
THE ARCHIVE

PRESIDENT'S CUP 1992-2001

The Gents play only friendlies in the current era, but veterans such as Dhruv Patel, Sanjay Patel and Stuart Snelling can confirm that this was not always so. The Bob Ashton Memorial Cup is well documented, but the President's Cup, a Twenty20 competition held on the Sunday preceding the August Bank Holiday, was at its peak a brilliantly organised competition that is fondly remembered and saw much spectacular cricket, though the scores were lower than is the norm today. The phrase carnival of cricket might have been invented for it. The venues were King's College (1992-2000) and LSE (2001), both a short trot from Berrylands station.

This three-team (two-team in 2000 and 2001) competition saw New Barbarian Weasels, the Gents, FC Chad (featuring Tony Buck and Colin Naish) and Urban Associates (once) compete. It was the brainchild of Weasels' founder W. Flack and predated the first English professional T20 game by 11 years.

The Gents won it in 1992, 1996, 2000 and 2001, producing over the ten years performances that varied from highly competent to disgraceful. Here's what happened.

It all started with a phone call from Flack to Mark Ashton in August 1992 inviting the Gents to participate in the inaugural competition. Though some regulars were away for the Bank Holiday weekend Mr A impressed some Enterprise into service and Gents had eleven. The cup was won in rain and gales and won well, West XI guest Clyde Seale, who could do nothing wrong all year, thrashing 51 in the first game to complement John Townley's composed 39*, a club personal best. They put on 90 for the first wicket. Nobody really knew what a par score was but 124-2 proved too much for a Weasels side who would learn their lesson, so much so that they would record a hat-trick of victories from 1993-1995. FC Chad reduced the Gents to 9-3 off eight overs in the second game but then had to expose their support bowlers to the skill and experience of Nick Boddington and Mark Ashton.

On a warm day in 1993, FC Chad's 102 was overturned in under eleven overs with an assault by those two hard hitters Mike Hughes (50*) and Nick Hubbucks (30), but a brilliant 52* by Bill Flack in the final proved a hurdle too high for the Gents to jump, despite another whirlwind Mike Hughes fifty. Weasels' swing bowler Simon Lloyd took 3-9. The Weasels were rather pleased and cavorted long into the night.

In 1994 Urban Associates, replacing FC Chad, were easily beaten but Gary Lynch and Mick Smalldon added crucial late runs after the Weasels had slipped to 93-8, helping their side to a narrow but deserved retention of the cup despite a valiant 40 from Jim Wright.

A year later and spectators saw feats of scoring that though commonplace in the modern era were a rarity then. Gent batted FC Chad out of the first game, but the enigmatic South Londoners then gained a memorable win against the hosts. Mark Ashton was injured and limped home. Daniel Todd then lost an important toss, the rampant Weasels piling up 159-3 on their way to a hat-trick of wins. The Gents' away end kept up vociferous support but even guest Paul Christensen's 52*, with good support from Chris Folley (35*) was not enough. Simon Lloyd fell ill that year. Cancer was diagnosed and would take his life in the winter but he bravely turned up in his wheelchair to support and join in the sideshows. And what sideshows! Golf, tombola, raffle, BBQ – all were provided for the big crowds that flocked to Berrylands.

The 1996 President's Cup was won after two great team displays. Phil Hill rightly copped the Man of the Tournament award for his astonishing 6-8 against FC Chad and brutal 26 in the final against Weasels. These two games saw the Gents unrecognisable from the side which had suffered five losses in July and early August, with the fielding at least a class higher.

After an easy President's Cup win against a Chad side who had nearly pulled off a shock win against Weasels in the first game of 1997, Gents were put to the sword in the final. Bowlers, incapable of bowling to defensive fields, and panicking batsmen all underperformed and the hosts took full advantage, winning with a flourish. Had FC Chad won that first game then Gents would have retained the Cup which would have been a travesty.

From 72-9 in 1997 Gents rallied round and improved by four runs in 1998 after Dhruv Patel, who had done well as captain in a difficult season, horrifically ran himself out first ball in the final. To Weasels went the glory once more and the following year they had another hat-trick.

Thank heavens the Sky cameras were absent in 1999. After defeat to FC Chad in the first game, an exciting game won by an excellent fifty from Richard Cooper, well supported by Larry Flack, Gents capitulated against Weasels in the second. The match reporter referred to "a litany of bickering and defeatism" and "an atrocity exhibition". Letters to *The Gent* from Ian Richmond and Jim Wright carried the same message. Strong words, but half the team left during the final, instead of assisting with umpiring and scoring, while Andrew Burman came up with possibly his best rant ever (certainly his loudest) on a sorry day for Gents cricket. It was the final President's Cup in a three-team format and one the Gents did their best to sully, though Wright, Snelling, Dimond and Richmond flew the flag in a self-deprecating manner after the match. It was a day for students of oratory, who would have learned much about motivation from captain Ashton (after FC Chad): "I feel like going home now to be perfectly honest only the f***ing M25'll be bloody chocker."

The last two competitions were rather muted. In 2000 FC Chad folded before Gents, on a good run, beat Weasels twice. In the final competition in 2001 Weasels were beaten in the only game possible as a third side showed late, the retire at 50 rule being suspended for this year only with Courtney Perry taking full advantage.



New Barbarian Weasels. Ernie Tattersdill (back row second from right) was an exceptional all-rounder, and in 1997 became the first opponent to score a 50 and take four wickets in one game.

Bill Flack, resplendent in bow tie and waistcoat (back row third from left) was the first captain and a fine cricketer and innovator. He would later play four times for the Gents, taking nine wickets with his off-breaks. To his left in the black blazer is Simon Lloyd.

From row far left is Ulsterman and glovesman Jim Patrick, two away from gentle giant Jeremy Best, who scored 103 against the Gents in 1991 and hit the ball as hard as any player can have done.

Weasels continue to this day, though they play few matches. Those great gentlemen Bill Flack, Simon Lloyd and Ernie Tattersdill have since died.

30/8/92	Gents 124-2 (Seale 51*, Townley 39*)	New Barbarian Weasels 95-5 (W. Flack 38*, Kirkwood 31, Dolan 3-11)	Won 29 runs
30/8/92	Gents 114-7 (Boddington 32, M. Ashton 29)	FC Chad 86-9 (Naish 24*, Dolan 3-11)	Won 28 runs
29/8/93	FC Chad 102-8 (B. Russell 27*, Davis 21)	Gents 103-2 (Hughes 50*, Hubbucks 30)	Won 8 wickets
29/8/93	New Barbarian Weasels 130-8 (W. Flack 52*)	Gents 112 (Hughes 52, M. Ashton 23, Lloyd 3-9)	Lost 18 runs
28/8/94	Gents 140-4 (Hughes 43, D. Patel 29*, J. Wright 23*, Bush 3-33)	Urban Associates 126-4 (Glover 51*)	Won 14 runs
28/8/94	NB Weasels 115-9 (Tattersdill 31, Raderecht 27, High 3-19)	Gents 111 (J. Wright 40, M. Ashton 26)	Lost 4 runs
27/8/95	Gents 151-8 (M. Ashton 34, Christensen 27)	FC Chad 81-7 (Sergeant 33*, Snelling 3-7)	Won 70 runs
27/8/95	NB Weasels 159-3 (Groves-Loader 50*, Tattersdill 37, Best 31)	Gents 138-7 (Christensen 52*, Folley 35*, Kirkwood 3-21, Sier 3-31)	Lost 21 runs
25/8/96	FC Chad 48 (Hill 6-8, C. Mitchell 3-4)	Gents 49-7 (Piper 4-10)	Won 3 wickets
25/8/96	New Barbarian Weasels 99-9 (Tattersdill 33, Raderecht 23)	Gents 100-5 (Hill 26, J. Wright 20)	Won 5 wickets
24/8/97	FC Chad 51 (D. Patel 3-9, J. Wright 3-9, S. Patel 3-22)	Gents 52-2 (C. Mitchell 27*)	Won 8 wickets
24/8/97	New Barbarian Weasels 143-4 (Tattersdill 51*, Smalldon 50*)	Gents 72-9 (Tattersdill 4-12)	Lost 71 runs
30/8/98	Gents 146-7 (S. Patel 46, Naik 20, Collings 3-20)	FC Chad 120-5 (Collings 36*, C. Russell 22)	Won 26 runs
30/8/98	Gents 76 (Laiq 20, Snelling 20, Owen 3-13)	New Barbarian Weasels 79-2 (Tattersdill 20*)	Lost 8 wickets
29/8/99	FC Chad 127-5 (Cooper 52*, L. Flack 27)	Gents 122-9 (Boddington 44, M. Ashton 26, B. Russell 3-19)	Lost 5 runs
29/8/99	Gents 87 (Burville 27, W. Flack 3-6, Owen 3-13)	New Barbarian Weasels 89-2 (W. Flack 53*)	Lost 8 wickets
27/8/00	Gents 174-6 (J. Wright 50*, D. Patel 24, S. Patel 22)	NB Weasels 107-4 (Woodhead 52*, Tattersdill 35)	Won 67 runs
27/8/00	New Barbarian Weasels 67-7 (Tattersdill 46*, J. Wright 3-13)	Gents 68-4 (J. Wright 22)	Won 6 wickets
26/8/01	New Barbarian Weasels 130 (Perry 76, Buck 4-26)	Gents 131-2 (Irvin 41*, J. Wright 28)	Won 8 wickets

