

Northfields v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 22 May, Durston House. Toss agreed. Sunny, 23C

Lost by 4 wickets

Gentlemen of West London			Northfields				
†Sudireddy		b David-Joseph	25	†David-Joseph	c Sudireddy	b Dubey	14
Kumar	c Derr. Redhead	b Abz	10	Derrick Redhead	c Kota	b Chatharaju	37
Kota	c and	b Afridi	9	Akshit		b Chatharaju	8
Dubey	c David Redhead	b Afridi	13	*David Redhead	not out		84
Krishna	lbw	b Abz	31	Haider	c Gulati	b Chatharaju	4
Puli	c Malhotra	b David Redhead	0	†Darren Redhead	c Dubey	b Kumar	9
Chatharaju		b Akhtar	0	Malhotra		b H. Patel	12
S. Patel	c Darr. Redhead	b Akhtar	10	Akhtar	not out		14
Gulati	c Malhotra	b David Redhead	60	Abz, Afridi and Kent	dnb		
Namilikonda	c Haider	b Akhtar	5				
H. Patel	not out		4				
Extras	w11 b6 lb5		22	Extras	w7 nb1 b3		11
Total	All out	39.2 overs	189	Total	6 wickets	38.4 overs	193
FoW: 21, 44, 46, 63, 67, 69, 89, 107, 165, 189				FoW: 39, 50, 70, 87, 110, 142			
Bowling: Abz 8-1-38-2, Kent 8-2-45-0, David-Joseph 3-0-8-1, Afridi 7-2-25-2, David Redhead 2.2-1-6-2, Akhtar 6-0-27-3, Malhotra 5-0-29-0				Bowling: Gulati 8-0-41-0, Krishna 8-1-20-0, Dubey 6-0-24-1, Chatharaju 8-0-40-3, S. Patel 2-0-18-0, Kumar 2-0-14-1, H. Patel 4.4-0-33-1			

A well-judged 84* by skipper David Redhead saw Northfields to a narrow but deserved success, their first in five games in this rubber. Earlier a blistering 60 by Gulati and a brave 31 by Krishna, who had retired hurt with a head injury, had lifted Gents to a par score that they were just unable to defend. This was a fiercely-fought clash with no issues between the teams, and plenty of hard but fair cricket. Srinivas Namilikonda returned to make an unplanned appearance.

The toss was agreed and we immediately had the first of the day's many talking points when Sudireddy drove the day's first two balls for six and four. Nor was Kumar going to die wondering, and he also took Abz for four and six before edging behind. Despite this brisk start the middle overs of the innings belonged to Northfields as wickets tumbled. Kota wafted at a bouncer two feet over his head and gave a return catch: a wide had he played no shot. Dubey was well caught at slip off a quick away-swing, Puli and Chatharaju scored ducks and S. Patel chipped to mid-wicket.

Krishna had had little of the strike but had moved quietly to 16* when he top-edged a pull into his face, a nasty bruise the result. Namilikonda fell (107-8) and the injured man strode out again to partner Gulati in a first-rate stand of 58 in 11 overs, the Gents' best spell of the day. Gulati (nine fours and a six) and Krishna were largely untroubled and even after Krishna's departure captain H. Patel ceded the strike, Gulati got his 50 and it was 189 all out, a sound recovery with 100 coming up for the final three wickets.

A word on the Northfields fanbase. They gave terrific, voluble support, inspired by a spectacular range of narcotics that would have left West XI c. 2002 green with envy. But they were a harmless bunch, and the Gents' scorer soon trained them to do the scoreboard to an acceptable standard. A word also on the talented, clean-living Redhead family; three brothers and their younger cousin David-Joseph played, all to some effect. Better sports one could not meet.

Though they had their moments, it didn't quite happen for Gents in the second innings. David Redhead survived an early drop and would go to smite 12 fours and two sixes. He received good support. David-Joseph fell caught of a lifter from the ridge in the 13th overs, the first of three for Chatharaju (into double-digit wickets already) who bowled Akshit, had the solid Derrick Redhead caught by long-off running round and Haider well caught by a diving long-on. Kumar and H. Patel struck in their first and second overs but the captain was imperious, losing a ball in a Windmill Road garden and hitting boundaries all over the compact ground. Krishna and Dubey were the pick of the bowlers.

So, Gents stand at 3-3. The last losing season was 2010 but 2022's oppo are resolute and extremely keen to bring Hemin Patel's boys down a peg or two. This is healthy and an interesting season looms.