

THE ARCHIVE

CLASSIC GENTS MATCHES

Sunderland SC v Gentlemen of West London

Saturday 31 July 1999, Town Park Enfield. Gents won toss. Sunny, 30C

Won by 4 runs

Gentlemen of West London			Sunderland SC				
McGirr	c Rough	b Trow	9	Nichol	c Ashton	b Snelling	10
Toft		b Bradshaw	1	Curry	run out (Burman)		61
Thornicroft		b Curry	27	*Stewart	c Ashton	b S. Patel	2
Wright		b Baker	10	Rough		b Wright	37
*†M. Ashton	lbw	b Coad	46	Sephton	c Ashton	b Wright	0
Dimond		b Coad	9	Trout		b Snelling	8
S. Patel		b Bradshaw	41	Coad		b S. Patel	14
Snelling	not out		16	Bradshaw		b Snelling	2
Sangaralingam	c Rough	b Coad	2	Trow	not out		5
Richmond	c Trow	b Stewart	4	†Longstaff	run out (Sangaralingam)		6
Burman	not out		0	Baker	not out		2
Extras		b7 lb2 w12 nb2	23	Extras	b15 lb2 w17 nb3		37
Total	9 wickets	40 overs	188	Total	9 wickets	40 overs	184

FoW: 12, 12, 58, 60, 90, 148, 176, 180, 186
Bowling: Bradshaw 8-3-26-2, Trow 8-5-21-1, Baker 8-0-39-1, Curry 3-0-18-1, Coad 8-1-43-3, Stewart 5-0-32-1

FoW: 13, 20, 86, 98, 124, 163, 165, 166, 183
Bowling: Snelling 8-1-35-3, S. Patel 8-2-21-2, Wright 8-1-27-2, Sangaralingam 4-1-26-0, Thornicroft 3-0-20-0, Dimond 4-0-21-0, McGirr 5-0-17-0

Sunday 1 August 1999, Victoria RG. Enterprise won toss. Sunny, 32C

Lost by 3 runs

Enterprise			Gentlemen of West London				
Freedman	c A. Culasy	b Rix	0	Buck	c Heap	b Dimond	9
Heap	c Snelling	b Rix	16	Richmond		b Harper	5
Parker		b Chawle	38	Todd		b Parker	19
Harper		b Chawle	25	Rix	c and	b Parker	9
†Price		b Chawle	0	Wright	run out		29
*K. Dimond	c A. Culasy	b F. Culasy	24	*Snelling		b Mahesh	28
Mahesh		b Chawle	5	Chawle		b Dimond	1
Evans		b Snelling	0	Burman	not out		0
Smith	not out		0	F. Culasy	not out		0
Kitchener		b Snelling	0	†A. Culasy and C. Jones	dnb		
Kelly		b Snelling	0				
Extras		b7 lb2 w18	27	Extras	b10 lb4 w15 nb3		32
Total	All out	26.5 overs	135	Total	7 wickets	35 overs	132

FoW: 3, 42, 82, 84, 104, 118, 132, 135, 135, 135
Bowling: Rix 5-0-29-2, Todd 4-0-37-0, C. Jones 4-0-21-0, Chawle 7-2-15-4, F. Culasy 5-0-25-1, Snelling 1.5-0-1-3

FoW: 17, 18, 37, 81, 128, 129, 131
Bowling: K. Dimond 6-1-26-2, Harper 7-1-12-2, Freedman 7-0-28-0, Heap 3-0-20-0, Parker 5-0-25-1, Mahesh 7-2-7-1

A double header is a game on both Saturday and Sunday. They were more common in the early years of the club, and 20 have been played in all, six on tour weekends, though there no domestic double header took place between August 2007 and the Gents' two final games of 2019. The original principle was to play a North London away game on the Saturday and a home game in Surbiton on the Sunday. They took some organising and many phone calls had to be mad. Only 10 members were available here but people rallied round and 18 players constituting two full sides played, Burman, Richmond, Snelling and Wright in both. Keith Dimond was on the winning side twice, swapping on the Sabbath from Gents to Enterprise, whom he captained.

Two excellent games took place on a scorching weekend. On the Saturday, Sunderland had needed 38 off 10 with five wickets in hand; on the Sunday Gents' ask was 41 off 10 with six in hand. Both chasing sides failed narrowly due to excellent death bowling.

The ferocious Bradshaw and the slower but no less incisive Trow helped restrict Gents to 69-4 off 20 on a lively pitch, though all batsmen spent time at the crease. The second phase of the innings was notable for a fluent 58 in 10 overs by Sanjay Patel and captain Ashton, his cover-drive shown in all its glory. His dismissal was amusing. Given out lbw by Dimond and in a mood of rapt concentration, he sprinted a leg bye before the umpire tapped him on the shoulder and explained that in such circumstances it was common practice to leave the field of play. Patel, who had bunked work to play, dominated the final overs and unleashed a magisterial six off Bradshaw that landed five yards over the long-on boundary.

Dougal Curry's innings was the bravest in many a moon. As the ball spat off a length or shot along the ground, he took blows to the thigh, chest, ankle and shoulder and deserved his fifty. Not every ball pitched; nine full tosses were bowled in the first 20 overs, each despatched efficiently for four. Sunderland were 85-2 off 18 but Wright soon settled down to bowl a challenging spell, having Rough and Sephton in quick succession.

Burman ran out Curry for 61 (including four glances off Thornicroft for four), picking up a shelled catch and diving in to break the stumps at the bowler's end. Snelling bowled Bradshaw, the lent McGirr found his line immediately and the Mackems' requirement of 38 off 10 had become condensed to 26 off five. These overs were bowled by McGirr (two), Snelling, Patel and Dimond. Each kept his nerve and though it was a close-run thing the Gents just held their hosts at bay.

Sunday saw seven changes, with six of the top seven batsmen absent. Bizarre incident piled upon bizarre incident. When the bejeaned Kelly, who had never played cricket before, saw Snelling (playing in shiny blue shorts due to heat rash) disturb his stumps, Buck mused whether any hat-trick had ever been greeted with more silence. He later advised his pal Colin Jones to "get changed as it won't go pear-shaped now." And Keith Dimond executed a direct hit over the trees and onto the sprinkler system in the gardens of the Balaclava Road flats, a unique occurrence. Buck won the race to retrieve the ball and have a nice cooling shower.

Meanwhile a rather exciting game of cricket was developing. Enterprise took advantage of slack new-ball bowling to reach 71-2 off 11 before Chawle got among them. The Culasy teenagers Aabid and Faisal – Dhruv Patel's paper boys – accounted for the violent Enterprise skipper (Aabid's sixth victim in his first two games) and it was all on for young and old. And for the statisticians, who wondered whether any side's wicket-keepers in two successive days had registered a greater age differential.

Only Todd, Wright (a stand of 44 between them) and Snelling got to grips with the Enterprise attack. Dimond essayed tactical acumen with his deployment and very cleverly kept back his best bowler, the off-spinner Mahesh. He conceded only one run off his first three overs, but while runs were coming steadily at the other end there seemed no need to panic.

The ask of 41 off 10 overs had become 10 off three, the batting side favourites one would think, but the loss of Snelling to Mahesh and a Dimond wicket-maiden in the penultimate over ramped up the pressure. Wright could not score off the first three balls of Mahesh's last over and was then run out going for a second. Only two byes came of the final two balls and Enterprise had the win, their first over their old rivals in 16 matches. Their ecstatic reaction was fully merited and the sides celebrated worthily. Snelling had captained with a light touch but make no mistake, the Gents did their best to win. Sometimes it doesn't happen. It was an exciting climax to a splendid weekend's cricket.

Five men had debuted over the weekend. Ken Toft, kindly introduced by Ian Colley, met Mark Ashton for the first time (their paths would not cross again for 19 years) would go on to play 136 more. The guard was changing. Ashton, Burman and Richmond would rarely play again, Thornicroft, dragging himself out of retirement for one last hurrah, never. The immediate future would be in the hands of Buck, Wright, Snelling, the Patels and, from 2003, Toft.