

Byfleet v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 25 April, Byfleet. Byfleet won toss. Sunny, 14C

Won by 4 wickets

Byfleet		Gentlemen of West London				
M. Hockin	retired out	50	*Dubey	b Marshall	12	
†J. Hill	c Sudireddy	12	Krishna	c and	b Jones	15
S. Hockin	lbw	29	Puli	c Clough	b Bowman	34
G. Hill	run out (Puli)	9	Karnekonti	c J. Hill	b Denham	8
Clough	retired out	51	†Sudireddy		b Deven	14
Oxborough	not out	8	S. Patel	not out		42
Marshall	c Dubey	2	Namilikonda		b Bowman	0
Jones	not out	9	Kota	not out		55
Denham, *Bowman and Deven	dnb		Kumar, Chatharaju and H. Patel	dnb		
Extras	b4 lb4 w3 nb3	14	Extras	w3 nb2	5	
Total	6 wickets	35 overs	Total	6 wickets	31.5 overs	185
FoW:	32, 87, 108, 134, 170, 172		FoW:	18, 39, 52, 83, 89, 89		
Bowling:	Namilikonda 5-0-22-1, Chatharaju 6-0-20-1, Puli 1-0-8-0, Kumar 4-0-16-0, S. Patel 4-0-25-0, H. Patel 7-1-32-1, Kota 6-1-34-0, Krishna 2-0-19-0		Bowling:	Marshall 6-2-26-1, Jones 6-2-17-1, Denham 4-0-22-1, Deven 7-0-43-1, Bowman 4.5-0-36-2, Oxborough 4-0-41-0		

At six o'clock Sanjay Patel lofted the slow left-arm spinner Deven high over long on to bring up a famous victory. Such an outcome had seemed unlikely at tea and more so 20.5 overs into the second innings when Namilikonda was bowled for a golden duck. Patel (five fours) and Kota (eight fours) then turned the match on its head with an unbeaten stand of 96 in exactly 11 overs.

Byfleet won a good toss on a bright but windy afternoon when it was far more comfortable keeping warm on the pitch than scoring or spectating. A vastly experienced line-up largely had things its own way in compiling 184-6 including two retired outs by M. Hockin and Clough. Chatharaju was the pick of the seamers and H. Patel and Kota, bowling in tandem, gave Dubey a measure of control until Clough's late blast spoiled their figures. From 87-1 in the 18th over the hosts went serenely on, never cutting loose but able to set a challenge that would beat the Gents five times out of six. There were a few dropped catches but the fielding on a dry, bumpy outfield held up well and the few visitors' successes were hard earned. Puli executed a fine run out from deep and Dubey took a well-judged catch at long off.

Dubey cut two fours in the first over of the reply before driving over Marshall's slower ball. Krishna and Puli got their heads down and ran well before Krishna was caught and bowled. Karnekanti looked good before top-edging a pull to the 'keeper. Puli, whose best innings for the club this was by a distance, and Sudireddy added 31 at exactly a run a ball but the quick demise of Sudireddy bowled, Puli caught by a corker of a one-handed catch by mid-wicket running round, and Namilikonda bowled jabbing forward next ball bequeathed a heap of trouble for the lower middle order.

Dubey, anticipating a game that might go the distance, had given much thought to his batting order, put his best batsman at eight and stuffed the tail with finishers. But Patel and Kota took control, hardly playing a false stroke. The pitch bore up well with true bounce and fours came regularly, allied to tremendous running. After four overs together, the required run rate was down to 6.0 from 6.9.

Byfleet kept at it but the batsmen were masterly, dispatching the loose ball to the boundary, chipping into spaces for leisurely singles and clipping ones and twos. The returning Marshall put a brake on the scoring but from the point of view of the hosts the damage had been done. They fought to the end and can be proud of their efforts under the leadership of Saturday IIIs captain Bowman (their batting and catching hero Clough captains their IIs).

Byfleet's experience was referred to above. Now we salute it. Till the end of 2020, Clough had played 200 games for the club, Daven 283, S. Hockin 316, Jones 426, M. Hockin 1,142 and Denham 1,390. S. Patel's 379 caps is a magnificent achievement but would only put him 23rd in the Byfleet roll. Their whole team were splendid ambassadors for the club and it was good to see the teams socialise after. They hosted well and the home and away gazebos were an innovative, welcome touch.



Above, batting heroes S. Patel, Kota (his 19th score of fifty or more) and Puli. There is a backstory behind SP's left-knee trouser stain. It is quite a thing for a 49 year-old to save three runs with a rolling and tumbling stop on the boundary. Expect such stains (young Puli's isn't bad either) to be a hot topic on the Gents Wives WhatsApp group when they do the weekly wash.