

Match 18th July 2024 – Park Street CC vs SFDWP CC

Munters School Days

“I say, Busted. Do you think that Dippers-minor will turn up today?”, exclaimed Paggers. “Well, that would be exceptional even by his standards of letting people down at the last minute.”, said Busted. “He’ll probably just be late”. Sure enough, he was seen ambling towards the pavilion as the batters took to the field. Meanwhile, Granty was chastised for exposing his box in public by the “safeguarding warden”. “Can’t get your bottom out here”, he said. “Kids with binoculars could possibly get a glimpse of your hairy cheeks from the school buildings 200 yards away...if the light were to bend around the pavilion... and a large oak tree...”.

The Aldenham School ground was a picture. Late evening sun flooded the pitch, illuminating an immaculately manicured strip. It looked like a perfect wicket to amass a large total. At this point, it should be noted, for clarity, that this was a three Bottom team with Simon, Harry and James all playing. To avoid confusion, we could refer to them as Tom, Dick, and Harry, but perhaps that would cause more confusion, so instead, we will call them James, Harry and Simon.

Simon and Harry started off slowly but soon accelerated. Harry was not holding back and played some good shots to decent bowling. “Biff, bash, crash!”, the bowlers were feeling the strain. Soon the second-string bowlers were introduced, and a rank full-toss barely cleared the bails before bouncing fortuitously (for Park Street) off the wicket keeper’s pads, effectively running out Harry who had gone some way down the track to dominate the bowling. “Oh, I say!”, he said. “That’s not cricket!”. Unfortunately for him, it was. This ended up being one of their only breakthroughs with the ball.

(I am assured, by the fount of knowledge that is Winners, that this was indeed a run-out rather than a stumping as the wicket keeper never had control of the ball. A little fact-ette for you there.)

Simon was finding his rhythm, and the bashing became more insistent. And his new partner Granty was in no mood to play second fiddle. “Take that you bounders!”, he said as another ball headed off to the boundary. Simon was, on the other hand, struggling with his leg, a theme that ran through the match. “Only a flesh wound. Easy singles and boundaries!”, he told his partner... and this worked with both Simon and Granty retiring on hitting the maximum. Time for the third Bottom. James also didn’t want to hang about and started pushing the run rate, together with Chenners both of whom retired early to give others a chance to have a go at the blighters. Unfortunately, James (Bottom) also hurt his leg... something genetic, perhaps? Diprose and Busted were out to keep the runs flowing. “A-swashbuckling I will go”, he sang as he played another textbook-perfect shot. But it was not to last. Swish. Miss. Bowled. And so, time for young Danny to see what he could do, which was to play out the over and see the SADS home with 155 runs for just 2 wickets.

Would it be enough? That strip was awfully flat and the boundary at the bottom of the hill was easily achievable. “What’s the tactics WG?”, asked the tardy Dippers. WG’s brow furrowed and after considerable thought, came up with the wisdom from his many years of cricket. “I suggest...”, he said, “I suggest that we aim the leather thing at those sticks and see what happens.” Sound advice indeed. The two openers showed some flair, but could they get the 8 an over required to win? WG and Dippers struggled to make anything out of the flat strip and the openers were just off the pace with their run rate. “I’ll push one slightly wide and see if we get

and edge for you to snaffle, Paggers”, is what WG would have said if it hadn’t been that the wide delivery was just a duff one. Anyway, the tactic worked. The opener was tempted into a wild swing and got an edge that carried through to Paggers. “Howzatt!” went up the cry. Paggers was dancing around in celebration. A catch! Legit! This would make it into the end of year review for sure. “Not out” came the surprising verdict from the umpire. “I heard nothing... Oh, and that’s a wide then, since he didn’t hit it.” Crestfallen, Paggers went back to the stumps to dream of what might have been.

This was not to be Paggers’ only significant involvement in the match. He bravely got out of the way as James threw at the stumps to run out one of the opposition. Not all of his contributions were so positive though. “Wicket keeper’s end!” went up the cry as the opposition went for an ill-advised run. The ball flew in. “Take ‘em off, Paggers!”.... It is difficult to explain how the ball, which arrived within a few inches of the stumps, could somehow move further away from them. As if enacting an Argentine tango with the ball, Paggers followed it, and seemingly pushed it even further from the stumps. “I thought that the batsmen would be laughing so much, they wouldn’t be able to make their ground”, rationalised Paggers subsequently. For all that, the fielding was extremely good, especially with three walking-wounded on the pitch and Chenners being the target of every shot, it seemed.

Chenners and Simon were next up. A tight over by Chenners, followed by a breakthrough wicket by Simon. “Hmm, a wicket, eh? Well two can play at that game” thought Chenners. His second over saw the removal of two more wickets for just 1 run. Those tight overs from Chenners and Simon also had the effect of increasing the required run rate. Harry and Danny continued keeping the run rate below the required one, with Harry taking a wicket. Danny was surprisingly economical for a wicket keeper – his flight and guile(?) kept the batters guessing.

James and Busted both kept the runs down with Busted adding a wicket to the haul, leaving Granty and Winners to bowl at the death to seal a great victory.

And so, match over, it was time for a lovely cricket tea, with sandwiches, sausage rolls and lashings of...beer.

SFDWP: 165/2 (20 overs)

Park Street: 125/6 (20 overs)