

We lost...

How many cripples does it take to win a cricket match? Well, not enough it seems. We started the game with Shedder's season debut greatly limited by a dodgy shoulder (however, it turns out that wasn't really the limiting factor). Enough self-deprecation!

However, one down on the bowling did mean the need for a couple of others to rise to the challenge and bowl not two but three overs each. This caused some constitutional concern amongst Verulam and we were forbidden to bring back our A-list bowlers (LOL!). So Wilsers was immediately called upon along with Harsha-with-the-limp (calf injury incurred in cow corner, or thereabouts). Spurred on by this vote of confidence they bowled very respectable third overs (although Harsha's may look more respectable as I can't see the bottom row of his bowling stats due to shaky photography of the oppo scorebook while trying to avoid Curtis's finger pointing out his superior stats). Ironically, Verulam, having restricted our already restricted (just being honest) bowling line-up seemed to have no qualms producing a long A-list of bowlers themselves.

Following Captain James Longbottom's toss we hand-gelled up and fielded first and, to be fair put on a pretty solid performance. The stats might suggest that some let the run-rate get away from them but that masks the fact that Verulam produce some pretty nifty batsman who were quite comfortable hitting out. Not an excuse, just a fact. This was a little tiresome as Verulam's main 'one-shot wonder' consistently buried the ball in the hedge resulting in three lost ball moments and Clampers rolling around under the covers for a while. Compliments to Howie for a lovely wicket seeing their 'Skip' off for just one run and to Harsha for some great bowling resulting in a solid catch from Mr Church.

Despite best efforts in the field Verulam had set us a target of 137 to win of which just 26 were gifted as extras. This seemed doable but, coughs awkwardly, batsmen 2 & 3 fell quickly for no runs. Thankfully, with a steady run rate from Churchy – including a fine 6 – and Howie and Longbottom following on, our score began to look more respectable. Looking for retirement Churchy was unfortunately bowled just one run short. Longbottom and Howie went on to retire opening the way for Winfield Snr who looked set to continue the good work. Sadly, caught behind, his efforts were short lived but not as short-lived as the next three batsmen – Curtis, Clampers and Frazier – who all exceeded my total by at least 1 run.

And so the game was left in the hands of Wilsers – brimming with confidence after his Captain's choice as almost-top bowler and Howie, returning from retirement in place of Harsh-with-the-limp. A valiant effort by both with what appeared to be some serious end-game cricket that closed the score gap considerably. Too little too late sadly but an honourable and hard fought loss.

If this report is a little brief it may be for my somewhat distracted efforts to try and order pizza during our batting innings. Despite being assured by Verulam that they had ordered pizza from Papa John's just last week, Papa John's clearly did not remember. After 20mins of ordering and being given far too many topping options it transpired that the pizzas would not make it to the pavilion in time anyway. Thankfully the bar was open - many thanks to Andy Knill-Jones for administering and to Chris Curtis for paying for the beer.

Bruises nursed, woes forgotten and the conclusion to a beautiful evening at Clarence Park. Swift recovery all you cripples!