

Wimbledon United v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 15 July, Cottenham Park. Gents won toss. Sunny, 28C

Lost by 110 runs

Wimbledon United			Gentlemen of West London				
Nayak		b Shastri	19	Dubey	c Herbert	b Saxby	23
D. Hitchman	c Namilikona	b Kumar	28	Basker		b Cripps	0
Flannery	not out		113	Kota	c Ahmed	b Saxby	8
†Herbert		b Kota	7	†Namilikonda		b Cripps	4
Iyengar	lbw	b Kumar	1	*H. Patel	c Flannery	b Dean	0
Ahmed		b Kota	19	Karan Patel		b Pai	8
Phillip		b Kota	3	S. Desai	c D. Hitchman	b Dean	2
Pai		b Dubey	0	Kumar	c D. Hitchman	b Dean	0
Cripps		b S. Desai	6	N. Khan		b D. Hitchman	33
Dean	not out		0	Shastri	c Cripps	b Iyengar	1
*Saxby				M. Gadige		b Pai	1
				K. Gadige	not out		6
Extras	b9 lb5 w12		26	Extras	b16 w8 nb2		26
Total	8 wickets	35 overs	222	Total	All out	18.3 overs	112
FoW: 57, 67, 111, 114, 175, 195, 213, 222				FoW: 1, 33, 44, 44, 53, 59, 59, 59, 75, 90, 112			
Bowling: S. Desai 4-0-41-1, Dubey 5-0-26-1, Shastri 5-0-27-1, Kumar 7-1-30-2, Kota 7-0-36-3, H. Patel 6-0-36-0, N. Khan 1-0-12-0				Bowling: Cripps 4-0-13-2, Saxby 4-0-32-2, Dean 2-1-4-3, Pai 5-0-17-2, Iyengar 2-0-21-1, D. Hitchman 1.3-0-9-1			

The Maroons pounded the Gents to avenge their May defeat. The loss was the visitors' fifth in six. Boring the 2018 campaign is not. In those five defeats the batsmen have scored 596 runs and batted only 132 overs, an average score of 119 in 26 overs. This is evidence that the batting is the root cause of the malaise but those present on this stifling Sunday would again point to the catching. Flannery batted superbly for 27 overs hitting 20 4s and a 6 but survived three drops, though two fell to a player with an injured and strapped hand. In their turn, Gents offered seven chances of which six were keenly snaffled.

The Gents' relationship to Cottenham Park is that of the Scotch to Culloden Moor, venue of the one-sided Scotland v. England 1746 Home International. Here in May 2017 Nilesh Dubey induced a lofted cover drive first ball from the prolific David Hitchman. The chance was shelled, the Maroons scored 176 for 8 then skittled the Gents for 53 (quite a recovery from 29 for 8). It was a debacle and something had to be done. Family commitments in the shape of a Telstar Mehta red-panelled football had wreaked havoc with availability but Vijay Basker kindly brought along three debutants, Gautam Shastri and the 13 year-old Gadige brothers Medhansh and Kavyansh who fielded with spirit all day and got their bat.

Nayak took a flurry of boundaries off Desai, 17 coming in the first over as he struggled with his length on a true but slow pitch. Shastri bowled Nayak with a full-toss before Hitchman edged behind to Namilikonda standing up to Kumar, a good wicket. Herbert, dismissed for under 50 for the first time in this rubber, and Iyengar fell in quick succession and matters were balanced, the hosts 114 for 4 in the 20th over. Despite drinks breaks at 12 and 22 overs the fielding then worsened. Nobody looked like taking a catch although the running and throwing held up well under the onslaught. Kumar and Kota bowled their off-spin accurately and shared five wickets.

It was a tall order but the Gents were hopeful. Then the innings started. Basker was unlucky to play on, luck tending to desert struggling teams. From a promising 33 for 1 in the sixth over with Dubey and Kota looking good matters did not necessarily proceed to the advantage of the Gents, as seven wickets fell in 33 balls. Dubey had batted assertively and drove the only six of the innings before cutting to backward point, the first of six good catches. Namilikonda played on, Kota punched to mid-off, H. Patel edged to a diving slip, Karan Patel drove over the yorker, Desai and Kumar picked out cover-point.

Naveed Khan, well supported by the tail, struck seven 4s. With the help of a few extras the hundred was brought up in the 17th over. It was generous of Saxby to allow both young lads a bat and they did well, Kavyansh driving a splendid lofted four. Hitchman in a rare bowl finished proceedings at 5.35pm. The game was well hosted by the Maroons with very well organised drinks breaks (some clubs struggle with this basic courtesy) and a filling and varied tea. How quickly the pendulum can swing.



Latest culprit James Flannery

Opponents' centuries

165*	Elmes (Northfields) (2015)
164*	Ahmed (Close PF) (2015)
150*	Walker (Rotherham SC) (1995)
150*	Collis (Millfields) (2018)
146	Shanin Khan (Bengal Troopers) (2016)
144	Sayf-Ali Khan (Stanmore Warriors) (2017)
140*	Bulmer (London Owls) (1993)
132	Heyman (Village XI) (2006)
113	Griffiths (Hale) (2009)
113*	Flannery (Wimbledon United) (2018)
112*	David Redhead (Northfields) (2016)
112*	AN Other (East Harrow Cheetahs) (1988)
111	Groves-Loader (New Barbarian Weasels) (1998)
107	N. Wilson (Wandham) (1994)
107	Jaques (East Harrow Cheetahs) (1996)
105	MacDonald (St. Anne's Allstars) (2014)
103*	Best (New Barbarian Weasels) (1991)
102	Hadfield (12 Angry Men) (1994)
101	T. Mayhew (London Saints) (1996)
101*	Atkins (Exiles) (2001)
100	D. Wilson (12 Angry Men) (2001)
100*	Poulter (Bricklayer's Arms) (2017)

Opponents have scored 22 centuries and this must stop. Six of the top 10 have come since 2015. Gents have scored 23, the first being 137* by Mark Ashton against Enterprise in 1992 and the highest being 158* by Steve Jones against West XI in 2002. Do not imagine for one moment that we have given up on the identity of the anonymous Cheetah who scored 112* in 1988. It is just taking a bit of time.