

Wandering About

Issue 9, 2008/09

Crazy talk...

Well it's now the business end of the season and I hope everyone is getting excited! If you're not playing finals yourself, remember to come along and support the other sides in action. It also means there is now just 2 rounds left to stake your claim for a trophy or that bit of late season glory that will carry your ego through the cold winter months. Also coming up soon is the Presentation night, which is being held on April 4 at the Bowlo (West Deakin Hellenic Bowls Club... but you should all know that by now!). This is always an awesome night and this year is gearing up to be even better, so make sure you keep the date free in your diaries.

A mammoth issue of Wandering About is coming your way this week: we have a Prez Says, a few entertaining match reports from 1st, 3rd and 4th grades, as well as some more sparkling Millar Time coaching tips covering the "important" art of training.

On a more serious note, next Wednesday is the Umpires course which is being held at the Bowlo from 6-9pm. For all those who nominated, make sure you have this date locked in as it's going to be a great night and should prove valuable to all participants, and the club, for many seasons to come.

And for those who are interested, we still have places left in the second Super 8s side we have entered for this Sunday 15th February. Get in touch with Pablo Colmenares if you are interested. I'm told it's been really fun in previous years so I'm getting involved this time myself.

Remember to send anything you feel worthy of publication to matthew.sk.morrison@gmail.com or josh.crase@gmail.com. You can send photos, articles, anything really but of course we have the final say on whether it goes to print (or email). The standards are pretty high*.

Crazy and Monners.

Prez Says

Well the last week has sure has been a sobering time for all of us as we watch in horror and disbelief the footage coming out of Victoria where fire has ravaged the country side. The majority of Australians really show their best in these tough times. I would ask that you keep all those people in Victoria in your thoughts and prayers but especially I'd like you to remember those people who are volunteering to fight fires, prepare meals, offer a shoulder. Particularly remember Wanderers Tim "Jonty" Rhodes and Aaron "The Glue/Tamsy" Tams who are ACT volunteer fire fighters. Tim has been based in Beechworth since last Sunday and Aaron is heading off to Victoria this Sunday. Their work and those of all volunteers who are helping at this time is outstanding.

What are the Wanderers doing? This weekend the Woden Wanderers Cricket Club will be donating all match fees plus \$1 for every run scored by each of our Wanderers teams in round 17 to the Commonwealth Bank Cricket Australia bushfire Appeal

(<http://ccsca.act.cricket.com.au/pageitem.aspx?id=20782&id2=1&eID=76&entityID=76> and <http://cricket.com.au/default.aspx?s=commonwealthbankseriesbushfireappeal>). If you would like to donate more there will be a bucket at the Club on Saturday night and we'll ensure that this money makes its way to the Commonwealth Bank.

Whoop there it is!!! Pres says don't get sick!!! It's taken three weeks of drugs and a whole bunch of coughing but it turns out I've got whooping cough. Not so much of a hassle for those who are immunised but anyone who isn't and has kids or is about to have kids and was at the PMs XI with me the other week might want to check out the fact sheet I've had the boys attach to this edition of Wandering About...

Finals are almost here and if 1s, 3s & 4s grab a W this weekend finals are pretty much locked in. I'd encourage you all value your wicket, work hard for your team mate above all else ENJOY your cricket over the next few weeks and we can relax into a solid post season.

GYWGYGT!!

P.S. Have you noticed our new Club Sign?? GO YOU WANDERERS!!!

Training

Duffy Oval (Dixon Drive) is the place to be on **Wednesdays** at **5:00pm** if you want to hone your cricket skills.

Some other informal sessions have also been known to occur on other days at other locations. If you would like to have a hit or bowl but can't make it to Duffy on Wednesdays, ask around the club and you might find another session more to your liking.



Who is that star batting? It's Millar Time...

Umpires Course

The umpires course is all set for **Wednesday 18 February** at the "bowlo" (WDHBC) from 6-9pm.

If you have nominated yourself, expect to be contacted in the next week or so to confirm your attendance. Remember, once completed and observed umpiring you will gain Cricket Australia accreditation and the club is going to cover all costs involved.

Caption competition

To win a cool prize and some extra slaps on the bum, all you have to do is create a clever or humorous caption for this photograph, starring our esteemed President at the club's Christmas party held at Pine Island. Send entries to either Crazy (josh.crase@gmail.com) or Monners (matthew.sk.morrison@gmail.com) and we will judge the best at the end of the season and present the award at the club's Presentation evening.



<insert humour here>

Selections

With only 2 rounds to go there's definitely no excuse for not having advised your availability in the coming weeks. However, if you haven't done so, **please** notify selections@wodenwandererscc.com as soon as possible. Don't forget that your availability affects not only your team, but teams in every grade below you, and the onus is on you as a person and a member of the club to notify the right people.

To see where you're playing each week go to <http://www.wodenwandererscc.com/site2/pages/Selections/>.

Presentation Night

Presentation night will be on **Saturday April 4**. Please keep this date free, as if you haven't been, it's lots of fun. Tickets will be \$40 for one or \$70 for two. Further details as well as invitations will be coming soon so watch this space.

Ladies' Picnic 2.0



We're definitely taking more photos at the next one...

The second instalment of the Ladies Travelling Picnic of the 2008/09 season is on Saturday 21 February. The cost is \$20 per ticket which covers champagne, lunch, champagne, cakes, champagne, cheeses, champagne, bus hire and did we mention - champagne. It sounds so good I might cross-dress and join them! Actually I'm just kidding, who would do something like that. Seriously. Kids and non-drinkers tickets are available for \$10/head. We also need a **bus driver** who can ferry the ladies around for the day. If you can help out (you must be 25 or older), would like to book a seat or have any other enquiries about the day, please email Caitlin at: treasurer@wodenwandererscc.com.

Raffle

The raffle prize draw is on February 28th – not far away now! Rocket (Rod Chancellor) would like to see tickets returned to him soon. If you are having any difficulty in selling them please inform Rocket or another committee member and we will distribute them to those who can. So get in there and start hassling your family and friends, workmates and strangers in the street. Here's a hint if you're having trouble selling tickets and work in the public service: just wrap your tickets around Freddo Frogs or Caramello Koalas and they will sell in no time.

Contact Details

Here are the details of people you may need to contact at the club:

President	Peter J Bowman	0419 293 592	president@wodenwandererscc.com
Vice President	Michael Holdom	0423 949 392	president@wodenwandererscc.com
Secretary	Clint Fritz	0407 667 948	secretary@wodenwandererscc.com
Treasurer	Caitlin Hammick	0412 737 851	treasurer@wodenwandererscc.com
Club Coach	Paul Bunn	0419 327 460	coach@wodenwandererscc.com
General Committee	Paul Bunn		
	Rod Chancellor		
	Josh Crase		
	Gareth McAlister		
	Nick Millar		

Millar Time coaching tips



It has come to my attention that there are doubters starting to appear in the club. Tall poppy syndrome patients. People who are under the false impression that I bowl pies and bat so far down the batting order that 'the final countdown' is my theme song. That couldn't be further from the truth, although I do love that song, and if anyone wants to play it while I bat, out of massive speakers placed strategically around the ground, they'd probably receive some kind of Order of Australia (although maybe not, Kevin doesn't listen to me anymore after I suggested moving Australia Day to my birthday). However the only countdown of relevance is the countdown to the fireworks spectacular I unleash on unsuspecting opposition bowlers (and I might add it's not usually a very long countdown, although occasionally I like to start my innings with an extremely well played leave.. it lulls the bowlers into a false sense of security). As for the pies, that's just laughable, I bowled pies once, when I used to open the bowling with a certain M. Bowman. I tried to make his bowling look good cause he is such an unfortunate looking kid and needed cheering up. It wasn't easy, I had to dig right down to my memories of once seeing Crase bowl to remember how to bowl pies, and I still couldn't make Marcus look good... Moral of the story, don't bowl pies, don't watch Crase, and nothing makes salad look good.

But I'm not here to defend myself from people who pay too much attention to my scorebooks (which may be doctored for all we know) and not enough into my natural talent, years of experience, cricket nuance, charisma, wit and rugged good looks. I'm here to talk about training. TRAINING?!!! You say? But surely someone with my wealth of talent, know-how, and general awesomeness doesn't need to train. The short answer is no. I don't need to train. But then I don't go to training for me. I go to training for the benefit of the club. You see I provide a special moral management service, or ego balancing if you like. Taking down those who are above their cricketing station with a quick blast from the willow, or a thunderbolt that leaves a residue that smells strangely of burnt leather and scorched stumps. It's by this method that I keep the Pipies, Paulie Smiths, Callum Hughes and Texas Holdoms of the club in check. But I'm also propping up those who are the little Aussie battlers of the club, those who the scorebook has frowned upon in recent weeks. I do this by bowling a ball that's a little shorter and wider than usual (about as short and wide as I get, which isn't very) or *accidentally* stepping out of the way of a ball in order for it to look a lot better than it would have otherwise, or in cases where I'm feeling extremely generous, to bowl me. It's all good for morale at the club. Sometime even just the sight of a quick-fire batting pyrotechnics display from the club's most destructive batsman and 'All Round Good Bloke' award winner 5 years running can prop up moral enough to make that difference the sides need to get over the line against those stubborn opponents that's just wont stay dead. So if your side doesn't feel balanced, make sure everyone gets to training, and leave the rest to me. Keep that up and I can see 5 premierships with my name on them, um I mean the club's name on them (well maybe 4 premierships with yellow defeating red in the final and N. Millar being named man of the millennium).

I've got to say I've been pretty damn happy with my effort at training this season but then I'm happy with my effort at most things. I am however somewhat disappointed at the effort of the players in general at training, it seems some of you don't quite know what is required in a good training session which is why I've compiled the following list:

Top 10 things NOT to do at training:

10. Practicing the block shot. A: blocks are for chumps, and B: if you're practicing blocking its probably because you've failed to score runs, and not making runs isn't going to help you make runs now is it?
9. Throw the ball up into the air after you catch it. I learnt this the hard way.
8. Hit people in the face with the ball. Face destruction is best left on the pitch.
7. Practice your leave. Leaves are worse than blocks. You should never need to leave the ball except in an attempt to look good by not giving the bowler the satisfaction of having anything to do with his excuse for a delivery.
6. Use the white ball. White balls are for losers. We don't play under lights people, there's no need for a white ball. The first graders are just kidding themselves and trying to look cool. Which is fine, provided you don't fail tragically like they have.
5. Bowl to, receive a ball from, or catch a ball off the bowling of Marcus Bowman.
4. Take awesome catches. These require a massive amount of skill and for most of you, you don't have that. Thus, in order to catch these you need to rely on a massive amount of luck, and your catching luck is not something you should be using up at training.
3. The reverse sweep. This king of all cricket shots is best used with the element of surprise and awe. For use in matches only.
2. Show any respect for your team-mates with bat or ball. If the ball is poo, smash it. If the kid can't bat, make him learn the hard way. It's time we all hardened the hell up I say.
1. Bowl spin. How many times do I have to mention this? It really seems some of you aren't getting the message. Spin is not a good option to bowl when you're tired at training. It's not something that should be tried for a laugh. It's not something that should be encouraged. In fact, it's not even something that should exist. It's people like you that are responsible for the blights on our game that are Stuart McGill and Nathan Hauritz. Nuff said.

A word from our sponsors...



The **West Deakin Hellenic Bowling Club** has been the home of the Woden Wanderers Cricket Club since the 2004/2005 season. After games on Saturdays, players of all grades retire to the "Bowlo" to swap fishing tales from the day's play over a couple of beers. Every week the captains deliver a "Call of the Card", a barbecue is held and those present go into the draw for a meat tray.



Compuware Corporation provides software and IT services that help you maximise the value of your technology investments. They have been valued sponsors of the Woden Wanderers Cricket Club for five years. The ongoing support that Compuware provides has helped the Wanderers to their first championship, and we look forward to a long relationship that brings more success to both organisations.



Alive Health and Fitness has now amalgamated with Bodyworks Health Clubs to provide Wanderers members with access to six top-class facilities across Canberra. Any active Wanderers member is entitled to the Alive Health & Fitness sports club membership. This membership comes at a reduced rate of \$29 per fortnight and a reduced joining fee of \$49.50.



5 Star Cricket is Canberra's local specialist in cricketing equipment, providing quality equipment made for cricketers of all abilities. As specialists they are able to provide the equipment and quality advice on how to best maintain your top gear. The shopfront is located at 4/9 Townsville Street, Fyshwick.

Kingston Butchery provides the meat trays for the badge draws after games each Saturday. If you spend \$40 or more at the Kingston Butchery this season you will get 20% off the purchase price. We recommend any of Jody's prize-winning sausages, with his marinated roasts and steaks fantastic for any occasion.



Weston Indoor Sports
 45 Lizardet Street
 Weston ACT 2611
 Ph: (02) 6388 0444
 Fax: (02) 6388 4800

Weston Indoor Sports Club offer indoor cricket, access to a cricket bowling machine, netball, volleyball and soccer for people of all ages and all sporting levels. You'll find plenty of Wanderers at Weston Indoor Sports in teams such as the Polar Bears and the Partridge Famulee Sporting Club on Tuesday nights.

The **Civic Merry-Go-Round** is run by a new Wanderer to the club, James Penny. He has generously donated some vouchers valid for 10 free rides on the Merry-Go-Round. If you are interested in collecting one of these vouchers, whether for yourself or someone of a more appropriate age, send an email to president@wodenwandererscc.com.



JP will hold your hand if you're scared

Match reports

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1st Grade, Round 16 vs Panthers CC at Waniassa

by Matthew Morrison

The mercury was tipped to hit 40 degrees on Saturday as the Wanderers headed to Wanniasa to play the Panthers. The Panthers are one of the weaker teams in First Grade, but this season the teams were much closer together in the standings than in seasons past, and we were expecting to have to work hard to get our third win in a row. As per usual there were a few enforced changes, with Frequent Flyer Knuckles headed to Melbourne for the weekend and Tex unavailable. Damo, Jonty and The Chad were all available this week after being unavailable last week, and for once Hersch was allowed to stay with the team in which he was originally picked.

Our new/old captain, Sab, lost the toss and we had to field first. His first major decision was who should be our 'keeper, since both our regular 'keeper (Dougie) and his backup (Knuckles) were not playing. Damo informed us that he had kept in a game as recently as last weekend, so he took the gloves and did a good job throughout the innings. Sab also decided to let The Chad take the new ball in partnership with Pipey, and in a stroke of strategic brilliance told Pipey to "not bowl crap like last week".

Both opening bowlers probably had their best spells of bowling all season, at least that I can recall. The Chad's nagging line and length and movement through the air was a perfect foil for Pipey's all-out pace and fire. Pipey was the first to strike, with a nasty rising ball taking one of the Panthers' openers on the glove and ballooning toward Crazy at third slip, who took a nice catch tumbling forward. 1/4. In the next over, The Chad managed to frustrate their other opener into skying one high just behind the bowler, and Sam came around from mid-on to take the catch and make it 2/4. A couple of overs later The Chad got another wicket in a similar fashion, but this time the catch went to Sab. The Panthers were in trouble at 3/7, and things got interesting when an LBW appeal was turned down, with the reason given that the ball "hit him outside the off stump". The problem with this reasoning was that the batsman was not offering a shot, which for those that aren't aware means that he can still be given out. A "disagreement" between Damo and Joel, their captain, who had yet to face a ball, occurred, and someone in the field offered a spot in our upcoming umpires course to the umpire in question,. Joel was quite clearly fired up when he faced his first ball from Pipey in the next over. He drove hard at it, only to get a thick edge out to backward point, where the ball miraculously lodged in the fingers of my left hand and stuck. 4/7!

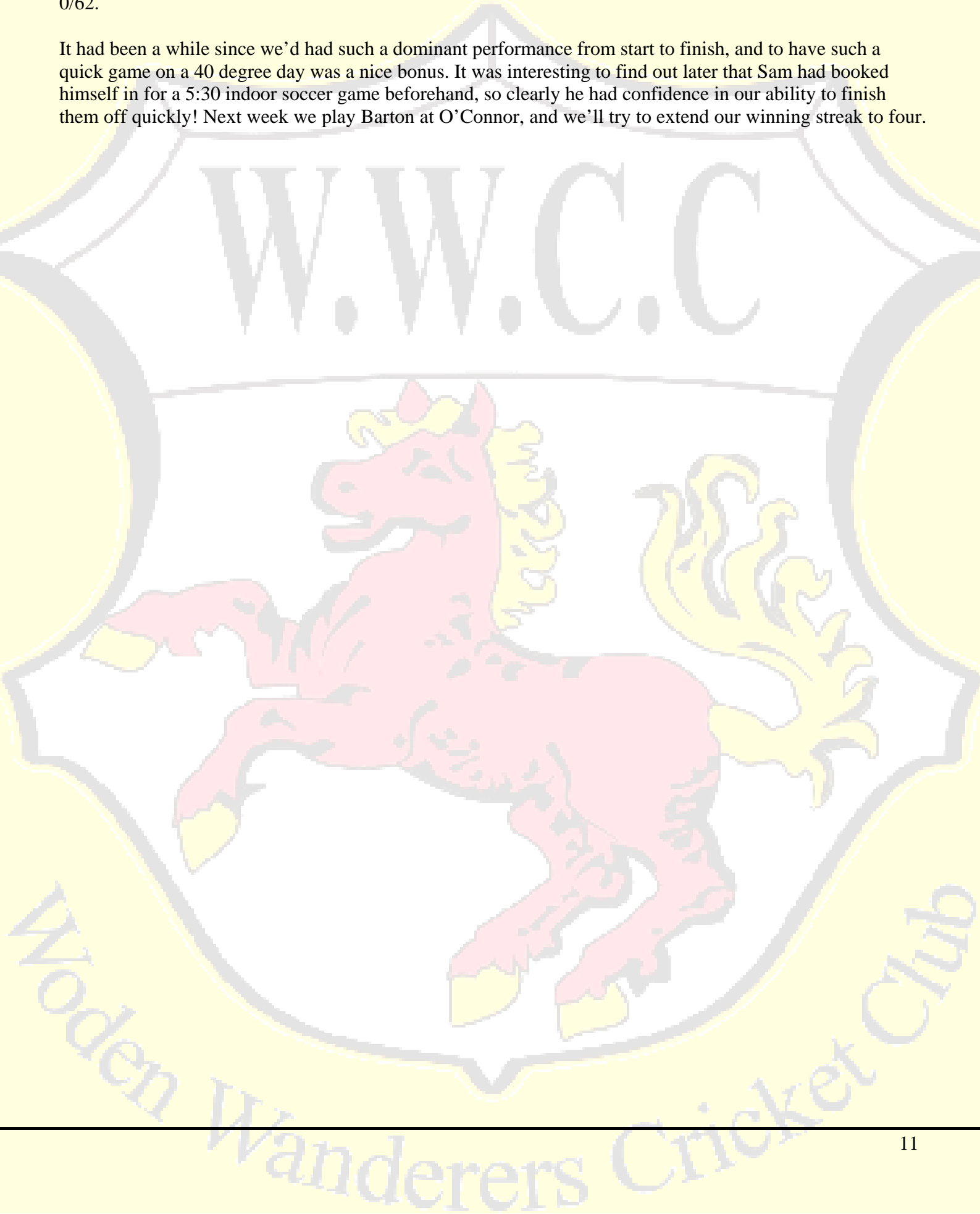
There were no more wickets before the first drinks break, but the Panthers were still in trouble at 4/20 after 15 overs. The Chad finished his spell with 2/6 after 6 overs, and Crazy had replaced him from the upwind end. He bowled with plenty of movement, and most of the time the batsmen never looked like hitting the ball. He got a nick through to Damo first ball after drinks which was taken, and then in the same over bowled a beautiful inswinging yorker to bowl the next batsman. He later told us he was trying to bowl a short ball and didn't get it right, but regardless they were still 6/20.

Mick Foti replaced Pipey, who had bowled his 9 overs straight and took 2/13. Finally, one of their young guys (Matt Hewat) showed a willingness to play shots, and although they weren't all textbook shots, he showed a good eye and found the middle of the bat to any loose deliveries. After getting a slight touch-up in his first over, Mick really bowled tightly and frustrated the batsmen. Eventually, he got his reward: Jonty took a nice catch at short mid-on to break the only "partnership" the Panthers really had, before getting Matt to chop one onto his stumps and getting a third batsmen to pop one up to mid-off, where the Chad caught the ball diving forward. The innings was complete when Sab threw the stumps down from about 30 metres for a run-out, and the Panthers were rolled for 56. Mick ended up with 3/16 off 5.4 overs and Crazy 2/19 off 8.

After such an outstanding bowling performance, we were determined not to take the foot off the throat. I went in with Josh and we knew that we should just play positively and not leave the work to "someone else",

which is an easy trap to fall into when chasing small totals. We managed to polish off the required runs in the eighth over without losing a wicket. Josh ended up on 34 not out and I was 25 not out, and we finished at 0/62.

It had been a while since we'd had such a dominant performance from start to finish, and to have such a quick game on a 40 degree day was a nice bonus. It was interesting to find out later that Sam had booked himself in for a 5:30 indoor soccer game beforehand, so clearly he had confidence in our ability to finish them off quickly! Next week we play Barton at O'Connor, and we'll try to extend our winning streak to four.



3rd Grade, Round 16 vs Workers at Yarralumla

By Al Hughes

Unfortunately I lost the toss so we went out to bowl in the 40 degree heat. It wasn't actually that bad at Yarralumla, as there was a bit of breeze the whole day. We had a strong bowling attack, and enough bowlers to share the load, so if we played well we had every chance. Especially off four wins in 2009...

Paulie opened the bowling downwind and started with a maiden. CC did the same from his end and we were off to our usual good start in the field. CC was swinging it a mile, and conceded only 9 from his first five overs. I probably gave him one too many, as they doubled that in his sixth: still 0/18 from six was handy, and, as always, he beat the bat regularly and always looked like taking a wicket. At the other end Paulie was struggling with the bumpy run ups and a nasty blister, so he came off after three overs and made way for John Lebner. Lebs has bowled well in 3s all season, and been a regular wicket taker. He only went back to 4s to make sure he doesn't over qualify and not be available for them for the finals if necessary....(In 4s he takes fewer wickets, but on all accounts bowls well there too.) Lebs started well: his third ball swung in late to the left handed opener and took his leg stump. 1/20 in the seventh over and we were holding up well in the heat.

In came Workers particularly irritating number 3 - Fred's favourite player. (I say that as for some reason Fred finds him even more annoying than the rest of us, and that is quite an achievement.) By this stage Starky had replaced CC, but was struggling for consistency, interspersing good balls with a few waist high full tosses...I replaced Lebs with Leigh, deciding short spells were sensible in the heat, and hoping that I could persuade Leigh to give his leggies a try. He was understandably reluctant to start with them, having always bowled medium pace in matches previously - and his medium paced outswing is very handy anyway. But on his last ball, also the last ball before drinks, he tried his first leggie. It landed beautifully, gripped and bounced, totally bamboozling the batsman and nearly taking Mick Hamood's head off at keeper. That took us to drinks at 1/64 from 15 overs. Although it was disappointing to have taken only one wicket, on a lightening fast outfield and short boundaries, I was pretty happy with our performance. Plus we'd used 5 bowlers already - and Fred was champing at the bit to get into his mate the number 3....

Not to mention the promise shown in that one leg spinner from Leigh - but he really needed to bowl from Starky's end, where the wind would assist him drift it in then spin away. So back out we went, and tempting as it was to introduce Leigh immediately (and bank on the umpires not realising he had just bowled consecutive overs :-)) Starky continued his spell from the pavilion end. Unfortunately he was struggling for consistency in his comeback game from injury, and ended up going for 40 from his first five overs. At the other end Fred finally got his chance, and immediately bowled with considerable fire, pace and skill. In his second over Paulie made the suggestion of bringing himself in from mid off to an insultingly close mid off - and this to their skipper Ian Kelly, who had opened and nearly made 50 by now. But not hit much in front of the wicket on the off side. It worked: he tried to force the third ball of Fred's second over through Paulie's head and only succeeded in slicing it to Leigh at point. Well bowled Fred - and good thinking Paulie.

That brought a very accomplished looking number 4 (A Walker) to the crease, a guy who'd made a 100 this season and apparently a stack of runs in the past. He looked solid, and played some good cricket shots for boundaries from the moment he arrived. Meanwhile at the other end Fred's mate (P Sharma) continued to bat in his infuriatingly idiosyncratic fashion, taking all his runs (virtually) on the leg side, and mixing outrageous attempted slog sweeps, with deft flicks and random charging. So much so that I ended up with 5 on the legside despite wanting bowlers to bowl off stump - and still he found some gaps. This partnership did some damage. Leigh replaced Starkey and bowled four overs of leg spin. There were a lot of very good balls in those overs. However, there were also a predictable number of pies. (Predictable as this was his first attempt to bowl the most difficult form of bowling in cricket - but also the most dangerous form of

bowling...) Nevertheless, he finished with 0/27 from his 5 overs, not too bad at all. Personally I would love to see him persevere - it just adds so much to an attack to be able to call on a leggie. On the other hand his outswingers are pretty useful too. A good dilemma for him to have.

I decided we might as well go all out spin, and asked Paulie to give them a twirl as well. He'd hurt his knee earlier when fielding - caught wrong footed he made a typically desperate dive in an attempt to stop the ball and wrenched his knee, and it made a horribly loud click when he straightened his leg. But, competitive as ever, he was determined to continue despite his knee and an open wound on his heel from a split blister. To my surprise he chose offies rather than leggies. Not too bad at all - but again a couple of bad ones were put away and he went for runs too....So by the second drinks break Workers had moved on to 2/167 from 30. Crunch time. If we lost our bundle we could end up getting spanked. On the other hand, if we could restrict them to anything under 250 I felt we had a good chance, especially given the hot conditions, short boundaries and fast outfield.

I decided it was worth giving Gary Mattison a try. I'd brought him up with a view to getting him to open the batting and swing the willow, but also as another bowling option. So Lebs started at one end, Gaz the other. Both took wickets. Lebs induced their number 4 to smash one at short extra cover. For some unknown reason I'd moved out of slip and found myself unable to get out of the way in time. Luckily it stuck: 3/172. In Lebs' following over he induced the irritating number 3 to scoop one to Gaz at mid on: 4/186. Then it was Gaz's turn with the ball. He clean bowled number 6: 5/192.

Clearly these bowlers needed replacing! There had been a wicket in each of the last three overs, but I reckoned Lebs was looking tired (by this stage he had 3/37 from 7) and I reckoned Starky would get better with another bowl. So Fred came back on downwind, and immediately clean bowled number 7: 6/194. I was hoping Starky would also help his skipper justify dragging bowlers who take wickets. I was worried when his first three balls went for five. Then I dropped CC back to deep long on with their number 5 (Daniel Jones, can bat) on strike. Next ball he hit one very high and hard to deep mid wicket / square leg. Very high. Off started CC. The ball kept climbing. CC kept running. The ball started dropping. CC kept running. Finally the two intersected, and CC held the catch after running about 40 metres to get to it. Classic CC! Two balls later Starky picked up another wicket - making for a very relieved skipper - and taking them to 8/201, and Starky finished with 2/47 from seven overs, bowling much better at the finish than the start. Fred did the rest: one caught and bowled, one bowled, and we'd bowled them out for 211 in the 39th over. Fred finished with 4/28 from 7 very hostile overs. As much as he's not so keen on the idea, I reckon the lower down the order I bowl him, the better he goes...

211 is not easy to chase, but having come back from 2/167 to bowl them out I was happy. And, more importantly, six less overs for us all to stand around in the sun: an added bonus. On the other hand we were missing some of our regular batsmen, so we needed runs from everyone. Of course we were batting second so our keeper had to open - meaning Zak went out with Mick Hamood this week. Mick looked good, playing a couple of his trademark effortless backfoot shots through fourth slip with a straight bat, and getting value as both reached the boundary - before he inexplicably missed a straight one and was bowled for 8. At the other end Zak was looking patient, and smacked one from Chrispy for 4: but then had a wild swipe and skied one to the keeper: out for 6, and we're 2/14.

This brought CC and Leigh together. Leigh had looked good in his previous knocks, and it looked like today was going to be his day. He left good balls alone or defended them, and picked off the bad ones. Meanwhile CC was looking determined - determined not to get out against his old club, and especially not to give his wicket cheaply. They set three on the leg side boundary from the moment he walked to the crease, so his boundaries were restricted to a couple of superb cover drives along the ground, and he declined to try to hit

the ball over the leg side fielders. At drinks the two were still together, and had taken us to 2/54. They had used only four bowlers, and I felt we were well placed.

After drinks Leigh, looking like today would be his day, fell to a sharp catch at slip, having compiled an excellent 28. He will score a lot more runs for the Wanderers. Out went Andrew Allen, and promptly smashed the first ball for two. Alas he fell for that score soon after: 4/65 in the 21st. Time for Starky to show what he could do. He and CC batted solidly against some very tight bowling, and a well placed, disciplined field. Workers showed what a good team they are: despite the heat they kept working hard, and runs were hard to get. Starky managed three fours before he fell for 11. (Yes, he tells me he hit three of them, and I don't doubt him - but the book shows only two. Hmmm) Meanwhile CC continued to bat with very un-CC-like patience, but was unable to find the boundary often. (In fact once less than the book shows quite possibly!) Starky's dismissal took us to drinks in the 29th over at 5/97. Still anyone's game, especially considering they had only used two overs from their fifth bowler...

Fred went out to join CC, with us needing 114 from the last 92 balls. Never an easy ask. He and CC tried to lift the pace, but Workers continued to make accelerating the run rate difficult. Finally in the 36th over Fred fell to a good catch by long off running in - out trying to force the pace, which was what we needed. 6/113. 99 needed from 57 balls. At that stage I decided I'd have to bat higher than my preferred 9,10 or 11. I'd been itching to get out there, and promptly did what I can't stand when I'm the not out batsman: issued instructions as the incoming batsman. CC had bowled 6 overs in the heat, fielded in the outfield and done a lot of running, and had been batting since the fifth over - all in 40 degree heat. So he was understandably impressed when I arrived to tell him: "Time to start hitting fours and sixes Craig". So we made a charge. Only CC could respond to such a challenge. The 37th over went for nine - not quite enough but finally boundaries: one to CC and one my preferred late cut - so much better value with a fast outfield. The 38th we only managed 3 - and from their fifth bowler, Fred's mate. Next over they brought Chrispy, their opening bowler back. I've opened against him many times, and he's always hard to get away with the new ball. But today I was hitting with the wind. We scrambled a couple of singles, then finally I hit one sweetly, and long on called it a six. Next ball I hit even better, this time squarer: another six! I'd just doubled my career sixes in two balls, and we took 15 from the over (one leg bye for those of you who can add up). Next over CC joined in, smashing a huge six over square leg, and I managed another four: 13 from the over. Suddenly the score was up to 163, and we needed 49 from 30 balls: definitely right back in the game.

Next over back came Danny Gair, one of their top four bowlers, to bowl his ninth. CC whacked one hard and high to square leg: I thought it was six when he hit it but unfortunately it fell just short - and CC was finally dismissed for a superb 54. Out came Lebs to join me - but the final ball of the over I managed only to slice straight to fly slip. The fourth time in four innings I've got myself out to D Gair. Bugger! Still, 27 from 16 balls had helped give us a chance. Not to mention consecutive sixes!

With both the established batsmen dismissed in the one over, it left too difficult a task for our final three batsmen, two of whom were carrying injuries, and we ended up dismissed for 174 in the 44th over. Not quite good enough on the day. Still, we were missing three of our better bats this season (Callum, JP and Westy), not to mention G Condon, P Martin and S Hill playing in 4s to make sure they qualify, so I'm confident we will turn the tables when we next play Workers - probably in the Grand Final.

The loss leaves us in fourth, and without a chance of making the top two. We play the other two sides in the four over the next two weeks (Crossroads then Queanbeyan), and if we keep our form going, I remain very confident we can give the finals a real shake this year. Man of the match - for the second week running - went to CC for his solid bowling, superb catch, and patient and nearly match winning innings. A bit more support from the rest of us would have got us there. Two qualifying games and then, hopefully, three finals to go before we take the flag.

4th Grade, Round 16 vs Brewers at Garran

By Peter Spence

Another stinking hot day greeted the “Fighting Fours” and their travelling supporter (Scurge’s dad, well he showed up at some stage during the day) for their big game against Brewers Best, away at Garran. After last week’s loss to Academics, the fourth grade table had tightened up with only a couple of wins separating 2nd (us) through to 7th (Workers). A win today against Brewer’s, however, would all but seal the Fighting Fours’ spot in the finals if other results went our way.

The Brewer’s were a tricky opponent to come up against. Whilst they were currently sitting in 8th place and no hope of making the finals, the previous week they had given 3rd place Baaaaaarton a serious touch up and before Christmas had beaten us pretty convincingly. So this was a game no one was taking lightly.

We were still missing a couple of players this week, with VJ out, Spikes and Billy Bob Thornton still languishing in 3rds and Az Thorne was not considered for selection again as it was a bit hot for him. That said, the side picked was still very strong. Greg was back this week to bolster the batting, Daniel Hughes had been called up from 6s and the master blaster from Boxy’s Reds, Phil Patulny, was set to make his much anticipated 4th Grade debut.

Scurge was also missing early, having shown up at the wrong ground. Fortunately a quick phone call to the skipper confirmed we weren’t actually playing Gungahlin and that perhaps he might want to come down to Garran and have a game with us. Not long later Scurge arrived having completed his secret mission stirring up and sledging the Gungahlin boys for their big game again TUFCCC which we needed them to lose to help our finals cause!

Skipper Toofy, having allegedly recovered from his bout of sunstroke suffered during the toss of the coin last week, was confident he could make it back-to-back wins of the toss and have a bat this week. He may well still have been suffering sunstroke as he’s only won 3 tosses all season! Of course this was never gunna happen and after calling tails and losing yet again it was time for us to have a bowl.

The boys took this disappointment in their stride and grabbed their hats from the eskies (awesome idea hersch!) and started ‘warming’ up. Fielding practice, which was taking place in the shade, came to an abrupt halt when someone hit the ball outside in the sun. No one would go and get it, so we reluctantly headed out into the furnace to get stuck in to the Brewers boys.

Sundar “Express” Jayarman and Charlie “Cupcake” Clements opened the attack for the Fighting Fours and whilst they were both bowling pretty solidly the first few overs, neither seemed to be troubling the Brewers openers, who were fairly comfortably going along at about 4 an over.

Just as the Brewers boys looked like they were going to put on a bit of a stand, Express got the first break through with a good catch taken by Scurge. Brewers 1 for 21 after 5. Cupcake was next to strike, bowling the remaining opener who failed to offer a shot, in the 8th over, and the Brewers were 2 for 28.

The next few overs were fairly uneventful, with some good tight bowling and the Brewers batsmen struggling to score, but then the skipper made the bowling change that turned the game.

Scurge was bought on in the 9th over and in the next few overs he proceeded to absolutely tear the Brewers innings apart. After striking in his 2nd over and then again in his 3rd over, all of a sudden Brewers had slumped to 4 for 34. The best, however, was yet to come, sports fans.

Scurge's 4th over was something to see to believe and had the crowd of 7 eskies and a stray dog on their feet. In the space of 4 balls, Scurge sent 3 batsmen back to where they came from, with his hat trick ball apparently missing the stumps by millimetres.

At 7/35 the game had well and truly turned thanks to Scurge's five-wicket burst! He actually picked up his 5th wicket a couple of balls before drinks when the batsmen got a nick and was well caught by Hersch. However after immediately walking when he nicked it, the batsmen almost got to me at gully before he changed his mind, told the umpire it came off his pad and went back to his crease! After a small amount of "discussion" between ourselves and the batsman and with the umpire really not that interested in anything other than how hot it was, the decision was accepted and we took a drink with Brewer's at 7/35 after 15.

After drinks we were pretty keen to finish off the Brewer's innings as the previous week we had Academics in a similar position but just couldn't manage to kill them off.

While Scurge was hogging all the limelight up one end, Hilly was plugging away at the other end bowling some really great line and length without much luck. But after a quiet few overs after drinks Sumo finally snuck one thru the cheat and had him plumb LBW. Of course the cheat thought he wasn't out even though the ball in question would've hit the base of middle stump, but fortunately on this occasion he wasn't able to convince the umpire and brewers were 8-47.

Toofy then thought he would put on a bit of a fielding display and took off after a ball that should have been an easy 2 for the batsmen. But in a blink of an eye the young skipper had put on his trademark slide and throw and some good keeping by Clint caught the batsman well short:9/52.

Soon after Charlie wrapped up the innings (Scurge had been dragged: it was going to be bad enough putting up with him after getting 5, no one wanted to see him get 6 or 7!) and the Brewers were bowled out for 60.

In the conditions it was an awesome effort from all the boys with Scurge the star of the show with 5/8 off 5 overs. Could have been 7 in the end, with the cheat incident and also Scurge getting another wicket on a no-ball that the umpire suspiciously didn't call until after he had checked Phil had taken the catch!

Charlie again bowled solidly for his 2/18 off 5.3, with Sundar and Simon also bowling well with figures of 1/19 off 4 and 1/13 off 6 respectively.

Whilst we were only chasing a small total, we were conscious that we were in a similar position the previous round and had batted poorly and let the game slip away. With that in mind the Skipper decided to promote himself to the top of the innings with yours truly, as the Fighting Fours trialled their 46th opening combination of the season.

Being the team player that I am and wanting to ease the pressure on the skipper in his first opening appearance of the season, I selflessly let Toofy take the first ball of the innings. The skipper looked comfortable from the start in his new role (except for that second-ball swoosh that he almost edged) and despite some fairly respectable bowling we managed to see off the first few overs without too many dramas.

After 8 overs the author of this report, after scratching around like a Z Grader from the wooden spooners of the Bangladeshi local pub comp, was the first to go with a tickle down legside for a not-so-well-compiled and not-so-stylish 7: 1/15.

Out strode Phil Patulny at 3 to make his Fighting Fours debut after some huuuuuuuge scores in 6s in this season. Phil immediately looked at home at the crease and he and Toofy started motoring along (there's a shock – I get out and the run rate improves).

With the game in the bag and the crowd losing a bit of interest, Phil and the Skipper decided to spice things up a bit by starting a mini collapse. With score on 51, Phil skied a mistimed pull shot and was on his way back to the shade for 15, in what was a promising debut innings.

Toofy was next to go, 4 runs later, when he was caught plumb in front for a good captains knock of 27. It should be noted though that Scurge may have showed a little too much enthusiasm in firing the skipper! He almost poked out the eye of the bowler when he was raising his finger!

Hilly, who had already packed his esky in the car and was taking his pads off in hope of a quick getaway, strode out to the middle next but his plans for a quick getaway were quickly dashed 2 balls later when he was consigned to kit packing duties, gone for a duck! (**Skippers note:** For some reason I remember packing the kit with Gregg. It's ok Hilly, there is always next week.)

Deciding that they had seen enough of the mini-collapse, Greg and PM steadied the ship with Greg finishing off the game with a big 6. The Fighting Fours were home easily at 4/64 after 16 overs. It was great to get the win in the end, and with results going our way on Saturday, we have now qualified for finals action this year. Now we have to try and sew up second spot over the next 2 weeks.

Man of the match was of course Scurge. Not so much for his 5 wickets or for his catch but for the enthusiasm and courage he showed in firing the skipper LBW. He also sealed the man of the match performance by showing up at the wrong ground earlier in the day and disrupting Gungahlin's preparations for their game against TUFCCC. As Gungahlin lost, thus sealing our finals spot, Scurge's efforts were much appreciated.

4th Grade, Round 15 vs Academics at Rivett

By Peter Spence

The new happy team arrived at Rivett primed for the crunch game against the very strong Academics line up. The equation was simple, a win against Academics would go a long way to sealing the new happy team's place in the finals. A loss will potentially bring us back to the chasing pack, with a tricky run home in the last 3 weeks.

That said we were reasonably confident of putting on a good showing despite missing a few regulars. VJ, Greg, Billy Bob and Az were all missing with Az apparently absent due to a clause in his contract that he doesn't play in games where the temperature is over 30 degrees!

With the weather unseasonably cool there was a lot of discussion amongst the boys over whether to pull on the sleeveless vest or the full-on jumper to cope with the Arctic-like conditions. Whilst the debate raged in the background, our illustrious skipper Adam "winning the toss is overrated" Stewart strode over to the Academics skipper confident that the decision as to whether to bat or bowl first would not be within his control for the 15th time this season.

To the amazement of the big crowd who had come to watch (Scurge had bought his own fan club along) the skipper actually called correctly and all of a sudden found himself in a position he was very unaccustomed to. Possibly suffering from an early case sun stroke he inexplicably muttered the phrase "We'll have a bowl thanks". (I kid you not!!)

There was stunned silence from both sides, although strangely the Academics stunned silence was also accompanied by broad grins across their faces. However, full of confidence in their brave skipper's choice, the new happy team rugged up in their winter woollies and prepared to head out to the field.

Unfortunately the day went from bad to worse as the calls began to roll in from our flagship Firsts that they had again mixed up the playing conditions for the second week in a row and their game was going to be played as an 11 a side match not 9 a side as was first thought. Amidst all the confusion Hersch was quickly despatched to 1s and Andrew 'Spikes' Allen was dropped to bowl first, but this is yet to be substantiated. After frantic calls to both 6th grade sides at 12.27, a player from each (Chook from Reds, Rocket from Yellow) started their journey to Rivett.

So after a hardly ideal preparation the new happy team strode on to the ground with only 9 players determined to stick together like we have all season and take it to the opposition.

Sundar and Lebs opened the attack and after a quiet first few overs in Lebs' second over Spency grassed one at gully (Skipper's note: I remember Spency checking the manicure to see a nail hadn't been broken.) The following over, Sundar struck to remove the dangerous Academics opener, who was coming off a last start ton, for 10. Out strode their number 3 who coincidentally was also coming off a last start ton, and Sundar promptly sent him back the very next ball. At 2 for 11 we were pretty satisfied with the start and with Rocket and Chook showing up at around this time, we were back to 11 players on the park.

Due to the wintery conditions and Toofy wanting to keep all his bowlers warm, the bowling changes started to come pretty regularly, and all 5 used were bowling really good lines and keeping the batsmen nice and quiet. Scurge managed to snag his first wicket of the day before the first drinks/warm soup break and after 15 overs the new happy team was on top with Academics 3 for 35.

After drinks we continued to apply the pressure on the opposition batsmen and some top bowling from Sundar (4 for 33) plus a great direct hit run out, also by Sundar (well the batsman was in by about 3 inches but it was an awesome appeal from yours truly at gully and Hilly at point that swayed the umpire) and all of a sudden we had Academics reeling at 7 for 54.

The rest of the Academics innings could best be described as frustrating! Despite some very tight bowling, their tailenders hung around and dotted up for quite a while. They then hit out a little right at the death of the innings.

In the end we had managed to bowl them out for 129 in 44.2 overs. All the bowlers toiled hard in the conditions and we couldn't have asked for any more from them. Charlie "Cupcake" Clements was probably the pick of the bowlers with 2 for 8 off his 9 overs with Sundar picking up 4 for 33, Scurge 2 for 22, Hilly 1 for 32. A special mention should go to Lebs who bowled really well but without any luck at all for figures of 0 for 25 off his 9. (Skipper's note: If only Spency could catch he'd have got an early one...)

Chasing 129, we thought we were in with a really good chance. Academics have a very strong bowling line-up, but at the same time we were confident we could chase down the total. Unfortunately that confidence was soon found to be misplaced.

Yours truly and Cupcake strode out to face up to Academics big left arm quickie who had been tearing teams apart all year (including 6 for 10 against us last time we played). But the canny opposition skipper pulled a swifty on this slow-witted left handed opening bat by starting with an entirely different opening attack.

Cupcake, in his first attempt at opening the batting for the year, started very solidly and didn't seem to be fazed at all by the change in tactics. But after a promising start he became the first wicket to fall for 7 with the score on 7 (and before anyone says anything I hadn't actually faced a ball at this stage!).

Chook then strode to the middle fresh from dominating 6th grade all year and full of boyish enthusiasm. Unfortunately for the big crowd that had been building all day (think it was now up to 3), the next 7 overs were nothing short of a bloodbath for the new happy team.

Spence was back in the pavilion soon after for a stylish and well compiled 1 and was soon followed by Hilly (4), Chook (2) and Tommy (1). So after 9 overs we were in deep trouble at 5 for 21.

The Skipper, having recovered from his early bout of sunstroke, then set about trying to undo some of the damage with PM, and both looked quite comfortable against some very good bowling. Having put on 38 for the 6th wicket, the skip was next to go, undone by a very good ball that snuck through his defence when he was on 25.

At 6 for 59 we were still in with some hope. However, 5 runs later, having edged the previous ball and being dropped at first slip, PM thought he would play the same shot again but give the opposition a bit more of a chance this time by edging it straight to the keeper. PM was gone for 11.

Lebs followed soon after for 1, caught at fly slip (Skipper's note: Honestly, who has a fly slip!) and when Rocket departed for 4 we had slumped to 9 for 75. It all rested on the shoulders of Scurge and Sundar. As Scurge is well known for his defence (or so he keeps telling the skipper) the crowd, which had now grown to 4 with the arrival of Az (who had found his way out of the fairy room to the pavilion), was anticipating a long stay and possibly a match-winning last wicket stand.

Scurge then proceeded to swat 3 quick 4s and we think we may have seen one ball that you could say he played defensively, but we could be wrong! Unfortunately though it was not long after that the game was all over, with Scurge departing for 13 and the new happy team all out for 89.

It was a bit of a disappointing result overall. Everyone toiled hard in the field and all 5 bowlers used bowled exceptionally well. But in the end we just didn't bat well or value our wickets enough and were beaten by a very good Academics team on the day. Man of the Match was Sundar for an awesome bowling and fielding effort, with Cupcake following close behind. (Skipper's note: Skipper may have awarded Man of the Match to himself as no other 4th graders turned up to the club after the game).

