

Wandering about... Edition 15 2007/2008
The Newsletter of the Woden Wanderers Cricket Club

The Phantom Speaks

Greetings all, and welcome to Finals Fever Part III: Revenge of the Fever,

Unless you've been hiding under a rock you'll know that First Grade are playing in the GF vs North-sieeed Lightning tomorrow at O'Conner.

The bus is on (refer the Prez' email) and the more support the better...it's a big day for the guys in First Grade and for the club as a whole. Let's get there and show our support.

Commiserations to 3rd Grade on such a close loss last weekend...a great season by those lads. As the Major says in his report, cricket was the winner. Thanks to Major Custard for another great match report, and thanks to all those who've contributed reports over the season, it's been good stuff!

Good Luck to First Grade!

Go you good things!

Cheers,

The Phantom

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Match Reports

Grandiose Final – 3rd Grade

WWCC vs Baaaaaarton @ Peach Melba

What a week. Finally our chance to avenge last year's defeat against Baarton. But first selection traumas: how do we squeeze Texas and Starkey into the team that won so convincingly in the semi-final? And will they be available anyway?

Most will have heard by now of the dramas in first grade. The Association Executive first decided to award the first grade's match against Baarton to WWCC because Baarton played an ineligible player - only to change their minds and delay any decision until after the next week's finals were played (!) So WWCC played Workers in an elimination final, rather than facing Northside in a qualifying final: no time to force a decision from the Exec before they were played. So last week we, together with Northside and Workers, combined to demand a Special General Meeting of the Association to hear the dispute. Only for the Exec to meet again on the Tuesday and decide in Baarton's favour, but not actually tell anyone or respond to the request for an SGM. But it went ahead anyway, on the Thursday before our GF, despite the protests from the Baarton Exec members that it was unconstitutional. But no resolution, as the Exec President refused to allow any vote to be put.

So I couldn't delay naming a side any longer, and did so Friday morning. At which point further damning evidence came to light, and the Exec reconvened on Friday afternoon - and finally made the decision that Baarton First Grade must be excluded from the finals, thus putting Northside into the GF, and pitting us against Workers again, this time in a preliminary final. And, from my point of view, meaning further selection issues :-). Fortunately Sab was kind enough to accept my pleas, and we ended up going into the GF with the same team as we'd had in the semi. Most unlucky not to play for us was Texas, who accepted the recall to firsts, even though he won't be available to play in the GF for them (prior commitment). I'm assuming the firsts match report has preceded this one (***Phantom's Note:*** incorrect assumption, no correspondence received), in which case you'll now know that Tex did his job superbly for 1s, hitting the winning runs to send them into Wanderers' first every first grade Grand Final - well played Tex! Starkey too played his part in firsts' win.

Anyway, back to the big one - our Grand Final. The bus trip out to the ground was the perfect start to the day (and of course was delayed by Dom running late as always - didn't think I could actually get any more nervous!). CC I think stuck to his promise to make it a three beer trip, and there was a good feeling as we pulled into Melba, and the sea of red and yellow Wanderers shirts filled the ground.

Off to toss the coin - and fortunately The opposing skipper called heads, thus saving me from the unthinkable: I had actually decided to ask them to bat first. Phew, didn't have to - and they chose to bat anyway. (Brief panic when I realised I'd left the new ball in the glove box of my car - back at the club. Luckily Matt Gainsford had arrived and gave me one to use...) (***Phantom's Note:*** The Matt Gainsford? Seems difficult to believe) Started with the usual suspects - but possibly from the wrong ends. The wind kept switching around, making it hard for Hotpants to get his outswinger working, and Macca for once didn't take his usual early wickets. Meanwhile their openers were looking good, and at 0/48 after 7 overs it was pretty worrying. Time to turn to Oooosterloo - probably the earliest he's got the ball all season. And his second ball takes the wicket we wanted most of all: Ryan gone for 25 (from 19 balls), snicking one to Monners behind the stumps. Next over Fred replaces Macca and again strikes

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immediately (sharp catch to our best fielder; Blake), then Dom gets the other opener to a CC classic one-hander - and we're right back in it at 3/63 in the 12th. Credit to Monners for that dismissal too - noticing the batsman taking guard well out of his crease he moved up to the stumps - and a ball or two later the batsman, having moved back into his crease, played a rash shot. Meanwhile Dom is insisting he's bowling the worst he has all season and I should take him off - but finished with a great spell of 2/27 from 7 straight overs.

At the other end CC came on to replace Fred (who'd be better in short bursts - I hoped), so somehow I managed to have our two inswingers bowling in tandem: sort of sums up the breeze. CC was economical and dangerous as ever, without getting a wicket - and we went to drinks at 23 overs with Baarton a pretty handy 3/94. But we were still in the game, and never dropped our heads in the field. Only one difficult chance had been put down, and our ground fielding was excellent. (Other than Major Custard!)

After drinks CC resumed with Blake, who'd had one over for one run just before the break. But their partnership was starting to get dangerous, without ever taking us apart. In his eighth over CC decided he'd had enough of Monners standing up to the stumps, went back to his long run and bowled the quickest he has all season. (Except maybe for the three balls after the guy from Queanbeyan hit him for a huge six a couple of months ago :-)

It worked: Monners retreated. And then with the final ball of his final over CC took the crucial breakthrough: Woolmer lost patience and skied one to the safe hands of Zak at mid-off - meaning CC finished with a wicket maiden and figures of 9 overs 1/18. One more from Blake (which went for two runs, yet for some reason S Bailey insisted later I bowled him one too many - go figure!) (*Phantom's Note*: Ahh, comments from the Supercoach, good to see he's back to avoiding your Editor on the golf course following another defeat last Monthly Medal) and time to bring Fred back again.

He starts with a maiden: nice. Then back comes Macca for his second spell: no runs just one wide. Fred's turn again. Five balls (including a wide) later I was very worried. Their captain and left hander, who'd batted for a long time in all three of our recent matches against Baarton without ever scoring much at all, had suddenly hit Fred for three consecutive fours. I was shouting "hit the stumps Freddie" - but I also know what he's like and pushed Macca right back at fine leg. 5th (legal) ball of the over comes the inevitable Fred bouncer. Top edge hook - in storms Macca and takes a beauty. Big relief. Next ball is fast and full. Huge appeal for LBW from most of us - except for Monners and CC who'd both noticed the ball had actually snicked the pad then also snicked leg stump (behind the batsman's legs), removing the bail. The umpire said "not out" - to the LBW. After the missing bail was pointed out, he then changed it to "sorry, you were bowled". (And it's in the book as bowled - but it must have been LBW first....ahh, who cares).

Next over Macca joins in and bowling straight grabs a very plumb LBW. Back to Fred - for the hatrick ball. Should we bring in extra slips? risk moving our fly slip and fine leg? Let's leave it as it is. Fred bowls full and straight (!); the batsmen nervously swipes in the direction of cover, and it flew low and hard to CC - who of course took a nice sharp catch: Go Freddy, a hatrick in a grand final! Way to go! Time for Macca to finish them off, which he did with his usual panache: dot one wicket wicket. Macca's final spell was 2.4 overs 3/3 (overall 6.4 overs 3/23) and Fred finished with 6 overs 4/20. And from an alarming 3/129 then 4/145 we'd bowled them out for 149 in the 38th over.

Very gettable - even if chasing in a GF is never easy. Guessing it might just be Fred's day, I asked him if he'd like to open, and he leapt at the chance - so out he went with Zak to start out innings. 12.1 overs later we're 0/49 and looking good. Both Baarton's opening bowlers had been seen off, and both our

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batsmen were looking comfortable. On came Ryan for the 13th over: first Fred missed one and was bowled - but only after having made a really good 29 (from 54), then Zak nicked one for an equally good 17 (from 33) and suddenly we're 2/54.

Out went Monners, fresh off his superb 40 in the semi. Started well - dot three dot two - and was then bowled - by Ryan of course. In goes CC to try his luck - starts with a nice off drive but then skies one - gone for 2, and we've slumped to 4/63. But still well ahead of the run rate, Greg looking solid, and plenty of batting to come. PM in next, and I'm hoping they can repeat their partnership from last year's GF when they put on (from memory) about 80 - that would get us home today. For a while it looked on the cards - but then PM missed a straight one and was bowled for 6, and so they come off for drinks after 22.4 overs with us at a precarious 5/78.

After drinks Greg, looking untroubled and batting superbly is joined by Blake, always a nervous starter. But he hit the groove quickly, and the pair of them added 16 in quick time, before Blake, having hit the previous two balls for a glorious 4 through extra cover and then a 2 departed for 9 (from 11 balls). 6/94. Time for Macca - averaging an astonishing 94 for third grade this season. "Do your stuff Shaunie" were the instructions. He started uncharacteristically slowly, then started hitting them well, including a superb six over long on. But after another quick partnership (of 24) he missed one and was bowled by Ryan for 12 (from 11 balls). 7/118. Dom's turn. Could he reproduce the form from Round 17 when he scored 59? Could anyone hang around with Greg? For a while he looked solid, and when he smashed a 4 to fine leg was looking good - but then he too was bowled by Ryan (for 7 from 11) and we were 8/126 in the 33rd over. 24 runs to get, plenty of time to get them. Time for the skipper to stick around for a while. Yep, lots of dots: 20 of them, plus a couple of singles. Meanwhile Greg is chipping away, and we've got the runs needed down to 17, with Ryan bowling his final over. Batting two feet out of my crease I lunge forward, hit on the knee roll, was missing leg or hitting outside off - definitely too high anyway. No, look in the book, it was out. "LBW". (Oh well, as I pointed out to Mojo earlier this season, if you use your bat you don't get given LBW...)

So, 17 to get and out goes our specialist Number 11, Hotpants, to join Greg. 17 needed from 52 balls - but only one wicket left. Hotpants sees Ryan off. Meanwhile they're setting the field deep to Greg, and he's taken a couple of singles, plus there was a wide. Hotpants is getting the dots we need. 39 overs gone, 9/135: 15 to win. Single to Greg, single to Hotpants - off the mark after 10 dots. 13 to win. Then the shot of the match: with fine leg on the boundary, Greg smashes a short one towards him - and clears him for 6. Huge cheers from the very large contingent of Wanderers supporters. 7 to win. Another couple of wides, and a single to Greg, and it's down to 4 to win. Could we do it?

Alas no. After batting superbly since the 13th over, and having seen virtually our whole team come and go, Greg nicked one - and first slip took a sharp catch to end the game - with us finishing all out for 146. It was a really gutsy innings from Gregg - he ended up with 38 from 72 balls and was clearly our best batsman. If only one of the rest of us could have given him the support he needed. Full credit to Hotpants for remaining not out 1 (from 11 balls). We all tried our best, but fell just short. Oh well, next season... At least we're getting closer. Last year we lost by about 30 (from memory), so next season we should win by 25 or so.

Other than the result, it was a fantastic end to a really enjoyable season. What a great game of cricket. In fact, we all agreed on the bus trip back to the club that "cricket was the winner" (ie not Baarton). Actually, we've had really good games with Barton Third grade this season, all played in good spirit, hard but fair. (And it was the same last season in 3s). It was particularly good to see so many of them

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make a point of going over to Greg after the game to tell him how well he'd batted, how close it was, and generally being humble and good-natured in victory.

As mentioned above, other than the actual result, it was a fitting end to a great season. Next year....

And, of course, there's this Saturday. Go you first grade team, play well and win Wanderers a flag. I know those of us in 3s really appreciated all the support we got on Saturday. The noise and encouragement while we were fielding - the roar when Fred got his hatrick, and the shouts and cheers that greeted every run while we batted were all great to hear. (Funny how it got louder and louder as the day progressed.) Good too that we stuck to supporting our team and put all the politics of the previous week behind us. On a personal note achieving the moniker of Major Custard was highlight (of course the gallery doesn't appreciate the long term planning that goes into setting up the opposition to believe you can't manage that one good throw!) I was considering my future - but as yet no bids from the IPL (*Phantom's Note*: second auction has already been held too...maybe they don't have your contact details Major?), so I'll not follow the example of half the Australian team and retire. Just slide down the grades. Big thanks to the whole club, and especially those of you I've played with this season: the most enjoyable season of cricket I've had (and it was my 33rd season).

I'm looking forward to supporting first grade on Saturday - and seeing us get that first flag. Go you Wanderers!