
THE GENT

No.160

June 2018

Up and running



Gents notch welcome win against Wimbledon United

Gents win three on the bounce after early oppo carnage

Redemption after Perivale

Putney controversy

Pavan Kota returns to India after two fifties

Guests to fore after late withdrawals

Averages - bowlers look away now

Match reports:

Hounslow Hurricanes (lost by 8 wickets)

Millfields (lost by 27 runs)

Wimbledon United (won by 8 wickets)

Putney (won by 1 wicket)

Northfields (won by 53 runs)

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Read about the Gents on www.gowlcc.org or Twitter [@gowlcc](https://twitter.com/gowlcc)



Redemption

To: Chris Welsh, Parks Operations Manager, London Borough of Ealing

Dear Mr Welsh,

I am the secretary of the Gentlemen of West London Cricket Club, who visited Perivale Park yesterday to play Hounslow Hurricanes. I am emailing you to thank John Carpenter and Jesse Loveridge, the groundsmen. After a wet week we arrived to find a perfectly prepared wicket, nicely mown outfield and pristine changing facilities. They must have worked so hard in their preparation. We were worried about whether we would even get a game given last week's weather, but we did and were made to feel very welcome guests by John and Jesse from the minute we arrived.

A big thanks therefore to them and congratulations to LBE on the makeover the ground has had. We lost the match but that was squarely the fault of our batsmen, not the wicket.

Yours sincerely,

Andrew Burman
Secretary, GWLCC

Dear Andrew,

Thank you for your email. I'm glad to hear the preparations were well received. I have passed on your thanks directly.

I hope the good ground conditions continue throughout the season and you get some redemption in the win column.

Kind regards,

Chris Welsh

Bowlers' heartbreak

Dodgy governments keen to improve psychological torture techniques could do worse than employ Gents bowlers as consultants. Between 3.37pm on 29 April and 1.55pm on 13 May, 14 of them sent down 69.2 overs, taking three wickets and conceding 385 heartbreaking runs. That's a score typical of an Indian state game. When Street of Millfields was out opposing batsmen had added 198 for 0 in 34.5 overs. His dismissal was eagerly debriefed by captain Sanjay Patel at his press conference. "It was planned," he said. "No way was it just a case of randomly giving bowlers a few overs each on a hot day until someone got lucky. The early bowlers softened him up and Vamsee pounced with a killer delivery." Successful bowler Krishna added "The ball did nothing but I'll take it. The bloke just wafted at it and it kind of dribbled through off bat and pad. Yes!" At the time of writing Gents bowlers have taken 27 wickets in five games including a mammoth 9 catches. Two oppo were somehow run out.

Wind fries brains

The run up to 19/20 May and the weekend itself saw sorry events. Gubbays are popular opponents. The Gents first met them in 2007 and the rubber has been competitive with Gubbays leading 4-2. Unfortunately, they cancelled on the Tuesday, the third time in four games. The future of this fixture is therefore in doubt, with a definitive position to be struck at the end of the season (the return is scheduled for 1 July). Putney, who seemed fun, were contacted and confirmed.

The day was difficult. Putney published a one-eyed if highly entertaining match report but the whiff of burning martyr is unpleasant so we shall not refute it here. What this demonstrates is that a fixture against unknown opposition always carries a risk which is why we should do what we can to retain Gubbays rather than burn ten seasons of friendship. Putney had a few things to say about the Gents' umpiring. It was ever thus. Our archive reveals that in the 1970-71 Ashes the English bowlers did not get a single lbw and we never heard the end of it from Boycott and Illingworth.

There was controversy elsewhere, caused in our opinion by the warm, unnatural wind that blew all weekend. It was a Foehn wind, which torments people and causes depression, suicide, madness, headaches, sleeplessness, crime waves and fruitloop match reports. Heaven knows what happened at Regent's Park to cause those pranksters at Village CC to produce the world's first politically-charged scorecard after their Saturday clash with Clapham In, *viz*:

The Village CC Innings

			Runs
GC Pontin	c Slip (questionable)	b Whale	5
J Woods	c Slip (proper)	b Saliman (Butt)	0
NP Troja †	c Slip (glove)	b Saliman (Butt)	6

Taxman

Good fun can be had with Extras stats. Monty RH gave away 71 out of 234 in 2016 and we publish this real 2018 scorecard in all solemnity, with the caveat that two runs were given for a wide and a no ball.

Bricklayer's Arms 99 all out (extras 52)
Epsom Taxes 103 for 6 (extras 24)

Guest support



The debut against Northfields of Wycombe House first eleven batsman Mehfooz Khan took the total of players this season to 25.

We thank Ameer Ahmed with his Saturday contacts, big-hearted Vijay Basker with his Mary Poppins bag of cricketers, Praveen Bocha and Nilesh Dubey for arranging the guest players and the guests themselves for their support.

The Gents' squad seemed big enough in the winter but events have since happened, as events often do. The Telugu Tauk T20 Sunday league played in the East End has hoovered up one senior Gent who lives locally. Two members are planning weddings. One has got a job requiring weekend work. Injuries sustained in Saturday games have caused a few pull outs as has our old friend last-minute family commitments. BBC Sport has already issued a family-commitments cancellation warning for Sunday, 16 June 2019 when Pakistan meet India in the ICC World Cup.

It is encouraging that we have members able to bring mates along but what would happen if one day the flow of guests, like North Sea oil, should cease? We would be in the cart. We can do nothing about the competing pressures on people's time but need to support the captain by avoiding late cancellations.

2018 scorecards, results and averages

29/4	Perivale Park	Gents 79 (Basker 20, Prabakhar 5-13) Hounslow Hurricanes 82-2 (Sachin 32*, Amit 24*)	Lost by 8 wickets
6/5	Hilly Fields	Millfields 253-1 (Collis 150*, Street 44, Cordell 41) Gents 226 (Kota 63, Kataru 51, Francis 40, Pingili 22, Street 3-41)	Lost by 27 runs
13/5	Old Tenisonians	Wimbledon United 128-8 (Saxby 21, Phillip 20, Gulati 3-18) Gents 133-2 (Kota 59*, Basker 37, Namilikonda 26*)	Won by 8 wickets
20/5	Old Tenisonians	Putney 96-8 (S. Bendre 23*, Dubey 3-19) Gents 97-9 (Ahmed 41*, Rea 4-19, Seaman 3-20)	Won by 1 wicket
27/5	Durston House	Gents 259-9 (Shaikh 55, Namilikonda 48, M. Khan 37, H. Patel 35, Ahmed 33, Francis 22*, Garner 3-41) Northfields 206 (Derrick Redhead 91*, J. Singh 49, Namilikonda 3-8, Krishna 3-32)	Won by 53 runs

Date	Gents	Result	Judd Street Tigers	Result
Sun 22 April	-	-	Southgate Compton	Lost by 151 runs
Sun 29 April	Hounslow Hurricanes	Lost by 8 wickets	Harrowdene	Lost by 4 wickets
Sun 6 May	Millfields	Lost by 27 runs	Graces	Lost by 6 runs
Sat 12 May	-	-	Porto	Lost by 8 wickets
Sun 13 May	Wimbledon United	Won by 8 wickets	Porto	Lost by 159 runs
Sun 20 May	Putney	Won by 1 wicket	Shakespeare	Lost by 8 wickets
Sun 27 May	Northfields	Won by 53 runs	Spartan	Abandoned
Sun 3 June	Crown Taverners	Away	N2 Casuals	Home
Sun 10 June	Hounslow Hurricanes	Home	Beamers	Away
Sun 17 June	Hale	Away	Railway Taverners	Home
Sat 23 June	St. Anne's Allstars	Away	Great Canfield	Away (tour)
Sun 24 June	-	-	Eastons	Away (tour)
Sun 1 July	Gubbays	Away	Motley Crew	Home
Sun 8 July	Judd Street Tigers	Home	Gentlemen of West London	Away
Sun 15 July	Wimbledon United	Away	Little Berkhamstead Sahibs	Away
Sun 22 July	Battersea Eagles	Home	WHCC 6-a-side	Home
Sun 29 July	Bricklayer's Arms	Home	Whalers	Home
Sun 5 August	Pak	Home T20	Acme	Home
Sun 5 August	Pak	Home T20	-	-
Sun 12 August	Northfields	Home	Potter Street	Home
Sun 19 August	Clapham In	Home	Cincinnati	Home
Sun 26 August	Bricklayer's Arms	Away	-	-
Sun 2 Sept	Judd Street Tigers	Away	Gentlemen of West London	Home
Sun 9 Sept	Wycombe House	Away	Mayfield	Home
Sun 16 Sept	Salix	Away	Railway Taverners	Away
Sun 23 Sept	Hale	Away	Fives	Away
Sun 30 Sept	-	-	Highgate	Away
Record	Played 5 Won 3 Lost 2		Played 7 Won 0 Lost 6 Abandoned 1	

Player (debut*)	M.	Inn.	NO	Runs	Avg.	Ct./St.	O	M	Runs	Wck.	Avg.
Ahmed	3	3	1	85	42.50	1/1	-	-	-	-	-
Allamneni *	2	2	1	0	0.00	-	9	1	52	1	52.00
Basker	4	4	-	77	19.25	-	-	-	-	-	-
Bocha	2	2	-	8	4.00	-	6	0	61	0	-
Caveney	3	3	-	19	6.33	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chatharaju	4	3	2	5	5.00	-	11	0	78	1	78.00
Dubey	2	1	-	0	0.00	2	10	3	23	3	7.67
Francis	2	2	1	62	62.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
Kota	3	3	1	139	69.50	-	16	1	90	1	90.00
Krishna	3	3	1	6	3.00	1	23	2	93	6	15.50
Kumar	2	2	-	7	3.50	-	8	0	26	0	-
Namilikonda	4	4	1	88	29.33	3	1.5	0	8	3	2.67
H. Patel	4	3	-	42	14.00	-	17.5	1	87	2	43.50
S. Patel	4	4	-	11	2.75	-	5	0	31	0	-
Shaikh	2	2	-	58	29.00	-	13	2	39	1	39.00

One game only: Bandla 1/1/-/0/, 4-1-13-1, Gangapatnam * 1/-/-/-, 3-1-3-1, B. Gola 1/1/-/5, 7-0-28-1, Gulati * 1/-/-/-, 7-1-18-3, Kataru * 1/1/-/51, 9-0-43-0, M. Khan * 1/1/-/37 (1 ct.), Pentakota 1/1/-/19, 4-1-4-1, Pingili 1/1/-/22, 8-0-24-0, Santha * 1/-/-/-, 8-2-13-2 (1 ct.), Sudireddy 1/-/-/-, 2-0-17-0

2018 in numbers

Highest score for: 259-9 v. Northfields **Against: 253-1** by Millfields

Lowest score for: 79 v. Hounslow Hurricanes **Against: 96-8** by Putney

50s/100s for (4): 63 Kota v. Millfields, **59*** Kota v. Wimbledon United, **55** Shaikh v. Northfields, **51** Kataru v. Millfields

50s/100s against (2): 150* Collis (Millfields), **91*** Derrick Redhead (Northfields)

4-wicket returns for (-)

4-wicket returns against (2): 5-13 Prabakhar (Hounslow Hurricanes), **4-19** Rea (Putney)

Sixes (18): 4 Namilikonda, Shaikh **3** Kota **2** Kataru, M. Khan **1** Francis, H. Patel, Pingili

Run outs (2): 1 Basker, S. Patel

Ducks (7): 1 Allamneni, Bandla, Bocha, Chatharaju, Dubey, Krishna, S. Patel

Hounslow Hurricanes v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 29 April, Perivale Park. Gents won toss. Cloudy, 9C

Lost by 8 wickets

Gentlemen of West London			Hounslow Hurricanes			
H. Patel		b Prabakhar	3	Prashant	b Bandla	12
Basker		b Vikas	20	Darshan	lbw	2
Kumar		b Prabakhar	4	Sachin	not out	32
Kota	c Manik	b Aravind	17	†Amit	not out	24
Bocha		b Vikas	0	Raj, Manik, Antony, Aravind, Prabakhar, Jinno and *Vikas dnb		
Bandla	c Prabakhar	b Antony	0			
Pentakota	run out		19			
†Namilikonda		b Prabakhar	6			
*S. Patel		b Prabakhar	2			
Chatharaju	not out		1			
Allamneni	lbw	b Prabakhar	0			
Extras	b3 w2 nb2		7	Extras	w10 nb2	12
Total	All out	29 overs	79	Total	2 wickets	17.5 overs
FoW: 23, 29, 29, 29, 36, 66, 75, 75, 79, 79			FoW: 10, 39			
Bowling: Prabakhar 6-2-13-5, Vikas 5-1-19-2, Antony 5-3-2-1, Jinno 7-3-11-0, Manik 4-0-21-0, Aravind 2-0-10-1			Bowling: Pentakota 4-1-4-1, S. Patel 2-0-9-0, Chatharaju 1-0-12-0, Bandla 4-0-13-1, Kota 1-0-12-0, Kumar 2-0-8-0, Bocha 1-0-12-0, H. Patel 1.5-0-12-0, Allamneni 1-1-0-0			

On a cold day at Perivale Park Hounslow Hurricanes dealt a torrid early season hammering to the Gents. A solid-looking batting side was skittled in 29 overs with only three in double figures, the hosts winning with 8 wickets and 17 overs in hand. The wicket attracted some comment but the truth is the hosts used it far better, bowling with more accuracy and striking nine 4s to the Gents' three, in half the overs. Groundsmen Jesse Loveridge and John Carpenter had borrowed covers from Hayes CC to ensure that the game went ahead and thanks are due to them, but this venue does not score highly for facilities with no seating for players and scorer.

The Gents welcomed back their favourite Kakinada boy Pavan Kota, fresh from cup glory in India with the Avengers Cricket Fraternity. He will play the first three before flying back. After a number of withdrawals, guest Raghu Allamneni made up the eleven. Everyone was on time and Gents supporters were entitled to think "All shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well", as anchoress theologian Julian of Norwich so aptly put it previewing the 1395 Ashes tour. The Gents also welcomed teen scoring sensation David Bender for fun and frolics.

The captain had stressed the need for crease occupation and sensible batting in his engaging pep talk but only Basker, Kota and Pentakota were able to take the message on board, the latter pair adding 30 in 13 overs that included only two runs in their first eight overs together, the first five being maidens. This was a grim but high quality clash of bat and ball. They were beginning to play with freedom when Pentakota was run out after being called for a sharp single. Kota holed out nine runs later. That was it, the captain driving over a straight one from Prabakhar, who ended with a rare five-wicket haul. Basker had looked likely early on while Hemin Patel and Kumar applied themselves for a few overs.

The second innings was a trial for the visitors. Pentakota struck early and Bandla deserved his wicket but Sachin and Amit gave only half-chances. The captain was ruthless with his bowling changes, replacing three after a single over. This at least gave an opportunity for nine to turn their arm over but the game had long gone and runs came freely in the final overs. There was no social interaction between the teams after the game. Nor indeed during it.



The Fashion Police were summoned and cited several Gents for fielding in civilian clothing. Sanjay Patel and Bocha respectively wore fleeces of mauve and black while Kumar modelled a blue sleeveless top over white shirt combo that resembled a retro Sheffield Wednesday home shirt 1965-1973. There is nothing wrong with losing a game of cricket, but at least look like cricketers. A thing called a pullover, often available in white, may be bought for chilly Sundays.

Millfields v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 6 May, Hilly Fields. Millfields won toss. Sunny, 25C

Lost by 27 runs

Millfields			Gentlemen of West London			
Street		b Krishna	44	†Ahmed	b Hughes	11
Collis	not out		150	Chatharaju	b Hughes	0
†Cordell	not out		41	Kota	b Gardiner	63
Marshall, *Cooper, Mellor, McCluskie, Raj, Hughes, Gregory and Gardiner dnb				Francis	b Street	40
				Bocha	b Street	8
				Caveney	b Gardiner	13
				Pingili	c Marshall	22
				*S. Patel	c Gregory	4
				Kataru	c Street	51
				Krishna	not out	2
Extras	b6 lb4 w7 nb1		18	Extras	b2 lb1 w6 nb3	12
Total	1 wickets	40 overs	253	Total	All out	39.1 overs
FoW: 155				FoW: 6, 24, 107, 126, 139, 153, 157, 195, 226		
Bowling: Pingili 8-0-24-0, Kota 8-1-54-0, Kataru 9-0-43-0, Krishna 8-0-44-1, Bocha 5-0-49-0, Chatharaju 2-0-29-0				Bowling: McCluskie 8-0-31-0, Hughes 8-3-15-2, Raj 4-0-35-0, Gardiner 7-0-60-2, Street 8-1-41-3, Gregory 4.1-0-41-2		



Collis, a hundred and a half



Nani Kataru, a debut 51

Bat dominated ball in the third game between the clubs, ten-man Gents falling 27 runs shy of Millfields' huge total in broiling heat. That's 1,184 runs in the rubber now for only 41 wickets. Kota hit his seventh club fifty and student Nani Kataru, who had travelled up from Southend, a fiery 51 on debut, but the innings of the day was by Collis who took out his bat for 150, hitting 13 4s and five 6s, leading his side to 253 for one. Such a total has never been successfully chased in a Gents match and the visitors gave it a real go, though they were never quite up with the required rate and fell just short. The captain would later express his pleasure at the team's determination, if perhaps not some of the fielding.

Cooper won the toss and batted. Patel opened with the pace of Pingili and the off-spin of Kota, the openers moving on watchfully to 37 in 10 overs. Runs came more freely thereafter with only two half-chances given. When Krishna got one through Street's defences it was the first wicket taken since Bandla bowled Hurricanes opener Prashant seven days before in temperatures tending to absolute zero. In that time nine bowlers had sent down 34 overs and 5 balls.

Street's dismissal brought in the assertive Cordell who added 98 with the remorseless Collis. The second half of the innings brought 164 runs, boundaries coming in more overs than not. There were a few misfields but also some good stops. The two quickest bowlers Pingili and Kataru, neither of whom was on the team sheet midweek, carded the best figures. The total was the seventh highest by an opponent but a record for only one wicket down. Collis' score was joint-third in the oppo individual carnage list, Elmes of Northfields still leading with his monstrous 165 not out in 2015.

The pacy Cooper was unable to bowl through injury but McCluskie and Hughes were adequate substitutes, Hughes getting the openers early before Kota and Francis added 83 in 12 overs. Kota was going through the gears with a flurry of boundaries before seizing up with cramp. He soon fell. Bocha and Caveney struck forcefully if briefly in support of the elegant Francis, who not for the first time glued the innings together. The rate slowed down around the 30-over mark but after Patel holed out in the deep Pingili and Kataru gave it a shot of adrenaline. They inherited a position of 157 for 7 with 97 needed off nine and scored 67 of them, running freely and scoring several boundaries before the overs ran out. The game was well hosted with a filling tea, a Gazebo shelter and plentiful drinks. Hilly Fields is a public park but the only boundary interloper was a ginger-haired man wearing a disappointing jacket.

Gentlemen of West London v. Wimbledon United

Sunday 13 May, Old Tenisonians. Gents won toss. Sunny, 17C

Won by 8 wickets

Wimbledon United			Gentlemen of West London				
Hasan	c Namilikonda	b Gulati	19	Basker	st J. Hitchman	b Hasan	37
*Saxby		b Gulati	21	Caveney		b Cripps	5
Phillip		b Kota	20	Kota	not out		59
Williams		b Santha	19	†Namilikonda	not out		26
Flannery	run out (Basker)		17	Dubey, Sudireddy, Gulati, Santha, Chatharaju, Gangapatnam			
Anand	c and	b Santha	3	and H. Patel dnb			
Patel	lbw	b Gulati	12				
Chaitanya		b Gangapatnam	0				
†J. Hitchman	not out		2				
Dean	not out		2				
Cripps	dnb						
Extras	b1 w5 nb7		13	Extras	b1 w4 nb1		6
Total	8 wickets	40 overs	128	Total	2 wickets	27.4 overs	133
FoW: 50, 51, 88, 102, 105, 118, 120, 124				FoW: 15, 83			
Bowling: Dubey 3-2-4-0, Chatharaju 5-0-26-0, Sudireddy 2-0-17-0, Kota 7-0-24-1, Gulati 7-1-18-3, H. Patel 5-0-22-0, Santha 8-2-13-2, Gangapatnam 3-1-3-1				Bowling: Cripps 5-0-20-1, Dean 8-1-42-0, Patel 5-2-10-0, Hasan 4-0-15-1, Saxby 3-0-29-0, Chaitanya 1.4-0-10-0, Williams 1-0-6-0			



Namilikonda (26*) and Kota (59*) see the job through

The Gents convincingly got their first win of 2018. They had excellent guest support, well harnessed by skipper Hemin Patel. The inserted Maroons were on top for the first 11 overs but once Gulati had the openers the Gents never relinquished their advantage, strolling to victory with eight wickets and more than 12 overs in hand, Kota taking his record in this rubber to 107 runs in two not out innings.

This was a triumph of team work, with eight bowlers used and the three who didn't getting a bat. The Maroons were without Herbert (a fifty in each of the three previous meetings) and David Hitchman, now teaching in Greece, but they lacked no talent in the batting. Hasan and Saxby were untroubled for 11 overs before respectively nicking the outswinger and being yorked by the inswinger, Saxby complimenting guilty man Vinitesh Gulati. The top order all got a start but none could go on to play the big innings. Young Kiwi Jonathan Williams looked likely to before being bowled by a full-toss after some beautiful off-side play. Accurate bowling on a lively, damp wicket played its part in the turnaround, as did some dynamic fielding but the catching was poor, though the lively Santha caught a shell of a return. There were two drops off the skipper and the players never heard the end of it. After 47 runs came in the first ten overs, the next 30 produced only 81 for 8 wickets. Basker's two friends from the eminent Telugu Daredevils T20 franchise, Prasad Santha and Hari Gangapatnam, were fast and accurate. At tea the Gents were hopeful and blessed the ability of the guests. It rarely works out so smoothly.

Andrew Cripps had damaged a few Gent egos with his 6 for 1 a year before and he bowled Caveney in the third over. Basker and Kota then added 68 in 20 overs before Basker, having been dropped twice, was neatly stumped for a solid 37. The Gents were now favourites, but keen students of the social game were mindful of the escapades of Judd Street Tigers a week before, collapsing from 87 for 3 to 94 all out in pursuit of Graces CC's 100. Namilikonda was in no mood to hang about, pulling his first three balls for 6, 4 and 4 en route to his highest Gents score. Fifties should follow if he is given a run up the order. Kota went to his eighth Gents fifty in just 27 games, hitting eight 4s and the winning 6. He returns to India with a healthy average of 42.59. The pair needed only 31 balls for their 50 stand.

Thanks are due to the guests, who played well and influenced the outcome considerably, and helpmate David Bender, who was falsely accused of fabricating association football scores, this being the sort of thing the young jackanapes would do.

Gentlemen of West London v. Putney

Sunday 20 May, Old Tenisonians. Toss agreed. Sunny, 21C

Won by 1 wicket

Putney			Gentlemen of West London				
A. Bendre		b H. Patel	19	Basker	c and	b Rea	16
Garg		b Shaikh	2	Caveney		b Seaman	1
Pange		b Dubey	12	Namilikonda	lbw	b Seaman	8
Deshmukh		b Dubey	1	†Ahmed	not out		41
Rea		b Dubey	9	Dubey	c Pange	b Rea	0
Seaman	c Namilikonda	b Krishna	10	Shaikh	c A. Bendre	b Rea	3
S. Bendre	not out		23	Kumar		b Seaman	3
Taylor	c Dubey	b Krishna	0	Krishna		b Deshmukh	4
Sugavanam	c Dubey	b Chatharaju	10	*S. Patel	c Pange	b Rea	5
Beedle	not out		0	H. Patel		b S. Bendre	4
*†Bone	dnb			Chatharaju	not out		4
Extras	lb1 w6 nb3		10	Extras	w6 nb2		8
Total	8 wickets	35 overs	96	Total	9 wickets	26.2 overs	97
FoW: 10, 35, 35, 44, 47, 67, 67, 93			FoW: 21, 29, 33, 33, 41, 49, 63, 74, 92				
Bowling: Krishna 7-1-17-2, Shaikh 5-1-13-1, Dubey 7-1-19-3, H. Patel 7-1-17-1, Kumar 6-0-18-0, Chatharaju 3-0-11-1			Bowling: Seaman 7-2-20-3, Sugavanam 3-0-20-0, Rea 7-0-19-4, Deshmukh 4-0-22-1, S. Bendre 3-0-10-1, Taylor 2.2-0-6-0				

The Gents welcomed the prestigious Putney CC (founded 1870) to a sunny Old Tenisonians, winning by one wicket amid unbearable tension. Aamir Ahmed with his best Gents innings batted 20 overs and steered the hosts home with gritty support from the tail after Seaman and the off-spinner Rea had caused havoc. Earlier disciplined bowling on a low, slow wicket had restricted Putney to 96 for 8.

Gents were reinforced by Vasi Shaikh from Wycombe House firsts, who bowled tidily, and Vamsee Krishna's daughter Greeshma, who had a busy day updating the scoreboard (overs and wickets only, runs being out of reach), serving mid-innings drinks and learning to bat. Putney batted by agreement and kindly supplied two fielders for a few overs until the late arrivals pitched up. Gents bowlers were accurate but again hindered by poor catching. Dubey starred with three wickets and took two catches including a sharp low one at silly mid-on off Chatharaju. The 14-year-old Soham Bendre batted soundly for 17 overs to top score. Only seven 4s were struck and Ahmed stopped everything.

Tea, a combo of vada pavs, sandwiches, fruit and Mr Kipling's, worked well and at 4.37pm play restarted with conditions unchanged as ball continued to dominate bat. Basker hit three 4s and survived the loss of Caveney and Namilikonda before drilling Rea's first ball for a return catch. Dubey holed out to deep mid-off next ball and it was 33 for 4. He could argue that his account was still in credit after the first innings. Shaikh edged a ripper to slip and when Kumar was bowled by Seaman's final ball Gents were 49 for 6 in only 13 overs, Ahmed 13 not out.

Ahmed moved chancelessly on but needed support. The tail comprised Krishna, Chatharaju and the venerable Patels, the captain being true to his word this season in giving people a go above him. Putney needed to bowl the hosts out, the required run rate at this point being only 2.18. Krishna ran well but was bowled in the seventeenth over. Ten balls later the captain, off the mark with a 4, reprised Dubey's dismissal mistiming a drive, 74 for 8.

Tension mounted and every run had to be fought for. Hemin Patel batted maturely for nearly eight overs while Ahmed moved remorselessly on. They added 18 before the vice-captain, having mentally blocked out the jocular encouragements from the fielders, had a swipe and lost his timbers, 92 for 9. Chatharaju survived a huge appeal for lbw first ball and second ball launched the shot of the day, an amazing drive over long on, for 4 to bring the scores level. By now Putney were very animated but could do nothing about the wide that gave Gents victory. Ahmed struck five of the 11 4s in the innings.

Such close finishes are rare. Of the Gents' 557 games 18 were decided by 1 wicket, four by 1 run and 6 were tied. The visitors had fought back hard but could not quite get over the line. Tiny things sway tight games; a declined single here, a harsh wide there. There was nothing to split the teams.

Northfields v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 27 May, Durston House. Gents won toss. Sunny, 26C

Won by 53 runs

Gentlemen of West London			Northfields				
M. Khan	c Iverson	b J. Singh	37	Iverson	lbw	b Krishna	7
H. Patel		b Derr. Redhead	35	†M. Singh	c Namilikonda	b Krishna	9
Namilikonda	c Garner	b Smith	48	J. Singh	lbw	b Krishna	49
†Ahmed	c M. Singh	b David Redhead	33	*David Redhead	c M. Khan	b Allamneni	15
Francis	not out		22	Derrick Redhead	not out		91
Basker	c M. Singh	b Dhuna	4	Devalia	st Ahmed	b H. Patel	6
Shaikh	c David Redhead	b Garner	55	Collins	c Ahmed	b B. Gola	15
Krishna	c J. Singh	b David Redhead	0	Dinekar	run out (S. Patel)		2
*S. Patel	c M. Singh	b Garner	0	Garner		b Namilikonda	2
B. Gola		b Garner	5	Smith	lbw	b Namilikonda	1
Allamneni	not out		0	Dhuna	c Krishna	b Namilikonda	0
Extras	b4 lb5 w11		20	Extras	b1 lb1 w5 nb2		9
Total	9 wickets	40 overs	259	Total	All out	39.5 overs	206
FoW: 40, 105, 160, 162, 171, 239, 245, 245, 259				FoW: 14, 23, 66, 96, 126, 169, 172, 196, 206, 206			
Bowling: Dhuna 8-1-49-1, Derr. Redhead 6-0-44-1, J. Singh 3-0-25-1, Devalia 3-0-31-0, David Redhead 8-2-30-2, Garner 8-1-41-3, Smith 5-0-30-1				Bowling: B. Gola 7-0-28-1, Krishna 8-1-32-3, Shaikh 8-1-26-0, Allamneni 8-0-52-1, S. Patel 3-0-22-0, H. Patel 4-0-36-1, Namilikonda 1.5-0-8-3			



Thrilling batting on a scorching, airless day saw a Gents win by 53 runs, their third in succession. At 97 for 1 off 10 overs the sky was the limit as to what they might score but the hosts, keen to prolong their three wins unbeaten May, fought back doggedly. In their turn they were restricted to 23 for 2 off 10 overs and 76 for 3 off 20 by tight new ball bowling before Derrick Redhead's booming artillery found its range. He could not quite close the cap.

The game was played in a fine spirit, captain David Redhead, a credit to his club, sending a very kind message to this effect after the game. The game was only declared on at 11 – the adjacent GlaxoSmithKline ground was deemed unfit for play, resulting in the sad sight of a crocodile of disconsolate cricketers dragging their bags back to Northfields tube.

With many members away, Ahmed and Basker came to the rescue. Egan pulled out of the host XI at midday but Basker had brought along a spare so Dinekar was loaned. There was early carnage as Mehfooz Khan attacked. Forty came off the first four overs, Khan losing two balls in back gardens before he was well held by long on. Hemin Patel and Namilikonda continued the attack, Patel taking the returning Derrick Redhead for 6, three 4s and 1 off successive balls just before his dismissal. The strong, fit Namilikonda blasted three 4s and a 6 off Jeevan Singh. He then pulled the leg-spinner Smith for his third 6 to move to 48, but was brilliantly caught mid-wicket diving to his right next ball.

Ahmed, Francis and Shaikh (a violent 55 off 29 balls with five 4s and a late barrage of four 6s, three off successive Devalia deliveries) scored heavily. Great credit must be given to Northfields for their second-half fightback. The bowling tightened up and my how the fielders responded. Sixteen-year-old Mandeep Singh took three catches behind the timbers, his best a low dive to snaffle Ahmed's leg-glance. The final score was par for the ground and included 11 6s. Gents have batted first every game here, following an aberrant 125 all out in 2012 with scores of 256, 260, 237, 257 and 259. Historians recall that the 2015 and 2016 totals of 260 and 237 saw Northfields' victories by 7 wickets.



Tea was solid home-made tucker with every single sandwich filling identifiable. This is not always the case. The niche Tunnock's Caramel Wafers featured and there was plenty of fruit, squash and tea. Both sustenance and shade in the refurbished pavilion were gratefully received. The ground, one of two playing fields used by the school, was spotless. The match fee charged by Northfields was very reasonable.

It had been a hugely entertaining innings with good cricket by both sides, much enjoyed by visiting supporters Jane Powell, Bridget Goodman, Dave Bender, Ken Toft and chatterbox Greeshma Krishna, whose batting skills advanced after a torrid net with Mr Toft at the end of which she claimed to have "never been out". She then wanted to know why the sky was blue and the grass green before, perhaps overtired, painting her face with blackcurrant squash and offering to apply similar make up to the Gents' scorer.

The weather forecast was discussed. Ealing had had an inch of rain overnight in the storms that would later ruin the Tigers v. Spartans game 20 miles north at Winchmore Hill. Bender is touring his greatest hits around the circuit. His set-opening crowdpleaser *BBC Weather* ("A Perivale protest song") denounced the competence and intellect of the state forecasters, who had promised thundery showers – an easy target perhaps but still a spellbinding performance from a curmudgeon at the top of his game.

Sanjay Patel had meanwhile gone a-musing with his vice-captain. He knows exactly what the Northfields batting can do and decided to set initially defensive fields. He kept a slip up for just ten overs: Putney had two plus a gully for half the Gents' innings. He had a long on and long off at both ends for the 40 overs and could claim vindication by the two important catches taken there.

Bharat Gola, Vamsee Krishna and Vasi Shaikh used all their experience and bowled to the fields set. Anything short would go so it was essential to pitch the ball up. Mandeep Singh holed out to Namilikonda patrolling the long on boundary in the fourth over. Krishna then trapped Iverson lbw in the tenth, the first of his three wickets and the first of three lbw appeals upheld by the hosts' very fair umpires. Jeetan Singh and skipper Redhead have scored heavily before in this rubber and upped the rate before Redhead hit a huge skyer to long off, Khan doing the needful. Northfields scored at 6.50 in the second 20 overs but excellently though Singh and Derrick Redhead batted it was too much to ask.

The bowlers kept their lines and the fielding was tight throughout. Redhead was beached on 91 with four 4s and six 6s and richly deserved a century to set alongside his brother's two years before. However, Namilikonda is not a bad seventh bowler to have and he was delighted with a late treble which deprived Redhead of his opportunity. A day of fun and frolics ended pleasantly as both sides mulled over events in Duffy's Bar in the company of several hundred jovial Irishmen watching Donegal and Derry knock lumps out of each other in the Ulster SFC Gaelic football (Derry 0-16 Donegal 2-16).

Durston House run gluts

27/5/12	Gents 125 (Hibbert 27, L. Fawkes 3-20, Russell 3-26) Northfields 129-6 (Shill 33)	Lost 4 wickets
25/5/14	Gents 256 (Small 93*, Newcombe 40, Caveney 24, Westwood 3-32)	Won 186 runs
	Northfields 70 (Cave 21, Bocha 4-10, Katragadda 4-13)	
24/5/15	Gents 260-7 (Kumar 79*, Basker 68, L. Fawkes 4-79) Northfields 261-3 (Elmes 165*, Murray 56)	Lost 7 wickets
22/5/16	Gents 237-9 (Charatla 61, Kumar 43, Caveney 30, Bocha 25, Derrick Redhead 3-27)	Lost 7 wickets
	Northfields 238-3 (David Redhead 112*, Knight-Williams 45, Thompson 30*)	
28/5/17	Gents 257-8 (Dubey 46, Kumar 34, S. Patel 31*, Pentakota 31, Small 28)	Won 112 runs
	Northfields 145-5 (Collins 42*, Iverson 28, David Redhead 24)	
27/5/18	Gents 259-9 (Shaikh 55, Namilikonda 48, M. Khan 37, H. Patel 35, Ahmed 33, Francis 22*, Garner 3-41) Northfields 206 (Derrick Redhead 91*, J. Singh 49, Namilikonda 3-8, Krishna 3-32)	Won 53 runs

Forthcoming fixtures

Sun 3 June Crown Taverners (Crown Taverners). Gents gave it a good go last year (Dino Francis 74).

Sun 10 June Hounslow Hurricanes (Old Tenisonians). Gents will we hope be better than 79 all out.

Sun 17 June Hale (Hale Common). Hale host Gents twice this year on their pretty ground.

Sat 23 June (Barnes Common). A few veterans are up for this, the club's thirtieth anniversary game.