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# THE ARCHIVE

## CLASSIC GENTS MATCHES



A warm September Sunday began with a film interlude that did not end well. Nor did it start well. Over to Salix:



We then took a half hour out to accommodate the BBC who had come along to film us as a backdrop for the new Dave Gorman Show *Genius* (which is being transferred to BBC 2 in spring 2009). An excellent bunch all and it was all going swimmingly until we set up a field so they could film close ups of a few players whacking the ball. We were one player short at this game so I had press ganged my neighbour into coming. He was keen but hadn't played for a good few years. Anyhow, the inevitable happened and whilst he was crouching at silly mid on a super whack hit the end of his index finger and broke it in about nine places, so it was off to A & E and no game for him as he became the third Salix player to be injured before a game actually started.

Naveed Khan, hitting sixes to order for the camera, was the batsman who maimed Dr. Fletcher's neighbour. Mark Sciberras was apoplectic about the delayed start. It was therefore to their credit that both, one perhaps guilty and one angry, went on to have influential games. As a footnote, *Genius* was extremely unfunny and the clip was never aired. The legacy is that Mr. Gorman autographed the scorebook so there was that.

We apologise for the truncated scorecard. This was how they were recorded in match reports 2006-8, until such bollocks was put a stop to. Such truncations caused more work in the long run. A job worth doing is worth doing well.

The game itself was awarded classic status for two reasons: it was one of only six ties in the club's long history, and it was the beginning of a resurrection in fortunes after a poor run of only three wins in ten matches, culminating in a 53 all out in the Bob Ashton Memorial Cup decider seven days before.

The Gents would win at Hale seven days later and triumph in the first 13 games of 2009 before Crown Taverners had something to say, a record only broken in 2013-14 under the stewardship of Greg Newcombe and Horace Hibbert.

## Salix v. Gentlemen of West London

**Sunday 14 September 2008, GSK Sport Club. Gents won toss. Sunny, 19C**

### Tied

**Gents;** †Khan 10, Denton 2, Sciberras 11, Gilkes 7, Inkollu 35, \*S. Patel 2, Buck 4, Shanvare 3, Toft 2, Snelling 0 not out, H. Patel 3, Extras 9, **89 all out (29.5 overs)**

**FoW;** 11, 17, 32, 42, 45, 53, 59, 84, 85, 89

**Bowling;** Kulasingam 1-12, Lumsden 1-9, Singh 2-23, Ellis 2-15, Fletcher 1-14, Henig 2-13, Keaton 1-1

**Catches;** Ellis 1, Henig 1, Lumsden 1, Shaw 1, Singh 1

**Salix;** Henig 2, Keaton 23, Darling 0, †Shaw (1) 0, Lumsden 5, Singh 14, Gavigan 3, Kulasingam 14, Fletcher 4, Ellis 2, †Shaw (2) 0 not out, Extras 21, **89 all out (32.5 overs)**

**FoW;** 6, 8, 11, 37, 51, 57, 60, 80, 87, 89

**Bowling;** Snelling 5-7, Inkollu 0-17, H. Patel 1-16, S. Patel 1-17, Shanvare 1-9, Sciberras 1-20

**Catches;** Khan 2, S. Patel 2, H. Patel 1

### Rolling back the years

With the scores level after a day of tense, tight and attritional cricket, left-hander Christy Kulasingam top-edged a spitting, turning Hemin Patel off-break high in the sky. Wicketkeeper Naveed Khan took careful responsibility for the catch and thus we had the second tie of the season. Stuart Snelling, charging in as if it were 1995 and carding his first five-for since 2001, and Ravi Inkollu, with a mature 35, made the most notable individual contributions for The Gents, but this was a good team effort.

Though the batting could again fairly be criticised, the bowling and fielding aspects could not be faulted and the result was just. Salix's match reporter Tony Fletcher noted kindly: 'Thus the first tie in Salix history and I think it fair to say a perfect end to a fantastic game played in a wonderful spirit'.

Yet at tea Gents, with only one win here in four games, were downcast, having vowed to dispel the disappointment of New Beckenham. Nine of that side returned with heads held high and were on the ground early, ready, willing and, one believed, able to take advantage of a good toss in perfect conditions of sun and breeze. But the wise ones noted the long grass and damp wicket and murmured that 120 would be a good score.

The Gents struck only four boundaries (three fours and Inkollu's six) in a pretty disappointing innings that left more than six overs unused. Khan, Sciberras and Gilkes knuckled down and indeed all the batsmen got a start of sorts but the wicket was lively and Salix's attack good enough to exploit it. The highest stand of the day came when Ken Toft provided gritty support for Inkollu as 25 came for the eighth wicket. But from 84-7 the innings collapsed to 89, closing with a limp chip from Hemin Patel to mid-off. Salix used seven bowlers, all of whom had success.

By now The Gents had been joined by Earl Bender of Perivale, who provided astute analysis of proceedings and helped with the scoring. It was good to see him.

The Gents could scarcely have had a better start in Salix's innings. First Henig pushed Snelling into Sanjay Patel's mitts at silly mid-on before Darling was run out attempting a second by a smart throw from Hemin Patel to bowler Inkollu. The same batsman had survived an edge to slip in the previous over so the drop was not costly. Snelling then bowled Shaw and it was 11-3. Keaton and Lumsden went on quite serenely and when the former took 14 off the only over of Sanjay Patel's first spell, Salix needed 53 with seven wickets standing.

Shanvare then had Lumsden lbw and Snelling took three more wickets right after drinks. Keaton lofted to long-on H. Patel, a fine catch, off the first ball of his second spell, the assertive Singh (who had clubbed Patel for a six) was lbw and Gavigan caught at the wicket, leaving the great man with the astonishing analysis of 7-4-7-5. Veterans Kulasingam and Fletcher then edged Salix to within 10 runs of victory before the latter holed out off Sciberras to mid-on Sanjay Patel, who then bowled Ellis at 87, conceding only one run of each off his last three overs. As a Salix player had been injured during the film insert, the captains agreed that the lowest scorer could bat twice. Back came Shaw, who damaged Gent hopes in 2006 (52) and 2007 (28). Two more runs came before Hemin Patel and Khan combined to tie the match.

Salix wrote a generous report and would continue their success against the Gents for three more seasons before fortunes swapped. "After literally weeks of rain, our last game at Glaxo dawned as bright and fair as you could have hoped. Traditionally a match played against a backdrop of gloom and falling leaves, it was fair, sunny and even a touch warm. And what a day. We kicked off by belatedly presenting some of the prizes washed out on Captains day. Finally however the game got underway with the Gents opening. The extensive heavy weather meant that the outfield was long and wet and the pitch was certainly pinging a bit. This all added up to a struggle to get runs and at tea the Gents had only managed 89, of which 35 were down to Inkollu, with only three players getting into double figures. Salix bowled no fewer than seven, all of whom got a wicket. This was attritional cricket at its finest and a tribute to both teams that we slogged it out.

Tea was a fractionally nicer affair than normal, befitting perhaps the sunny weather and so it was Salix into chase. And thus the match developed into what I can only describe as one of the best games I have ever seen. With such a small total to defend the Gents set some very tight fields and needed to bowl every ball on the mark, which they pretty much did. And this is not an easy task. The Salix players found the same problems in getting the ball away and indeed finally managed only three into double figures. Highlights of the lads were the florid Rog showing some totally unexpected flair and skill and much Caribbean styling flicking off the pads and Kunwar, in his first competitive game for us, ditto. However after 17 overs we were 29 short and 8 wickets down. Then came a very protracted period as CK1 did the whacking and yours truly did the holding down one end as we chased the run rate of TWO AN OVER. Yes, it was that hard. Ten overs ensued and we got to within 6 runs of a win when my wicket fell to decent catch and then Elvis fell for a couple and it was down to Mr. Shaw (returning as lowest scorer) and CK1 to steer us through. As the Gents clustered round the bat the odd single came and we were tied. And on the final ball one popped up and was caught by the wickie.

Thus the first tie in Salix history (that I can remember anyhow) and I think it fair to say a perfect end to a fantastic game played in a wonderful spirit."

### **Tied matches**

West XI 147-9 Gents 147-7 (KGF Richmond 12.7.92)

Gents 160-7 London Rams 160-8 (Victoria RG 5.5.02)

Gents 167-5 New Barbarian Weasels 167-8 (Victoria RG 12.7.03)

West London Invitation XI 140-8 Gents 140 (Old Tenisonians 24.8.08)

Gents 89 Salix 89 (GSK Greenford 14.9.08)

Gents 231-9 Judd Street Tigers 231-10 (Old Tenisonians 14.7.13)

A tie is when the scores finish level and the chasing side is either dismissed or, in a limited overs game, the overs have run out.