

The Millennium Man Mocks Marshallswicket

In the twilight of 1999, as the world braced for the new millennium—a mix of excitement, trepidation, and downright fear—a similar feeling overcomes me whenever I'm handed the reins as match manager. But today, dear reader, let me regale you with the tale of the "Future Millennium Man" and his troupe of merry cricketers.

Clarence Park unfolded beneath a sunny June sky, a rare sight after weeks of soggy misery. The pitch, cracked yet spongy underneath, mirrored the uncertain appearances of many SADs players.

First on the scene was WG, dishing out tight, full lengths that left the batsmen in knots. On the third ball, our hero, "Future Millennium Man" (Longbottom), faced a pivotal moment. A nervy "I'm gonna drop it" catch turned into our first scalp. Cool as liquid nitrogen, he snaffled the catch and mentally thanked his lucky stars—and his choice of extra underwear—for narrowly escaping disaster.

But WG wasn't finished. Another over, another masterclass in denying Marshallswicket any comfort, culminating in a stellar 4-2 spell.

Then came Chenners, a mix of genius and gaffes. Lucky boundaries down the leg side boosted Marshallswicket briefly, but Chenners quickly put paid to that with a wicket in his very next over.

Enter "Future Millennium Man" once more. His first over was a spellbinding maiden—straight, accurate, and baffling Marshallswicket completely. His second over? More dots than a malfunctioning laser show. Was this man from the future, or just a very, very focused cricketer? The mystery deepens.

Fresh recruit Tucker, recently defected from the Scratchers, showed promise with two tight overs, though wickets eluded him. Patience, young Padawan—your moment will come.

Dan and Fraser took their turn. Dan, a protagonist "entering stage right," bowled a peach that sent El Bato's stumps flying, only to be foiled by a "no ball" due to some obscure back-foot technicality. Undeterred, Dan struck gold in the next over. Fraser, dependable as ever, kept it economical, snaring wickets with a grace that belied the chaos around him.

By now, Marshallswicket found themselves 10 overs deep, 5 wickets down for just 50 runs—a dire situation warranting the famed Clarence Park buffet.

CRS and Tembras stepped up. CRS, armed with grenades disguised as lofted shots, lit up the sky. Note: a no ball over the waist is bad; over the head, catastrophic. Tembras, battling an out-of-form libido and net-less preparation, unleashed his trademark headballs in the first over. By the second, he found his groove, sighing with relief as he finally got the ball to behave—something he's been struggling with, even off the pitch.

Then came the big guns, Winfield and Jan. Winfield, with precision that could guide satellites, stifled every run attempt. His second over brought forth a dramatic batsman "oooh

ducky - I don't like balls" LBW that fired up the SADs. A hat-trick loomed tantalisingly close, but Winfield settled for an impressive two-for.

Jan followed, two overs resembling a Connect Four board with dots aplenty.

The first innings concluded with SADs needing 104 to clinch victory—a challenging yet tantalising target. The Future Millennium Man and his cohorts had set the stage for an epic chase.

And so, with our captain, the “Future Millennium Man,” just shy of 1000 runs, organising his batting lineup with all the strategic prowess of a chess grandmaster asking each batsmen “Ya batted yet this season?” with his 980-odd runs, he took the bold step of sending himself and Jan out to open the chase. Future Millennium Man, on the cusp of cricketing immortality, would not leave the field until he etched his name in the annals of the 1000-run club.

Both he and Jan faced down pace, pie, and whatever else Marshallswicket threw at them, scoring runs with the precision of a cyborg. Longbottom, now the true “Millennium Man,” had breached the 1000-run mark—would this milestone restore his legendary form? And would that spare pair of underwear prove prophetic in the battles yet to come? The cricketing universe held its breath.

The final runs were a formality, executed calmly by Tembras and Chenner—no fireworks, just efficient execution.

SADs chased down the target in 12 overs—Marshallswicket left dazed and battered.

Off to the bar we went, leaving El Match Manager to organise a feast fit for kings. And as Anil and his crestfallen side were battered once again with bangers and chips, the victory belonged to SADs and the Millennium Man—a grand triumph.

Date: Tuesday 18th June 2024

Venue: Clarence Park