeze your arse' off and have a thoroughly undeserved pint or two; although it is the Saddos way that we do not make a wake of these things and the banter is always better after a good, sound thrashing!

We were a table of five and, after the first pint, the other Saddo table of six got up to go we demanded why they weren't staying for a second? Jonesy immediately said, "**We've only got 3 runs between us; we're not sure we deserve another!**" Quote of the day and nuff' said!

Epilogue

The above 'performance' brought out a plethora of stats showing some similarly poor results over the years (notably against Fishers and Killigrew), along with a collective sigh of relief for all those not involved. Perhaps it will be another 12 years before I take on the mantle of Skipper once more; I also note that I think my last match report was from 2017 when we were thrashed by Fishers and I'd top-scored that day too (not counting the extras, obviously).....with 12!

"Oh to be a Saddo now the cricket season is here!"

A gloomy Greenfield Park, but the possibility of a sharp, bright shaft of sunlight from the West to further torment many a hapless batsman remains!



Tim holes out; but if the fielder had been a touch shorter (mentioning no names!) it would have cleared him for a certain 4!



A sub average performance, even by Saddos' standards!



Grim reading.

