

Crossbats v. Gentlemen of West London

Saturday 10 April, Marble Hill Park. Gents won toss. Cloudy, 8C

Won by 8 runs

Gentlemen of West London			Crossbats				
*Kumar		b A. Skinner	6	S. Skinner	c Kota	b Namilikonda	40
Krishna	c A. Skinner	b Humphrey	0	McAlpine	c R. Patel	b Pingili	9
Kota	c and	b Deoras	14	Ross	c and	b R. Patel	12
Namilikonda		b Humphrey	1	†Felton		b Krishna	18
R. Patel		b McAlpine	75	Carter	run out (Bocha)		22
†Sudireddy	c and	b Deoras	5	*Wright	c Kumar	b Namilikonda	18
Bocha	c and	b S. Skinner	49	Winch		b Pingili	38
Chatharaju	not out		35	A. Skinner	not out		9
Pingili	not out		12	Deoras	not out		4
Karnekanti and Puli	dnb			Humphrey and Boereboom	dnb		
Extras	w5		5	Extras	b3 lb2 w19		24
Total	7 wickets	35 overs	202	Total	7 wickets	35 overs	194
FoW: 2, 9, 14, 89, 97, 102, 173				FoW: 15, 43, 78, 109, 127, 172, 180			
Bowling: A. Skinner 7-3-6-1, Humphrey 7-2-31-2, Deoras 7-1-49-2,				Bowling: R. Patel 7-0-31-1, Pingili 7-1-44-2, Krishna 6-0-41-1,			
Carter 3-0-21-0, McAlpine 3-0-26-1, Felton 4-0-33-0,				Namilikonda 7-0-31-2, Kota 4-0-20-0, Karnekanti 4-0-22-0			
S. Skinner 4-0-36-1							

The Gents edged an exciting match after R. Patel, Pingili and Namilikonda, wisely held back by Kumar for a final blast, conceded only 29 in the last five overs when 37 were needed. Crossbats nearly did it and no Gent could have complained if they had. Earlier, blasts from R. Patel (75 off 38 balls with 14 fours and a six) and the returning Bocha (49 off 32 with seven fours) and Chatharaju (35 off 32 with two fours) had set a large if not insuperable total. That made it 1,532 runs for just 50 wickets in the four matches between the clubs, three of them played on the benign artificial strip of this pretty ground.

This was the earliest domestic game by three days and in sepulchral light worthy of November play started at 12.17. Krishna top-edged to square leg in the second over as A. Skinner and Humphrey dominated with the new ball. The first boundary did not arrive till the twelfth over at the end of which Gents had crawled to 22-3. Patel began with five dot balls. There would be only seven more in his 55 minute stay as boundaries flowed mainly down the ground and square on the off side. The rock Kota (14 off 52) gave him staunch support as the Gents built healthily. Controversy came when Namilikonda declined an appeal for a stumping of Patel. Video evidence filmed rather unconventionally by the umpire himself was inconclusive.

Crossbats bowled with guile but the middle order, chiefly Bocha and Chatharaju, continued the good work of Patel and Kota and the innings closed at five and twenty to three. Few overs would be bowled after this point in the First Class games going on in southern England. It was now very dark, so one could see, or not see, why. Tea and coffee, splendidly supplied by spectators H. and S. Patel, went down a treat.

The left-handed S. Skinner impressed from the word go as Crossbats piled on at five an over. The Gents had their successes, a neat slip catch by second slip Patel followed by the afternoon's fourth caught and bowled. Short mid-off Kota caught Skinner in the fifteenth over but at 18-overs drinks the hosts were 99-3, the required run rate 6.06. By his own admission, this was not Krishna's day but he produced a pearler to get rid of Felton before mid-on Bocha, who was having quite a day, ran out the veteran Carter who was attempting a tight second. But merry swiping from Wright and Winch brought Crossbats right back into it before Kumar clung on to one in the covers, captain catching captain.

Kumar had much to ponder and his decisions on the disposition of the bowlers were impressive. At 30 overs Crossbats had stood at 165-5 with twos aplenty being sprinted and the Gents powerless to stop them. But the fielding then tightened as 23 came from four overs. Thirteen were needed off the last, bowled by Namilikonda, but only six came and the Gents had the win. Puli neither batted nor bowled but otherwise involvement was shared around. Despite the horrid conditions it had been a cracking game and might have gone either way. After months of isolation and, it must be said, disappointing haircuts (or lack of) it was a pleasure to meet up again.