
THE GENT

No.177

July 2023

Tea at Redbourn Common

Sun shines on Gents after early defeats



Crossbats (lost by 4 wickets)
Merton Hawks (lost by 57 runs)
London Itinerants (lost by 4 runs)
John Buckner XI (won by 5 wickets)
Northfields (won by 38 runs)
Redbourn (won 5 wickets)
Putney (won by 5 wickets)
Teddington Town (abandoned)

Averages

SP's 7,000 runs

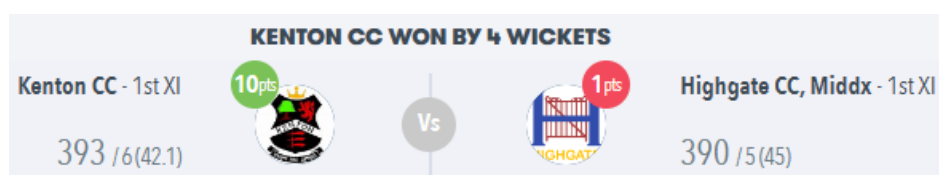
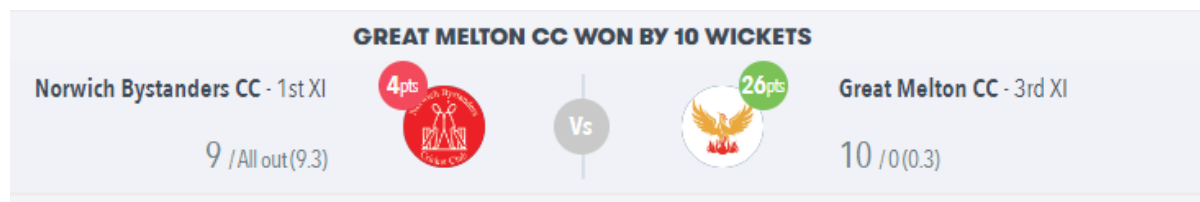
Nuts in May – Norwich Bystanders all out for 9 while Kenton fail to defend 390



It might be a damp wicket...

...but get your head down, bat time, you'll be fine. Poor Norwich Bystanders never got going in their Norfolk Cricket League Div.1 East clash on 6 May and were dismissed for nine. Hats off to 'keeper Terry Chambers who scored all the runs including two fours. Shiv Shani took 5-5-0-7. Matter arising; how did they garner four points?

In contrast on 20 May Highgate must have been confident at tea but no, Kenton were always in control and had 17 balls and four wickets in hand at the end.



7,000 and counting

Great is an overused adjective but if anybody can think of a better one to describe Sanjay Patel, we would be interested to hear it. He passed 7,000 runs against London Itinerants and we salute him. It was his 424th game. In that time, he has scored 30 fifties and one ton. He also has 441 wickets, 125 catches and a stumping. Those privileged to watch him bat against Putney confirm that he has lost none of his vigour.

Mark Ashton, Upender Sanga and now Pavan Kota have scored a ton and taken four wickets in the same match. In scoring his 126*, Mr Kota passed 4,000 runs in his 115th match, and 109th innings.

10/5/92: **Gents 246-3** (M. Ashton 137*, Hubbucks 67), **Enterprise 223-7** (High 66, Hughes 60, Edye 34, M. Ashton 4-34)
27/8/17: **Gents 200-5 dec.** (Sanga 100*, A. Ahmed 50*, Chalamalasetti 26), **Bricklayer's Arms 181-5** (Poulter 100*, Tremain 31, Sanga 4-28)
4/6/23: **Putney 212** (Lloyd 56, Wishart 47, Punton 46*, Sorger 21, Kota 4-31), **Gents 213-5** (Kota 126*, S. Patel 28*, Chatharaju 20)

Never forget your anti-histamines

Southgate and Osterley produced a weird finish in the MCCL Div.1 game on 11 June. Both sides knew that a win was needed to kickstart their respective seasons. Southgate skipper Phil Dunnnett decked with 296 on the board off 51. As the overs ticked away it became clear that holding on for a losing draw was going to be the best that Osterley could hope for. Indeed, as the game entered the last over of the day that looked odds on at 243-7. Jack Upton bowled it and with three balls left Southgate still needed three wickets to win. Unlikely? You'd have thought so.

However, it was at that point that Upton trapped Sharma leg before. He then repeated the trick to remove number ten Anmoldeep Singh first ball. One ball left, one wicket needed. It then transpired that number 11 Habib Ullah was no longer at the ground; hay fever issues had caused the opening bowler to depart the scene. The umpires waited around, just to make sure, but once the timed out point had passed, it was indeed game over. Southgate had scrambled 12 points in a most left-field manner.

An intriguing scenario nonetheless presents itself. What would have happened had Upton taken the 8th and 9th wickets off the 5th and final balls of the over? Osterley could quite plausibly have claimed that it didn't matter where their Habib Ullah was, there were no balls left and therefore didn't need to bat. He could have been on the moon, it wouldn't have mattered. But, of course, Southgate could quite plausibly have counter-claimed that there were only 10 batters there to bat and they got nine out. That's what they needed to do and they therefore won.

Crossbats v. Gentlemen of West London

Saturday 8 April, Marble Hill Park. Gents won toss. Sunny, 15C

Lost by 4 wickets

Gentlemen of West London				Crossbats			
Parvathaneni	lbw	b Lawrence	9	S. Skinner		b Dhatric	40
Puli		b Lawrence	3	Rearden		b Chatharaju	5
Nagpal		b Lawrence	0	Iyengar		b Chatharaju	0
Francis	retired hurt		2	†McAlpine		b Chatharaju	4
S. Patel	run out (Humphrey)		0	Ross	c Sudireddy	b Nagpal	0
J. Patel	c A. Skinner	b Lawrence	1	*A. Skinner	not out		29
*†Sudireddy	c Panesar	b A. Skinner	36	Srikanth	lbw	b Dhatric	0
Krishna		b A. Skinner	10	Panesar	not out		3
Chatharaju	lbw	b A. Skinner	0	Humphrey, Lawrence and Gumbley dnb			
R. Patel	c Reardon	b Humphrey	0				
H. Patel		b Gumbley	11				
Dhatric	not out		12				
Extras	w4 nb1 lb1		6	Extras	w3 nb3 b4		10
Total	All out	31.4 overs	90	Total	6 wickets	27 overs	91
FoW: 3, 3, 15, 15, 24, 63, 63, 63, 64, 90				FoW: 16, 16, 23, 33, 87, 87			
Bowling: Lawrence 5-2-14-4, Gumbley 5.4-1-13-1, Panesar 4-0-19-0, Srikanth 4-1-10-0, Humphrey 6-0-23-1, A. Skinner 7-3-10-3				Bowling: R. Patel 4-0-11-0, Chatharaju 6-0-20-3, Dhatric 7-3-14-2, Nagpal 6-0-18-1, H. Patel 3-0-18-0, Parvathaneni 1-0-6-0			

The hosts' deep batting overcame fine seam bowling to earn a win in the Gents' earliest domestic fixture. This was a sobering day for new captain Sudireddy (on his hundredth appearance) and his men. Two sound partnerships were all the batsmen had to show and once the Skinners were batting together a total of 90 was proved to be inadequate. To record a lower Gents' score batting first, you'd have to go back to April 2018, 79 all out against Hounslow Hurricanes, with H. Patel and Basker batting up top and Theresa May at 10 Downing Street.

Though the visitors suffered some misfortune in their dig (Nagpal slipping on the greasy surface as he tried to defend the yorker and Francis retiring hurt with a back injury) other wounds were self-inflicted, S. Patel paying the price for his partner's bad call, while Chatharaju's lbw looked high. But this must not detract from good work by an experienced Crossbats attack with no apparent weaknesses.

On a cold but bright day, Gents had first use of the wicket but soon slumped to 24-5, four to Lawrence. Sudireddy, leading from the front in his usual busy way, batted well and turned things round, driving the only two fours of the innings, receiving stout support from Krishna in a stand of 39. Four wickets then fell in the blink of an eye and it was 64-9. Captain Skinner, upon Francis's retiring hurt, had allowed Dhatri to bowl and field and at this point, to bat. This was a noble gesture outside the Laws. Dhatri seized his chance, adding a watchful 26 for the tenth wicket with H. Patel before the innings closed with 20 balls unbowled.

The Gents' reply was bang on. Chatharaju's fearsome inswing earned him three early wickets, R. Patel beat the bat several times and the double change to Dhatri and Nagpal gave the captain continued control. When Nagpal induced an edge behind it was 33-4, the sides at parity. The problem was the left-hander S. Skinner who rose above the mayhem. He was joined by his brother and their stand of 54 won the game. They saw off Dhatri and Nagpal and scored quite freely off H. Patel and Parvathaneni.

It was looking like a six-wicket win but the returning Dhatri had other ideas, yorking S. Skinner and pinning Srikanth for a golden. But the breakthroughs came too late and the match was soon over. Dhatri is not the first Gent elevated from twelfth man into a position of influence. Some may remember Praveen Bocha's debut at Crown Taverners in 2012. Down at 12, Tavs' skipper let him play and he scored a worthy 30.

History records seven Gents games here, two against East Harrow Cheetahs in 1988 and 1989, and five since 2019 against Crossbats. Only once did Gents bowl a side out while seven is the maximum number of Crossbats wickets to fall. But despite the heartache suffered by the bowlers Marble Hill Park remains a pleasant if quirky venue it is always a pleasure to visit.

Gentlemen of West London v. Merton Hawks

Sunday 30 April, Haydons Road RG. Gents won toss. Sunny, 18C

Lost by 57 runs

Merton Hawks				Gentlemen of West London			
Imran		b H. Patel	50	H. Patel		b Khan	0
Jordan		b R. Patel	18	Garige	lbw	b Khan	18
Bawa		b H. Patel	13	A. Ahmed	c Meredith	b Jain	23
Meredith	not out		28	*†Sudireddy	lbw	b Khan	0
Counihan	c Sudireddy	b H. Patel	3	Puli	c Romalojoseph	b Jain	5
†Tiklani	c Sudireddy	b H. Patel	5	Chatharaju		b Romalojoseph	9
Khan	c Puli	b H. Patel	2	S. Patel		b Floyd	5
*Romalojoseph		b S. Patel	1	J. Patel	st Tiklani	b Floyd	0
Turner	run out (Puli)		0	Nagpal	c Jordan	b Romalojoseph	4
Jain	c and	b R. Patel	2	Dubey		b Romalojoseph	0
Floyd	c Sudireddy	c Puli	2	R. Patel	not out		3
Extras	w2 b3		5	Extras	w3 nb2		5
Total	All out	33.1 overs	129	Total	All out	21.5 overs	72
FoW: 57, 81, 92, 102, 112, 114, 117, 122, 126, 129				FoW: 0, 27, 27, 45, 58, 64, 65, 66, 67, 72			
Bowling: Chatharaju 3-1-11-0, Nagpal 4-0-10-0 Garige 4-0-10-0,				Bowling: Khan 7-4-20-3, Turner 4-0-21-0, Jain 4-0-11-2,			
Dubey 4-0-27-0, J. Patel 6-0-17-2, H. Patel 7-1-25-5, S. Patel 4-0-22-1,				Floyd 4-0-14-2, Romalojoseph 2.5-0-6-3			
Puli 1.1-0-4-1							

The Patels, led by wily Hemin's brilliant 5-25, shared eight wickets in Hawks' par score, but the batsmen were shot out for the lowest total since the comedy 53 all out against Wimbledon United in 2017, an innings that lasted a mere 14.4 overs. The wettest March since 1981 had caused dozens of cancellations in April so such a low-scoring match was no surprise but some of the Gents' decision-making sadly was. In the words of one player 'the basics were compromised'.

The visitors' highly-competent opening stand of 57 was exactly their margin of victory. The pitch was not quite the terror track implied by the scorecard, but it was damp and spongy with a few balls creeping and several lifting alarmingly. A disappointing result then against good oppo who were keen to book home and away in 2024. Support from Messrs. Francis, Joshi and Teja was greatly appreciated.

Sudireddy chose to bowl on a mild, breezy day. Imran and Jordan, watchful at first, batted 14.3 overs before Raj Patel induced Jordan to play on. Imran reached his fifty off 57 balls before also playing on, the first of Hemin's five. He hit three fours and two enormous straight sixes off Dubey. Though Meredith held firm Gents then showed what they are capable of with their best spell of the day. Hemin struck once his third, fourth and fifth overs, and twice in his sixth. It was the off-spinner's seventh such haul.

The fielding, initially nervous and error-strewn, bucked up with the 'keeper pouching three. R. Patel took a sharp caught and bowled in his second spell, Puli threw in for a simple run out and with wickets for S. Patel and Puli eleven balls were unbowed when the innings closed.

Khan, bowling brisk medium off three paces, castled H. Patel for a golden but Raja Garige on debut pulled him for two sixes in his second over. Ahmed was solid and hopes were high. But Khan pinned Garige and the captain within three ball and mayhem was upon us. Ahmed was looking sound but he soon holed out, a well-judged catch at long on. This was 45-4 and the end was nigh. As the hosts had done, Hawks began to catch everything. Their interesting array of bowlers (Romalojoseph was the fifth and he was quick) used the pitch perfectly. Puli looked competent but after his dismissal runs dried up and with dreadful familiarity it was soon over. One batsman was bowled off a double bouncer (not a No ball under Law 21) and one stumped after he had gone gardening.

The Gents face some challenges: cricket has ceased at Old Tenisonians so it's back to council grounds with all that entails; the weather has been grim with successive fixtures flooded out; a senior player is already out injured, possibly for the season; and one prolific batsman is no longer involved. But exciting new players in Dhatri and Nagpal have signed, Kota will return and there are some mouth-watering fixtures coming up. Plenty for Sudireddy and Chatharaju to manage then but spirits are high and it is not yet time to shine the Bat-Light.

Gentlemen of West London v. London Itinerants

Sunday 7 May, Dundonald RG. London Itinerants won toss. Sunny, 20C

Lost by 4 runs

London Itinerants				Gentlemen of West London			
Tyagi	c and	b Chatharaju	10	Dubey	lbw	b Daga	5
Khembra		b Kulasingam	26	Krishna	run out (Varma)		8
†Varma	c Krishna	b Dubey	10	Kota	lbw	b Tyagi	26
*†Kundu	st Sudireddy	b H. Patel	24	Kulasingam		b Vishwanath	14
Raitani		b H. Patel	4	*†Sudireddy		b Tyagi	8
Nagesh	c Gulati	b Dutta	18	Gulati	not out		43
Sinha	c Chatharaju	b H. Patel	0	S. Patel	c Khembra	b Fisher	6
Vishwanath	c Sudireddy	b H. Patel	8	Dhatric	c Nagesh	b Fisher	7
Daga	not out		25	Chatharaju	c Daga	b Fisher	2
Korwar	run out (Dubey)		7	H. Patel		b Fisher	5
Fisher	dnb			Dutta		b Korwar	0
Extras	w6 nb1 lb1		8	Extras	w7 nb4 b1		12
Total	9 wickets	35 overs	140	Total	All out	31 overs	136
FoW: 11, 35, 74, 76, 84, 86, 103, 122, 140				FoW: 7, 21, 52, 58, 64, 72, 86, 111, 135, 136			
Bowling: Dhatric 4-1-18-0, Chatharaju 6-1-24-1, Gulati 5-0-16-0, Dubey 3-0-14-1, Kulasingam 7-1-16-1, H. Patel 7-0-34-4, Dutta 3-0-17-1				Bowling: Korwar 7-1-18-1, Daga 5-1-25-1, Tyagi 5-0-20-2, Vishwanath 5-0-25-1, Fisher 7-1-25-4, Kundu 2-0-22-0			

Unlike every match in the Middlesex County Cricket League the day before, a brief window of dry weather allowed this game to go ahead and what a cracker it was. Though the result was disappointing, Gents did plenty right and made new friends in London Itinerants, a young, talented side who deputised for Putney who cancelled on the Wednesday. They were a slick act who broadcast the match on FrogBox, albeit recording the Gents as Lions CC Indoor XI, but by their captain's admission were not a typical Itinerants side as they had to field a number of guests (this was a double-header weekend for them, Saturday's outing was cancelled, and some regulars could not swap).

The placid wicket prepared by idverde, LB Merton's parks subcontractor, was a considerable improvement on the vicious track that so horrified Gents and St Anne's Allstars in 2016, the last time Gents had played here. Five of that side returned seven years on: the captain and vice-captain, Kota, Krishna (who took 6-4-8-3 that day but did not bowl this) and H. Patel. Young American Zac Bowden was the 'keeper!

Itinerants had first use of it, the seamers were licking their lips, but with bright sunshine and a drying ground it was more of a day for the off-spinners, H. Patel and Fisher each claiming four wickets. In civilian life Fisher is a history teacher and he confirmed that the syllabus has changed since your match reporter's day: though the Tudors correctly retain their place in the batting order, the poor Stuarts, an underrated dynasty, have been replaced by the high-spirited knockabout fun of the Chinese revolution.

With bowlers dominant throughout neither side was able to bat batted consistently. There were no weak links in the Gents' attack and after Khembra fell bowled Kulasingam wickets fell regularly. H. Patel sniffed blood and assisted by neat catching and a quite brilliant stumping by Sudireddy Gents were on fire. But Daga smote mightily, driving the only six of the innings, and Itinerants closed on a competitive 140.

Dubey fell early and Krishna was run but Kota celebrated his return to the colours with four regal boundaries before being adjudged lbw. The following batsmen got a start but could not consolidate and tended to bat rather frantically, the exceptions being Kulasingam with 14 off 31 and Gulati who faced only 38 balls for his 43* but was in control throughout, hitting five fours and the only six of the innings to set alongside Daga's. It was a treat to watch but nobody could stay with him quite long enough. H. Patel looked the likeliest to as 24 came up for the ninth wicket but after he went the end came quickly.

Defeat by such a narrow margin always hurts but the game was a credit to the sport and each gave of his best. The new opponents this season are stronger than ever, deliberate policy by the fixture secretary, and victories will have to be earned.

Gentlemen of West London v. John Buckner XI

Sunday 14 May, Joseph Hood RG. Gents won toss. Sunny, 20C

Won by 5 wickets

John Buckner XI				Gentlemen of West London			
Clarke		b Gulati	6	H. Patel	c Lovell	b Herbert	5
Robertson	c Gulati	b Krishna	26	Dubey	c Lovell	b A. Haynes	24
Brown		b Gulati	0	Kota	c A. Haynes	b Robertson	16
†Davies	c Gulati	b H. Patel	6	Gulati	not out		29
Lovell		b S. Patel	5	Chatharaju	c Lovell	b A. Haynes	0
J. Haynes		b S. Patel	8	Krishna	lbw	b A. Haynes	2
Herbert	lbw	b H. Patel	4	S. Patel	not out		0
A. Haynes		b Nagpal	19	Puli, R. Patel, *†Sudireddy and Nagpal dnb			
*Thompson		b Krishna	2				
Howard		b Krishna	0				
Brown	not out		5				
Extras	b1 lb2		3	Extras	w5 nb3 b1		9
Total	All out	31.5 overs	84	Total	5 wickets	30.3 overs	85
FoW: 17, 17, 26, 35, 47, 58, 58, 60, 60, 84				FoW: 13, 50, 54, 62, 75			
Bowling: R. Patel 4-0-10-0, Gulati 6-1-14-2, H. Patel 7-0-18-2, S. Patel 4-0-13-2, Krishna 5-1-11-3, Kota 4-1-11-0, Nagpal 1.5-1-4-1				Bowling: Herbert 5-1-8-2, Howard 3-0-8-0, Lovell 5-2-13-0, Robertson 7-0-26-1, A. Haynes 7-3-14-3, Brown 2-0-9-0, Thompson 1.3-0-6-0			

After impressive new opposition John Buckner XI had made a painstaking 84 on a slow, spongy wicket, determined batting saw Gents to their first win of 2023, the resolute Dubey facing 60 balls for his 24 before Gulati won the day. Another 30 runs for the visitors might have swung it their way but they can still be proud of their performance and this fixture will be much looked forward to in 2024. There was little between the teams.

Joseph Hood RG was a new venue for the Gents and a pleasant one. Its facilities were tidy enough, but heavy rain in the week had bequeathed a grassy, muddy outfield on a ground that was the largest any player could recall. Boundaries would therefore be scarce. Indeed, JB did not hit one (not through want of trying), but made up for this with excellent running between the wickets which kept the score ticking over. Biggest contributors were Robertson, who batted 21 overs, and A. Haynes, whose first three scoring shots were threes.

Gents had a useful attack and made steady inroads into the batting. Seven were bowled most the result of frustration though Krishna produced two beautiful inswingers to do for Thompson and Howard. H. Patel went into double-figure wickets in only the fourth game, joking that he would put his feet up when the hot weather comes and the batting tracks arrive. Gulati took two catches, a smart reaction grab at silly mid-on and a rolling, tumbling affair after sprinting back from mid-off.

JB XI were clearly good cricketers and proved it with the ball in their hands, supported by agile fielding and sound catching. Play straight was the watchword and up came by 86% the highest opening stand of the season, a record-endangering 13. Celebratory rockets were set off but H. Patel had pulled a side muscle and holed out in the seventh over, the first of Lovell's three catches.

Dubey and Kota added 37 in 71 balls to put Gents in a strong position. They put in a terrific shift and turned the screw with two fours apiece in the thirteenth and fourteenth overs. Kota fell to a fine catch by gully. Dubey soon followed and when Haynes had the vice-captain concern was rising behind the boundary. Realising that the Gents could not be restricted, Thompson had by now gone on the attack with his fields. It made +for compelling drama and Krishna fell on 75. Not for nothing did Gulati scoop the club's all-rounder award in 2020 and 2022. He had gone on the offensive, clearing the close fielders with booming pulls and drives. He took the Gents home.

JB XI, named in memoriam of a player's grandfather, were lively company and keen for a rematch. It would be interesting to watch their correct batting on a faster wicket. For the Gents it was a welcome win and the evening's jollifications, with all 22 players present, were very enjoyable. Five away matches are now on the card before two at Wycombe House on 25 June and 2 July.

Northfields v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 21 May, Durston House. Northfields won toss. Cloudy, 19C

Won by 38 runs

Gentlemen of West London				Northfields			
*†Sudireddy	c Kent	b Abz	39	†Derr. Redhead	run out (Kota)		92
Dubey	c Akshit	b Egan	0	Akhtar		b Gulati	1
Kota	c and	b Abz	33	Akshit	c Kota	b Krishna	0
Gulati		b Yaz	55	*David Redhead	run out (Puli)		3
Kumar	c David Redhead	b Jaz	32	Afridi		b S. Patel	24
Puli		b Hamidullah	6	Upcraft	st Sudireddy	b Kota	14
Chatharaju	c Afridi	b Jaz	27	Abz		b Dubey	26
S. Patel	c Akshit	b Kent	3	Hamidullah	c Dutta	b Chatharaju	1
R. Patel	not out		20	Yaz	not out		9
Krishna	not out		4	Kent	lbw	b Puli	5
Dutta	dnb			Egan	not out		4
Extras	w6 nb2 b4		12	Extras	w2 nb1 b6 lb5		14
Total	9 wickets	40 overs	231	Total	9 wickets	40 overs	193
FoW: 3, 55, 114, 149, 152, 196, 205, 216				FoW: 2, 3, 9, 42, 101, 159, 167, 180, 189			
Bowling: Egan 8-0-38-1, Abz 7-0-53-2, David Redhead 2-0-9-0, Afridi 3-0-14-0, Kent -8-0-46-1, Yaz 6-0-36-1, Hamidullah 4-0-21-1, Jaz 2-0-20-2				Bowling: Krishna 6-0-14-1, Gulati 5-1-21-1, Chatharaju 8-0-30-1, S. Patel 4-0-11-1, Kumar 1-0-13-0, R. Patel 6-0-37-0, Kota 3-0-16-1, Dubey 5-0-32-1, Dutta 1-0-4-0, Puli 1-0-4-1			

Consistent and sometimes spectacular batting saw Gents post their first competitive score of 2023 on a benign, much-improved Durston House wicket. Northfields, led by Derrick Redhead's 86-ball 92 (nine fours and three huge sixes) fought hard and came close but were never quite up with the required run rate and so slipped to their first defeat of the campaign after two wins and a tie.

This was a welcome return to form for the visitors who after some patchy displays played to their full potential. Northfields were as usual talented, fair opposition who were bolstered by two players from Wycombe House, the veteran Upcraft and Hamidullah from the U17s who was their fastest bowler.

In 2022 Sudireddy famously struck the first two balls of the day, bowled by Abz, for six and four, as a prelude to a loss by four wickets. There was no such early doors mayhem here, young Dubey, having faced 60 balls against John Buckner XI, had his innings terminated on the fifth as he cut a full toss to cover. Sudireddy batted attractively, facing only 27 balls for his 39. Kota (33 off 22), Gulati (55 off 52 – his eighth score of fifty more – to set alongside his 60 in 2022), Kumar (impressive in his first game of 2023, 32 off 32), Chatharaju (27 off 29) and R. Patel (20 off 27) then ensured a remarkably even rate of scoring, the four ten-over segments seeing 60, 55, 57 and 59 runs added. Six batsmen scoring 20 or more is a rarity.

The pitch was placid and only one ball misbehaved, a spitting cobra rearing up at Chatharaju who fended to slip. Such progress meant that the Gents never broke free but it was riches untold compared to the first four innings of the campaign (90 all out, 72 all out, 136 all out and 85-5) and they seemed happy enough at tea, supplemented by a multipack of Walker's crisps courtesy of Mr Joshi.

One Redhead will always do damage but here it wasn't to be captain David, run out by Puli after Gulati and Krishna had struck in the second and third overs. Afridi dominated the fourth-wicket stand but the wily S. Patel knocked his woodwork over, 42-4 off 12.2, Derrick Redhead 11*.

Northfields then built steadily with stands of 59 and 58 off 86 and 47 balls as Redhead blazed on, taking three sixes off R. Patel whose figures did not reflect his good spell. They were 60-4 at 20-over drinks, needing 172 at 8.6. The fielding held up well and pick-ups and throwing were excellent. Upcraft was neatly stumped then the big wicket fell, Redhead run out by Kota. Gents kept their heads and Dubey, Chatharaju and Puli earned their late wickets.

We end with a tribute to the Redheads, batsmen and sportsmen of the very top rank. Between them they have one ton and four fifties in this series: David 112* in 2016, 67* in 2019 and 84* in 2022; Derrick 91* in 2018 and 92 in 2023.

Redbourn v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 28 May, Redbourn Common. Gents won toss. Sunny, 22C

Won by 5 wickets

Redbourn				Gentlemen of West London			
†McKay	lbw	b R. Patel	25	*†Sudireddy		b Davies	38
Biggs		b H. Patel	16	Chatharaju		b Hill	3
Jawahid		b H. Patel	4	Kota	c Biggs	b Davies	19
B. Roe	c Sudireddy	b Dubey	7	Gulati	c Mathur	b Garlick	91
*D. Roe	not out		70	Kumar		b Garlick	28
Bradley	c Sudireddy	b Dubey	45	Puli	not out		5
Hill	not out		15	S. Patel	not out		1
Mathur, Davies, Garlick and Dewhurst dnb				Dubey, R. Patel, H. Patel and Joshi dnb			
Extras	w4 nb1 b3 lb5		13	Extras	w5 nb3 b2 lb1		11
Total	5 wickets	35 overs	195	Total	5 wickets	29.5 overs	196
FoW: N/R				FoW: 6, 54, 78, 162, 189			
Bowling: Gulati 7-2-34-0, Chatharaju 5-0-35-0, S. Patel 5-1-31-0, R. Patel 7-2-32-1, Dubey 7-0-35-2, H. Patel 4-0-20-2				Bowling: Mathur 5-0-34-0, Hill 3-0-19-1, Garlick 7-0-35-2, Dewhurst 5-0-34-0, Bradley 3-0-17-0, B. Roe 2-0-16-0, Davies 2.5-0-15-2, Biggs 2-0-23-0			

Redbourn had seen some blissful weather over the week resulting in a batsman's paradise of a pitch, beautifully cut with an outfield fit for a golf course, **writes Raj Patel**. A road it could be said... quite literally, with North Common Road running through the outfield which proved to be a bit of a danger while fielding. The Gents toiled through some incredible batting with the onslaught spearheaded by captain D. Roe and duly partnered by Bradley who posted 70* and 45 respectively. Gulati's rockets from one end and Chatharaju's banana swing proved to be a formidable bowling partnership in the opening overs, however as the batsmen grew into the game the boundaries started to show up.

An injured R. Patel began his spell with some cautious bowling so as to not aggravate his injury further but broke through the opening partnership by dismissing the dangerous McKay. From here wickets began appearing with H. Patel taking two, each at the start of consecutive overs going against his own game plan of keeping the slower scorers at the crease. These wickets brought Roe to the crease who gracefully touched all parts of the ground, road, surrounding bushes and people's driveways with his boundary hitting. Two more wickets fell courtesy of Dubey's consistent bowling and captain Sudireddy taking the edges behind the stumps on both occasions. S. Patel supported the bowling attack, confusing both the batsmen and his team mates with his variations in pace. The highlight of this innings had to be the cover drive by young teenager Hill elegantly stroked for four. Hats off to you, sir. Redbourn ended on 195-5 after 35 overs, a total which the skipper thought could be restricted to 160-170, but the 34th over made sure that did not happen.

Fielding was difficult on a pitch where the outfield allowed the ball to run away to the boundary. While attacking the ball Puli slipped (thankfully no injuries sustained) on North Common Road and the sun was beating down on the Gents. Club mascot, Rajit 'The Monkey' Joshi nobly raised his hand when team selector Dubey was short of players late on Saturday, fielding with a slipped disc, so that the game could go ahead. The skipper considered two injured players when setting the field superbly.

After the break, the opening partnership of Chatharaju and Sudireddy looked strong until a perfect seamer's delivery from Hill clipped the top of Chatharaju's off stump. Kota stepped up to the crease with young spectator Ashwath cheering him on. A partnership seemed to be forming were it not for a beautiful catch by Biggs positioned at square leg, on North Common Road. Sudireddy then fell and this brought out Gulati. A perfect balance between elegant stroke play and aggressive hitting brought him to 91 before his dismissal. As with Roe's innings, the ball touched every part of the ground off his bat. A pleasure to watch. His innings was beautifully anchored by the wily Kumar hitting 28 in solidarity. The winning runs were put away by S. Patel and Puli, who found running in spikes on the pitch much easier than on North Common Road. The Gents chased down the 196 with 5.1 overs to spare. This was a thoroughly enjoyable win, with contributions from all, partnered with a beautiful venue and friendly oppo. This being the third win on the bounce under new skipper Sudireddy, the Gents look to keep the momentum going.

Putney v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 4 June, Barn Elms. Putney won toss. Sunny, 22C

Won by 5 wickets

Putney				Gentlemen of West London			
Fillingham		b Chatharaju	7	*†Sudireddy	c Wishart	b Bedson	0
Harris		b Chatharaju	7	Chatharaju		b Taylor	20
Lloyd	c Sudireddy	b D. Reddy	56	Kota	not out		126
Wishart		b Kota	47	Puli	c and	b Taylor	0
Plimmer		b Kota	0	Dubey	c and	b Panton	18
†Sorger		b Kota	21	Soni	c Sorger	b Mohammed	0
Kaushal		b Dutta	0	S. Patel	not out		28
Panton	not out		46	Nagpal, Ismail, Dutta and D. Reddy dnb			
Bedson		b Kota	0				
Mohammed		b Dubey	0				
*Taylor	c Sudireddy	b Dutta	7				
Extras	w7 nb2 b8 lb3		21	Extras	w12 nb7 b2		21
Total	All out	39.1 overs	212	Total	56 wickets	34.4 overs	213
FoW: 15, 18, 120, 121, 138, 145, 164, 164, 165, 212				FoW: 0, 61, 67, 101, 102			
Bowling: Dubey 8-0-28-1, Chatharaju 8-1-30-2, S. Patel 3-0-34-0,				Bowling: Bedson 5-4-0-41-1, Harris 5-0-34-0, Taylor 7-0-25-2,			
Nagpal 3-0-22-0, D. Reddy 4-0-33-1, Kota 8-0-31-4, Dutta 3.1-0-9-2,				Mohammed 6-0-51-1, Panton 5-0-18-1, Kaushal 4-0-27-0,			
Puli 2-0-14-0				Wishart 2-0-15-0			

A chanceless stand of 111 in 112 balls by Kota and S. Patel saw Gents to an unlikely victory. At 102-5 including three ducks, Putney were favourites but Kota's eighth ton, with 19 fours and a five, with wise support from his veteran partner, did the needful. Earlier Kota had taken four wickets as the genial hosts proceeded to a well-balanced 212 against committed bowling and fielding. Scoring a hundred and taking four wickets is a rarity, only Mark Ashton and Upender Sanga having previously achieved such a double.

Chatharaju achieved prodigious inswing, Putney's umpire being overheard that he repeatedly wanted to call wide as the ball pitched on sixth stump, only for it to hoop in and deny him the pleasure. He castled the openers, 18-2. Lloyd and Wishart are batsmen of high quality and showed it with a stand of 102 before Reddy found Lloyd's edge in the 21st over. Putney were on top but there now followed some brave counterpunching as Gents took seven wickets for 45. Kota winkled out four of them, all bowled, while there were scalps for Dubey and Dutta. Putney were 165-9 but a last-wicket stand is apt to happen. Panton played the shots while captain Taylor nurdled, sensible, wise cricket. Dutta got Taylor with five balls unused.

Since his return to Test cricket opener Ben Duckett has faced 692 balls and played no shot to a mere eight. This is also the way captain Sudireddy does things, but when he scooped the first ball of the innings to mid-off the glory of Gents' 2023 opening stands had continued: 3, 0, 7, 13, 3, 6 and now 0. Kota took ten off the next five balls. With Chatharaju batting brightly it was 35-13 off three. Chatharaju was bowled on 61 and Puli fell third ball, 67-3.

All the while Kota was playing with confidence. Dubey hit three fours before falling to a low caught and bowled, intoning the admonitory mantra 'Play ground shots, play ground shots' on his return. But he had maintained the momentum of the innings. Soni then fell caught behind, 102-5 off 16.3, 111 needed at 4.7 off 23.3.

Kota and Patel were superb. For an hour they interspersed ones and twos with the odd boundary. Putney always had the hope that one wicket might bring two. Taylor set good fields and his fielders supported the bowlers to the hilt, but the breakthrough would not come. Kota then took twenty off Mohammed's final over to take Gents to the brink of victory, and secured it with a two and a four in the next over. No praise can be too high for the two batting heroes but everybody had contributed.

A word on the composition of the team. Ilhan Ismail and Dayakar Reddy were on debut; Chirag Soni had only played once before. Well done the team secretary and the committee in honouring the fixture. Putney were good hosts and scored highly by inviting Gents back to their excellent Barnes Common clubhouse.

Teddington Town v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 11 June, Teddington Town. Teddington Town won toss. Sunny then thundery, 31C

Abandoned

Teddington Town				Gentlemen of West London			
Shabbir		b Chatharaju	13	*†Sudireddy, Chatharaju, Kota, Kumar, Puli, Krishna, S. Patel,			
Musgrave	c D. Reddy	b Kota	45	A. Ahmed, Dubey, Nagpal and D. Reddy dnb			
Singh		b S. Patel	2				
Rashid	c Sudireddy	b Nagpal	14				
Dobani	c A. Ahmed	b Nagpal	37				
Desai	run out (Puli)		15				
Kapoor	not out		12				
Uddin	c and	b Kota	1				
Khanwali	not out		1				
Mok and *†Thomas	dnb						
Extras	w3 b3		6	Extras			
Total	7 wickets	37.1 overs	146	Total			
FoW: 19, 22, 51, 103, 132, 132, 134				FoW:			
Bowling: S. Patel 6-0-25-1, Chatharaju 5-1-12-1, Nagpal 8-0-34-2,							
D. Reddy 5-0-26-0, Kota 8-2-27-2, Dubey 4-0-18-0, Krishna 1.1-0-1-0							

Some good cricket was played by both teams in the three hours possible before a thunderstorm flooded the ground. Young Harry Musgrave knitted the innings together, facing 86 balls for his 45 with three fours. Dobani struck merrily, 37 in 40 including six fours, before picking out Ahmed at long off. Kota and the pacy Nagpal took two wickets each and Puli produced a wonderful piece of fielding to see off Desai, a diving stop at backward square and a direct hit at the 'keeper's end all in one movement.

Averages

Player (debut*)	M.	Inn.	NO	Runs	Avg.	Ct./St.	O	M	Runs	Wck.	Avg.	Econ.	SR.
Ahmed A	2	1	-	23	23.00	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Chatharaju	8	7	-	61	8.71	2	41	4	162	8	20.25	3.95	30.75
Dhatric *	2	2	1	19	19.00	-	11	3	32	2	16.00	2.91	33.00
Dubey	7	5	-	47	9.40	-	31	0	154	5	30.80	4.97	37.20
Dutta *	3	1	-	0	0.00	1	7.1	0	30	3	10.00	4.19	14.33
Gulati	4	4	2	218	109.00	3	23	4	85	3	28.33	3.70	46.00
Kota	6	5	1	220	55.00	2	23	3	85	7	12.14	3.70	19.71
Krishna	5	4	1	24	8.00	1	12.1	1	26	4	6.50	2.14	18.25
Kumar	3	2	-	60	30.00	-	1	0	13	0	-	13.00	-
Nagpal	5	2	-	4	2.00	-	22.5	1	88	4	22.00	3.85	34.25
Patel H	5	4	-	21	5.25	-	28	1	115	13	8.85	4.11	12.92
Patel J	2	2	-	1	0.50	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Patel R	5	3	2	23	23.00	1	27	2	107	3	35.67	3.96	54.00
Patel S	8	7	3	43	10.75	-	26	1	136	5	27.20	5.23	31.20
Puli	7	5	1	19	4.75	1	4.1	0	22	2	11.00	5.35	12.33
Reddy D *	2	-	-	-	-	1	9	0	59	1	59.00	6.56	54.00
Sudireddy	8	6	-	121	20.17	10/2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

One match only: Francis 1/1/1/2, Garige R * 1/1/-/18, 4-0-10-0, Ismail * 1/-/-/-, Joshi 1/-/-/-, Kulasingam 1/1/-/14, 7-1-1-16-1, Parvathaneni 1/1/-/9, 1-0-6-0, Soni 1/1/-/0

2023 in numbers

Highest score for: 231-8 v. Northfields, Against: 212 by Putney

Lowest score for: 72 v. Merton Hawks, Against: 84 by John Buckner

100 partnerships for	100 partnerships against
111 Kota (126*) and S. Patel (28*) v. Putney (6th. wicket)	102 Lloyd (56) and Wishart (47) (Putney) (3rd. wicket)
50s/100s for (M = first 50 or 100)	50s/100s against
Kota 126* v. Putney	92 Derrick Redhead (Northfields)
Gulati 91 v. Redbourn	70 D. Roe (Redbourn)
Gulati 55 v. Northfields	56 Lloyd (Putney)
4-wicket returns for (M = first 4 wickets return, D = debut))	4-wicket returns against
H. Patel 5-25 v. Merton Hawks	4-14 Lawrence (Crossbats)
Kota 4-31 v. Putney	4-25 Fisher (London Itinerants)
H. Patel 4-34 v. London Itinerants	

Sixes (7): Gulati 3, 2 Garige R, 1 Chatharaju, Sudireddy

Run outs of opponents (5): 3 Puli 1 Dubey, Kota

S. Patel passed 7,000 runs and Sudireddy joined the 100 Club