

SFDWPs VS Marshalswicket
20 Over Match (Skipper: M Jones)

Clarence Park Bowl
Tuesday, 21st July 2020

The House of sand: A tale of 4 quarters

Result: Lost, 132 run target (for 4 wkts); 118 runs (for 10 wkts in reply)

We took to the field against Marshalswicket (I see what they've done there, not bad either) full of hope after a recent Saddos win (I think) the earlier week. There were those of us who were emerging from lock-down unshaven, with hair unkempt; and those who looked as well-groomed as ever. In all cases, though, our danders were up and I sensed a quiet confidence about the team....

I was pleased to don the gloves once more and I'd say we were looking reasonably sharp in the field. Indeed, we were off to a flyer with Arnd taking a neat catch from Church Snr. to dismiss their top opener for only one run; onwards and up woods we thought...

Church Junior joined the attack and this double ecclesiastical pairing proved the tightest of the Saddos bowlers, with only seven runs against them; with Church Snr. also picking a second wicket, having clean bowled their other opener - what a start! Arnd joined the attack and removed their number four for only one, clean bowled. If this was not a bed-rock of a start to our bowling, I don't know what is....

Their #3, my old pal Si W, was scoring pretty well though, having survived a sharp dropped edge that had me diving to my right, but it just didn't stick - curses!

Young Harry took an absolute corker in the deep off of Peel's bowling to dismiss Wakers and there was understandable jubillation from the Saddos' ranks, but no more so than the young lad himself, as he snaffled the cherry from high in the air and sent it back skywards in celebration- cracking stuff!

Unfortunately, this tight start started to unravel as their fifth, sixth and seventh batsmen all reached 25 or more to retire giving their lower order free reign to score freely.

Messrs Longbottom, Wilson and Peel's bowling had kept things pretty tight, but Tim P was a touch unlucky to have been knocked about a bit by some confident batting.

However, the real story of the middle period was an extraordinary instance, the like of which one tends only to find when playing sport; especially old man dad sport...

One of their more rotund batsmen played a firm drive off off the Corporal's bowling, who had come into the attack with some slow but accurate stuff. This mighty thwack was fielded splendidly by TimP standing at mid-on, who immediately dispatched it to the bowlers end. Jonesy, perhaps thinking that the ball wasn't going to go anywhere near the stumps, proceeded to perform a cart wheel in order to field the ball. This enabled him to halt its progress with the use of his buttocks, whilst his head was employed in removing the bails and dismantling the stumps. The batsmen in his haste to reach home, meanwhile, had taken a tumble mid-way down the pitch. This reminded me of Peter Church in his batting pomp and his theory that if you hit it well it must be a run! With the ball lying about 2 yards from the prostrate Skipper, who begun to untangle himself from the stumps, the batsmen meanwhile was crawling slowly, but purposefully towards the crease; finally diving with a flourish from his knee, arms extended gratefully to receive his ill-deserved run. Thankfully Mr Pointer more than saw the funny side and, from my vantage point behind the stumps, I've rarely seen anything funnier on the cricket field. Thank you, Jonesy and God bless you!

Kneesy was probably a touch unlucky with his spell having found the edge a couple of times, Including one that leapt sharply off the bat over my right hand shooting up to try and meet it; probably stuck a bit in 'no-man's land', to be honest.

Winfield kept things pretty tight in the circumstances going for only 14 runs at the end. And Jamie (Church Junior) was probably the pick of the fielders, showing his dad what it is to have a body that works. Earlier, Church Senior had gone to field a ball that was shooting sharply across the field to his right and as he leaned over like a little teapot (although not short and stout), it was clear that he was not going to reach the ball in time; but that certainly wasn't going to stop him from falling over. Likewise Graham fielding in the same position a little later made a magnificent Pat Jennings-esque dive to a ball that ultimately eluded him; but the athletic spectacle was worth seeing nevertheless.

So we trudged off with them having made what looked, at one stage unlikely, to be a decent total of 132 runs from the 20-overs and for only four wickets; there were 14 extras (4b, 4nb, 6w), which is certainly better than some weeks.

And so to the chase with Longbottom taking on their bowlers from the get go. Graham was going pretty well but was clean bold to a good delivery. TimW joined the throng and was also looking good, but was on unlucky to be run out from a direct hit, when he smashed the ball through to deep extra cover; only for the fielder to scoop it up cleanly and in one motion take down the stumps, leaving Tim just a yard short. Kneesy looked similarly well but didn't quite get hold of one and scooped it to mid on for an easy catch. Church Junior was going pretty well when he was clean bowled from a chap whose day was about to get much better.

James and Arnd had both carried their bats, leaving the lower order to knock off the remaining runs knowing that we had a couple of good batsmen still left in the tank...

This was the sort of batting foundation that would have had any little pig scurrying over with a hod-full of bricks, but alas it was only a sandcastle that was to follow against the gentle incoming tide of their bowling (is this what they call a stretched metaphor?)

Coming in at seven the skipper managed just one before being caught. I came out at eight having been carefully watching the ball and noted its typically low and wide trajectory. Taking stance, I said to myself to watchtheball, watchtheball, watchtheball; unfortunately I was so busy telling myself to watchtheball, I forgot to watch the ball, as it came up off a length to hop neatly over my defensive stance and removed the bails. The perfect fast bowlers wicket; unfortunately this wasn't a fast bowler and playing a forward defensive shot probably isn't best off of your back leg! Two wickets in two balls. Tim Pointer strode out manfully, but was soon returning after having been given out LBW by Mr Nightingale; not a happy batsmen as it was, of course, definitely missing the stumps and, without question, sailing down leg-side. However, it is always nice to see jubilation on a cricket pitch and there is no doubt Mr Rahul will remember his hat-trick longer than the three of us will remember our innings.

More disappointment was to follow as SimonW was also given out LBW; Peter Church was bowled for two and young Harry was run out for nought. The bottom six batsmen had managed just three runs between them, giving returning Longbottom and Arnd far too much to do. As the maths went increasingly against us we finished well short on 118 runs for 10 wickets. I should note, though, that it was a magnificent knock from James L and a shame he finished just shy of his 50 on 48.

Overall an average performance from most of us, but it was nice to be in amongst the boys again, share a pint afterwards; but more importantly head off home with a few more comedy sporting memories (thank you, Jonesy)!

Match Report by Phillip Cowen