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**Streatham & Marlborough Cricket Club**

**Midweek SMS – 19 July 2017**

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A good week for the club as four sides recorded outright wins, two winning draws and the solitary loss in the league fixtures. More of the same please!

A number of performances to highlight… with the bat S Hassan (57), Pulley (60), Knott (100\*), Shah (95), McNeil Adams (80), Williamson (81\*), Little (55), Southworth (75\*) and Quade (36\*) made significant contributions whilst the bowling plaudits go to S Hassan (4-61), Mitch Davis (6-10), Mark Davis (5-28) and Kent (4-10). Whilst I don’t normally mention wicket hauls of less than four but young Noah Dodds’ spell of 5 overs, 5 maidens and 3 wickets was only stopped by the ECB’s bowling regulations so it seems churlish to leave this out. Little discussion required for the Player of the Week, Alan Knott paying tribute to his late father to scored an unbeaten hundred. An emotional effort and truly worthy of the award. Well done Al!

On to the news and unfortunately, we have some more sad news to report.

**Danny Haxton**

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|  | It is with great sadness that I have to inform you of the loss of a valued former member of the club. Danny Haxton joined Marlborough (1870) CC as a junior in 1992 and progressed to represent the 1st XI of the merged club until 2006 before moving to Kent. Danny fell ill whilst on duty at Beckenham Fire Station on Sunday evening. He was a talented batsmen and one of the nicest guys you could ever wish to meet. Taken at just 37, he is survived by his wife (Nikki) and his two children (Olivia and Harry). I will pass on funeral details upon receipt but extend the club's heartfelt condolences to Nikki and the family. |

**Social Calendar**

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| 20160909_192229.jpg | |  |  | | --- | --- | | 29 July | Club social hosted by the 3rd XI | | 5 Aug | Streatham CC & Marlborough CC Old Boys Day | | 12 Aug | Club social hosted by the 5th XI | | 26 Aug | Club social hosted by the 1st XI | | 27 Aug | President’s Day | | 2 Sep | Club social hosted by the Ladies XI | |

Best of luck to our all our players at the weekend.

Cheers,

Dan

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**1st XI**

Winning draw

SMCC 266-7d (43) / Ashford 234-8 (44)

1st XI League position – 2nd / 10

Report: N/A

**2nd XI**

Lost by 7 wickets

SMCC 254-4d (51.5) / Bank of England 255-3 (48.3)

2nd XI League position – 9th / 10

Report: The 2s travelled to Bank of England for their latest challenge in Div 2. Sharif won the toss and made the difficult choice to bat first in the constant drizzle. Hobbis fell early so Shah joined Knott at the crease. 35 overs later, a 150+ run partnership and the decision to bat looked like a great one. Shah was driving and cutting the ball with ease and looked in good touch following the previous week's heroics before falling for a brilliant 96, unfortunate not to get a deserved ton. Knott on the other hand was playing his best cricket for a long time. Straight drives, cover drives, clips off his legs, pull shots, you name it. I've mentioned my admiration for him once before in one of these reports but have to do it again. To say goodbye to his dear father on the Friday and score an emotional century in front of his devoted mother is a true reflection of the man. 100 not out and he deservedly closed SMCC's innings out on 254-4 off 51.5 after Sharif declared. Knott lead both sides off the pitch to applause from all at the ground and straight in to his mothers arms where an emotional embrace took place. One look to the sky said "that's for you dad". I have no doubt he was watching every ball of that knock with great pride. Well batted Alan Knott.

We took to the field after tea knowing it was going to be tough to get 10 wickets on Bank's road but confident that our bowling and fielding would get us close. Unfortunately, Bank made a quick start, running well between the wickets. Both openers passed the 50 mark before the breakthrough was made by a Knott direct hit. Frustratingly, still at the other end was the the worlds 4th best Rackets player who also plays Golf off a handicap of 1. Correct, he could play cricket as well, as he expertly timed Bank's chase to leave himself needing 9 off the last over. With 8 on the boundary, Sharif could have been forgiven for thinking he could only get a single. Wrong, he switch hit it over point for 6 and that was that. He had single handedly won Bank the game. Jealousy, bitterness aside, it was a great knock. All the more frustrating that we'd dropped him on 30-odd and it was his first (and last) game of the season.

I fully believe this side is capable of picking up results in the remaining games to avoid the drop. We just have to keep believing in ourselves as individuals and as a team, puff our chests out and pull ourselves up. It doesn't have to be pretty, it just needs to begin with a W... (A Sharif)

**3rd XI**

Winning draw

SMCC 240-6 (54.5) / Guildford 119-2 (46)

3rd XI League position – 7th / 10

Report: Come friendly bombs and fall on Slough! It isn't fit for humans now.

If John Betjeman thought Slough really was the worst place in England, he perhaps had never been Guildford.

Or at very least, that was how the 3s felt, driving back from ancient Saxon town with just eight points garnered from 100 overs of cricket.

Surrey had left Guildford similarly dissatisfied just a month earlier, a Mark Stoneman failing to prevent an eight-wicket defeat to Essex. Streatham & Marlborough made the trip, which judging by the late arrival measures some 400 miles, with high hopes of avoiding a similar feat against the relegation battlers.

The first misfortune was immediately clear - relegated to the club’s second ground, a council-maintained cabbage patch that doubles as a cricket pitch every other Saturday, skipper Matt Clark inspected what had been nominated as 'the wicket’. The opening pair of Harry McNeil-Adams and James Gray chuntered in affected Yorkshire accents about ‘uncovered pitches’ and made their feelings about the toss known to captain. But Clark lacked the common decency to call correctly and was promptly informed that he would be getting first use of a track Dave Gladstone reckoned ‘would play better than it looked’.

Gray took the first ball and spent much the first over trying to get the bat in the same postcode as the ball the enormous Ben Shaw was booming down at him. ‘Hit the middle of the three balls’ he was overheard saying to himself, as though Friday evening’s festivities had left him unable to do much more.

McNeil-Adams on the other hand was his typically classy self, quickly seizing on anything over-pitched by punching the ball through the covers with the compact technical excellence from which Germany will benefit later this summer. His departure - Hexit - comes as no surprise as it is part of Britain’s ‘best possible deal’ where all the very best talents move to remain within the EU. (No politics! Ed.)

With the ball doing plenty with unpredictable lateral and vertical variation, Gray and McNeil-Adams were forced to battle. Fortunately, two public schoolboys relished the challenge of stoicism and the upper lips stiffened admirably as they recorded their third consecutive century partnership. It was your unfortunate author who fell first, unable to resist the off-breaks of Cameron Green, part-time spinner and full-time Peter Griffin impersonator, aiming an ugly hoik over cow corner and missing it entirely. His replacement, Ed Lawrence, didn’t last much longer as Green picked up his second through a dubious LBW decision.

McNeil-Adams appeared unperturbed and appeared to be drifting serenely towards a third hundred for the club. It’s worth noting at this point that the last time he reached three figures, it was while opening with Ollie Perkins who made 62 - perhaps like Icarus he flew too close to Harry’s bright sun and now finds himself fallen. But I digress.

Disaster struck for McNeil-Adams when he chipped the ball straight back to Green, his third of five victims on the day, and the SMCC innings threatened to falter. Arise Will Williamson, a man who loves two things: Maoams and hitting a cricket ball. He was soon raising his bat for 50, a little perplexed at the speed of his own innings which was only ended by the declaration of Clark, one ball short of the maximum 55 overs with Streatham & Marlborough 240/6 and Williamson 81 not out, the innings’ top-scorer by a solitary run.

Given how much life and variable bounce the pitch had shown, anything over 200 looked a very impressive total. But Clark might have been worried it was in Guildford’s sights when Sam Moldon flew out of the blocks, hitting Hitesh Naik for consecutive boundaries and sending the new ball off into the pastures of Surrey. However, the captain claimed his first wicket of the year, a testament to his noble reticence to throw himself the ball, when his bouncer found its way to the back of Moldon’s bat and into the middle of McNeil-Adams’ gloves.

His replacement Callum Green had been a 1st XI player in the early season but dropped to find form, looked every part a batsman at No3 and had he been instructed to do so, might have had the ability to anchor a run-chase. So too might Guildford’s efforts to win the game might have lost them it, something captain Jonathan Hedges seemed all to aware of and he bedded in with the draw his only interest.

He was eventually forced from the wicket, like a barnacle levered off the hull of an ocean-going vessel, by that most persuasive of crowbars Gladstone, who found wicked but often slow turn in the pitch. His figures of 11-2-25-1 do not speak to the consistency and wile with which he bowled against two batsmen determined to remain.

Green and Will Jenner both appeared capable of batting and as so often in these timed games, when two batsmen decide that neither side will win, they succeed. The pair played out 14 maidens in their 46 overs, which yielded just 119 runs and left SMCC baffled as to how their opponents thought three points in total were worth playing for.

Roll on overs cricket, cry the 3s. Then we’ll see who can really play. (J Gray)

**4th XI**

Won by 84 runs

SMCC 195-8 (47) / Sunbury 111ao

4th XI League position – 6th / 10

Report:

**5th XI**

Won by 75 runs

SMCC 183-8 (40) / OD CUACO 108ao (36.3)

5th XI League position – 4th / 9

Report: The old man and the tea - a tale of the 5th XI and OD Cuaco

After last week’s change of style I have received many suggestion/requests for further pale imitations. Amongst the more serious and viable of them are Lawrence, Chandler, Austen and Woolf. This week though is an attempt at Hemingway.

'We'll win. We've got enough. Don't worry about that.'

'We'll win. We've got enough.'

'Just bowl well, catch and field as we should.'

'Yes but what if...'

'We wont. Don't worry. We'll win. We've got enough.'

As the men walked away, out on to the field the old man settled to his score book and his tea.

This season and all seasons he dreamt of landing a really big result. Often he returned from his efforts unrewarded. Every week he went down to the field again.

Far out on the grass the men exerted themselves. The light was better now. Evening was approaching. The sun had broken the cloud cover. The drizzle had gone. It was warm. The old man poured more tea, bent to his book.

The 5th XI had earlier scored 183 runs for the loss of eight wickets. Jim Hughes, bowled around his legs for 31. A moan of primitive disappointment circled the ground. An end to his brand of elegance. Simon Stuart 44 runs. Ben Southworth not out 75. Mark Davis caught deep mid-off zero. Followed by a deep howl of anguish such a man might make as a nail was hammered through his hand. A sound that is the same in every language.

‘Bad shot, bad shot. Didn’t hit it hard enough. Should have put it out of the ground. Someone else’s turn.’

The old man marked the runs as they came. Sharpened his pencils periodically. Watched the long game unfold in its interminable way.

The long ninety run partnership between Southworth and Stuart sealed the total. A product of their long years of sharpening their skills. Putting themselves to the test.

Shiraz Sheikh seven point three overs, two wickets, 28 runs. Barrington Wilks eight overs, one wicket, three runs, five maidens. Mark Davis ten overs, 1 maiden, five wickets, twenty eight runs. Raj Patel eight overs, one maiden, one wicket, twenty three runs.

Daniel Murrell forty three runs. Matiullah Haidar twenty eight runs. Fifty eight runs in their partnership. The struggle was tilting away from them during that time. Yet 183 on the board. Surely.

Curtis Knott three catches. Three byes. A catch for Jim Hughes. A catch for Stan Barrett-Johnston. A run-out engineered by Andrew Chowdhury.

Now the old man sensed the defeat of his mighty opponent. He was sorry for it. Luck had returned to him. Deserting OD Cuaco in its faithless way. The sharks began to circle. Sheikh bowled the last batter. The victory was hauled in. He would bring news of it to the club that very night.

The old man surveyed his ruined body. Of the injuries that had prevented him taking part. He felt the need for sleep. To dream of his young self, hurling the ball down the endless yellow track.

Cuba 1953

(L Johnston)

**6th XI**

Won by 8 wickets

OD CUACO 40ao (23.3) / SMCC 42-2 (9.3)

6th XI League position – 5th / 8

Report: The day started under grey skies, a journey away to face OD Cuaco at the Warren Annexe ahead of a strong looking 6th XI. The Chairman arrived in a car more befitting a surgically enhanced footballers wife than a world renowned professor, along with the news that he wouldn’t be driving back to club after the match due to a more pressing dinner engagement, with nine people and only two cars for the return journey, Uber had an early mention. Off we set, driving through the light but constant drizzle. The pitch was green and sloping, the changing rooms a short journey across a small stream, the scoreboard showing 38 for 9, jokes were made, that wouldn’t happen again, could it? The toss was won, the opposition skipper passed on local knowledge that the pitch had a tendency to keep a little low, we will have a bowl.

The drizzle continued as we took the field, the youthful Noah Dodds new ball in hand. What happened next will rarely be seen in any XI, let alone the us in the 6s. Dodds bowled, the young right handed opener drove the bowl uppishly, as the ball flew past me at short cover i envisioned the ball ending up in the stream, what no one had factored in was Van Aswegan, bouyed by a South African resurgence in the teat match, channelled his inner Jonty Rhodes, plucked the ball a mere inch from the ground, one handed in a full out dive, followed by a rain assisted slide which was a thing of beauty. The batsman stood his ground in disbelief, we celebrated, he still stood there. He eventually walked off and little did we know that the 6s were about to do something special.

Dodds bowled beautifully, a serious talent and at just 15 a big future ahead of him. Five overs, five maidens, three wickets. It’s hard to write how good an opening spell it was and do it justice. Consistent pressure and always asking questions of the batsman. One wicket was completed with a combined age of just 29, Dodds bowled, Cranston snaffled behind the stumps. You may read that sentence a number of times over the next few years.

Basir, 1 for 15, bowled with pace and picked up a deserved wicket and the pressure built on the batsmen. Wickets fell regularly, Henderson, 3 for 16, and Willmott, 3 for 4, picked up where Dodds and Basir left off. 15 for 5 became 40 all out. The bowling was exceptional, the fielding was top notch. The pitch did a bit, a few stayed low, a few shot along the floor but it still wasn’t a 40 all out pitch.

It was too early for tea so we went straight back out. Perkins and the Chairman walked out, filled with the knowledge that an early finish would aid both of their evening party plans. The left arm bowler was quick. The Chairman, who had made comments after seeing the ball stay low that he wouldn’t be playing the pull shot, proceeded to pull for 8 runs in the first 5 balls. The sixth ball was a beautiful inswinger that was nicked behind. Van Aswegan fell shortly after but this only brought Sahib Singh to the crease. Having been told that he once played a defensive shot and got out so vowed to never play one again I wasn’t sure what to expect. What we got was the tank of a man swinging powerfully at every ball and when he hit it, he hit it hard. In a flash 42 was on the scoreboard and the game was over at 15:45. A great result against second in the table and the earliest finish i can remember to a game. The Chairman had time to drop people back to the club and we were back in time to watch the end of the home games and test out the new Pilsner, lot’s of testing! (A Henderson)

**Ladies 1st XI**

Won by 32 runs

SMCC 134-7 (30) / Spencer 102ao (30)

Ladies 1st XI League position – 1st / 12

Report:

**Academy XI**

No fixture – opposition dropped out of league

Academy XI League position – 7th / 7

Report: N/A