

Results 2017

May		
Sunday 7th	BBC Mishits	Lost by 6 wickets
Sunday 14th	WG XI	Lost by 21 runs.
Sunday 21st	Brightwell-cum-Sotwell	Lost by 5 wickets. Healey 74*.
Sunday 28th	Millfields CC	Lost by 105 runs.
June		
Sunday 4th	Charlatans	Lost by 9 wickets
Sunday 11th	Ad Hoc.	Lost by 54 runs.
Saturday 17th	Jo Cox Charity 6-a-side	Lost + Lost + Lost
Sunday 25th	Marlborough & Streatham	Won by 6 wickets.
July		
Sunday 2nd	North Enfield	Lost by 7 wickets
Sunday 9th	Whitchurch-on-Thames	Lost by 70-odd runs. Robin 50+.
Sunday 16th	Mickleham	Lost by 4 wickets. 169 a.o. versus 172-6.
Thursday 20th	Superstars CC (20/20)	Lost by 5 wickets.
Sunday 30th	Thursley	Cancelled by them.
August		
Sunday 13th	Charlatans	Lost by 41 runs.
Thursday 17th	Essex University Staff	Drawn
Friday 18th	Quilibets	Lost by 54 runs.
Saturday 19th	Worlingworth	Won by 40 runs. Hawkins 45, Stefan 38.
Sunday 20th	Hockerill	Lost (43 runs). Chris H 50+, Gemma 22*
Monday 28th	Elstead	Draw. Baxter, McIntyre 4-fer. Robin 55.
September		
Sunday 3rd	Brill	Washout
Sunday 10th	King's School, Rochester	Won by 8 wickets. Baxter, Brand 63* each.
Saturday 16th	Reading University Staff	D/L Method Win. Chris H 5-fer, Venky 52*, Drew 44.

Fixtures Secretary: Dan Forman and the outgoing Jon Porter after a decade's service to the club.

Averages and Related Stuff for 2017

Dan Forman has prepared a statistical digest and highlights of the season in numbers. It makes for a jolting read for some of us! Absolutely no liability for errors accepted at all....

Top run scorers (minimum 50 runs)

- Healey 275 at 91.6*
- Pharaoh 243 at 48.3
- Baxter 207 at 34.5
- Tunbridge 198 at 18
- Brand 193 at 64.3
- Manian 118 at 14.75
- Mills 113 at 22.6
- D Williams 108 at 27
- Sommerville 101 at 20.2
- R Eastaway 75 at 25
- D Forman 70 at 8.75
- N Davidson 68 at 7.5
- Venky 57 at 19
- Lowen 55 at 7.85

* Bradmanesque but not actually the highest average as Harry Forman was 2 not out for the season

Top scores (minimum 40 runs)

- Pharaoh 82 vs Whitchurch
- Tonbridge 79 vs Streatham and Marlborough
- Healey 78 vs WG
- Healey 74no vs Brightwell
- Baxter 63no vs King's Rochester
- Brand 63no vs King's Rochester
- Brand 62 vs Streatham and Marlborough
- Healey 59 vs Hockerill
- D Williams 59 vs BBC
- Pharaoh 59 vs Mickleham
- Pharaoh 55 vs Elstead
- Venky 52no vs Reading
- D Williams 48 vs Whitchurch
- Mills 47 vs Essex
- Healey 46no vs Quillebets
- Hawkins 45 vs Worlingworth
- Sommerville 44 vs Reading
- Tonbridge 44 vs Charlatans
- D Forman 41 vs North Enfield

Top wicket takers

- R Eastaway 13 at 18.8
- D Forman 13 at 21.4
- McIntyre 13 at 27.3
- Hurst 12 at 19.9

- Healey 9 at 15.6*
- Gundry 6 at 5
- Gray 6 at 29.6
- Heard 6 at 49.1

* the book does not record bowling figures for the rain affected game against the WG XI - the match report and Robin's memory recall that Arvind took three, Owen two and Chris one but without the runs conceded these have sadly not been recorded in the averages

Best Bowling

- Gundry 6-30 vs Milfields
- Healey 5-16 vs Reading
- McIntyre 4-39 vs Elstead
- Baxter 4-40 vs Elstead
- Hurst 4-42 vs Essex
- McIntyre 4-46 vs Brightwell
- D Forman 3-19 vs Reading
- R Eastaway 3-29 vs Mickleham
- R Eastaway 3-30 vs Ad Hocs
- Heard 3-42 vs Hockerill
- D Forman 3-44 vs King's Rochester
- Barman 2-12 vs Superstars
- A Eastaway 2-14 vs Worlingworth
- Saturday, 23 September 2017
- Sunday, 17 September 2017

Monday, 25 September 2017

Why does it always rain on me?

Is it because I dropped a catch when RUASC were on 117? Or the rain in Sonning Lane falls mainly at the end of the game?

Reading University Alumni and Staff CC 140 all out. Mandarins 131-4. No Result*

* D/L score had us ahead! [Ed.]

When is the most frustrating time for the rain to come? As one draws the curtains on the morning of a much anticipated game? Or as the metaphorical curtain comes down at the end of another Mandarin season? Ten minutes before the start of a match that you have already made the effort to drive to? Or ten runs short of victory at the end of a season in which wins have, shall we say, been hard to come by?

It was the latter fate that befell the Mandarins against Reading University Alumni and Staff. And it certainly felt frustrating. Especially so perhaps because all week we had been anticipating rain, with the forecast suggesting it would begin to fall at some point between the Chiswick roundabout and Captain Tunbridge losing the toss and being put into bat.

But neither eventuality materialised and the only thing that fell with any consistency were Reading wickets, five of which all went to our recently discovered tearaway opening bowler Chris Healey (7-1-16-5) who bowled with control and not a little menace. (Or perhaps it was his identical twin

brother Nick - who made a 'can you tell them apart?' appearance at tea). Backed by a somewhat surprisingly competent fielding display (McIntyre's one hander, Heard's athletic grab on the run and Tivey's steady under a steeper take all being - with all due love and respect - unexpected highlights), the bowlers all did a job. Heard was unlucky to go wicketless with the new ball. Venky was unlucky to be put on a time when the RUASC number six was swinging hard and happily; and Sommerville was unlucky his good ones were not rewarded (although took one with arguably the worst ball of his spell). McIntyre then supplied control and your correspondent (5.2-0-19-3) supplied three well caught wickets to finish the RUASC innings on 140 with an over to spare.

(Although - in what later proved to be a crucial turn of events - I also dropped a low but catchable caught and bowled chance an over earlier in the spell. And while it was not costly to my own figures, it was to the team's as Tunbridge went around the ground for 16 in the intervening over. Team-spirited skipper that he is, Graeme naturally blamed this entirely on me.)

Tea was taken in the well-appointed Reading CC club house, rather than the rather exposed and ramshackle hut that served as the changing room for the second team pitch. And heartily fortified by samosas, spring rolls and chips, we set about the gettable but by all means fail-to-gettable chase. At this stage the weather still looked set fair for another 35 overs and it looked like we were going to need them as Tunbridge (victim of a ruthless first ball LBW decision by Umpire Tivey it must be said) and Mills returned promptly to the pavilion, leaving us 8-2 and asking Sommerville (44) and (Venky 52no) to set about a patient rebuilding job. This they did with aplomb, watchful at first, accelerating later, taking us to 93 in what was set to be a match-winning partnership.

However the mid-September weather was yet to have its say. As it worsened, RUASC creditably resisted coming off before a downpour made that unavoidable. A short delay ensued although not long later Venky and Tivey were back out there edging us ever closer to glory. But the weather worsened yet again and - while RUASC were sportingly willing to stick it out to a conclusion - a groundsman did nothing to confound his trade's grumpy stereotype and ordered us off for good without consultation.

A quick check of a Duckworth Lewis calculator had us comfortably ahead but in the absence of an agreement between the sides that DL would apply, we had to settle for a moral victory on this occasion, which is at least an improvement on all the 'moral/Mandarins draws' we suffered/earned in limited overs games earlier in the season.

Over a Healey-bought jug of local IPA in the bar, our belated run of form brought forth talk of trying to find a further fixture to keep the season going (not least for Graeme whose trips to Rochester and Reading brought scores of 0 and 0, figures of 1-0-16-0 and a horror drop to boot). But it was raging against the dying of the cricket season light. So we went our separate ways for 2017. In glorious sunshine of course.

Dan Forman

Mickleham Memories - A Fairly Honourable Defeat

Mandarins 159 all out; Mickleham 160-6 from 31 overs; Mickleham won by 4 wickets

The scorebook tells the tale. We fell 25 or so short of the total Robin Pharoah's typically defensively solid, attackingly hard-hitting 59 put us in contention for. They had enough lower order batting to make it despite an early flurry of wickets which made the game competitive.

Mickleham's battery of seamers bowled well on the type of decent-paced track that offers seamers just enough lift and movement to ensure few batsmen look set. Robin aside, only three Mandarins

made double figures. Nick Davidson's 17 in a 56 run partnership alongside Robin was central in nudging us into three figures; Rob Eastaway's well-timed 27 not out the stroke-making heart of successive 20+ partnerships for the 9th (with Paul McIntyre) and 10th (with Jean-Christophe Gray) wickets, ensured we made it to the middle of the 35th over before succumbing.

Rob and Jean-Christophe's (1 for 13 from 7 overs) tight opening bowling partnership reduced Mickleham to 30-3 after 9 overs. But we couldn't dislodge that mainstay of village cricket, the limited but limpet-like opener - his ground out 29 in 20+ overs enabling the opposition's strongest batsmen, reliably tucked away in the lower middle order, to whittle down the total.

The boundaries from Mickleham batters ticked over rather than ever flying. The odd wicket fell, deservedly, in particular to Rob (3 for 29 from 7 overs). We dropped their best bat 15 runs shy from the end, but it wasn't a howler. And so the slight of feeling of what might have been on our side was accompanied by Mickleham's sense that it was a game they had to work for. Which, in what was a 35-overs game, in a season in which we have struggled, made for a decent match to play in.

And if it's not a fixture you have played, the action was set to a leafy Box Hill back drop, included a fine tea, and was gently reflected on afterwards in a good pub 100 yards from the ground.

Jean-Christophe Gray

Monday, 11 September 2017

Mandarins chalk up late-season victory in Rochester drizzle

Mandarins (159 for 2) beat King's School Rochester (157 for 9) by 8 wickets

A fine performance with ball, bat and in the field (despite a couple of dropped catches) saw Mandarins notch their third victory of the season at one of the season's blue riband fixtures at King's School, Rochester.

The clouds were ominous as King's went in to bat. Fine opening spells full of line and length balls from Eastaway (9-2-16-2) and Heard (8-1-25-1) restricted them to 41 for 3 after 17 overs. Fielding was tight for most of the innings, with some questioning whether this was really "how the Mandarins did things"; some worried about a dangerous precedent being set. Manian had a mixed day in the field, holding a great catch at deep midwicket before inexplicably letting the next chance through his hands to slam into his delicates.

A spell of 14 overs straight from Hurst kept the runs down, going for 34, with two wickets. He was ably supported by Forman (10-0-44-3) and Healey (5-0-31-1). 157 for 9 declared at tea looked a gettable score but it was hard to tell given the rain had already been coming down, stopping play for 15 minutes in the middle of the innings and taking the shine off the ball and some pace off the wicket.

After a suitably classy tea in the headmaster's house, Baxter and Lowen started the Mandarins innings solidly, a few nice boundaries and some surprisingly quick singles taking us to 40 before Lowen was caught for 12. Lord Sir Graeme Tunbridge Esq. was out quickly, caught and bowled for a duck, but Brand steadied the ship at number 4.

There followed a match-winning partnership of 110 between Baxter and Brand, who both dug in and accumulated steadily at around 4 an over before taking advantage of some friendly change bowling

and then seeing off the returning opening bowlers. Each scored an unbeaten 63 in the wind and drizzle to win the game with 9 overs and 8 wickets to spare.

Sam Brand

PS. The day was rounded off with drinks in a candlelit Restoration House: many thanks Jonathan and Robert for your hospitality - Ed

Sunday, 3 September 2017

Team Photo, 2017

Here we are, mixed in with the Elstead crowd, just after tea on a warm August Bank Holiday afternoon.



Picture credit: Anthony Ainslie

Monday, 21 August 2017

Rob Blogs

With the 'five day' Test at Edgbaston and the Mandarins tour starting on the same day, I've written a blog about the decline of the draw in cricket. Get it [here](#).

Rob Eastaway

PS. (Andy H)

In defence of the overs' game, I would say that whilst I do kind of agree with Rob, it does require two important factors for a time-game to be a success. First, a shared understanding of what constitutes

the right time to shut-up shop a play for a draw (the last two or three overs, maybe?). In league cricket, I once played a match where the opposition blocked and blocked for 28 overs after losing a run of early wickets. It was not an edifying experience.

Second, a pitch good enough to actually get people out, and umpires happy to give LBW. I've played on too many slow, low pitches where it's almost impossible to get someone out who's mastered the art of the forward defensive.

I could add that, within the arena of the chess-playing professional, it's perfectly possible to agree a draw with an opponent just because you both happen to fancy doing something else entirely. So called professional draws add to what is usually more than half of the total number of games being drawn at that level.

Wednesday, 16 August 2017

New ground, same taste of defeat

Charlatans (161 for 7) beat Mandarin (121 all out) by 40 runs

An unusual home (ish) game for the Mandarin at a novel venue, Greenwich Park, but against a familiar foe. A lovely tree-ringed ground and a sunny afternoon. Some uncertainty about which strip we were to play on. The middle stump at one end inserted at an angle you wouldn't see at Lords. Several Mandarin delayed by parking challenges.

We lost the toss and fielded. Rob and J-C were threatening, Dan, Arvind, Drew and Owen economical. We secured two run outs. No Charlatan batsman passed 40. The Chairman held a catch.

Tea was excellent – especially the Eastaway scones and brownies.

Then it was back to normal. The Mandarin just don't seem to do limited overs cricket. The batting stats speak for themselves: 0 for 3; median score 1; mode score 0; five ducks in total.

Arvind and especially Graeme made the target look gettable for a while before both being bowled. The Charlatans bowling was pretty good apart from lots of wides.

The venue produced more crowd interest than usual. In addition to wedding photos in front of the sight screen and mass birthday dancing on the boundary, at one point a man who turned out to be American wandered through deepish mid-on and mid-off. When told that he was holding up the game he asked grumpily whether we owned the land. No we said, but we've hired it for the afternoon. He then became irate, justifying his incursion because he had paid his council tax "like everybody else". Rob asked whether he would do such a thing on a baseball pitch. 'What's is a baseball pitch?' he asked. 'I've no idea' said Rob.

A lively discussion with some of the oppo about Trump and Brexit in the Crown afterwards.

Louis Davidson

Saturday, 22 July 2017

Mandarins Try a New Format

A new fixture (the Mandarins' first ever twenty 20 game?) and a strange, slightly disorientating occasion for me. The two teams I play for, playing against each other, at the club where my sons play and I spend many hours at on most summer weekends. It was a bit like you and your girlfriend's parents meeting for the first time. Except that that meeting also take place at your school in front of your teachers.

At least we all had cricket to talk about. And somewhat unexpectedly an exciting game emerged from what seemed to be a hopeless cause at the halfway stage. Your captain and correspondent lost the toss and we were put in to bat first on a decent-looking Streatham and Marlborough CC track. Anand (3-0-10-1) was hostile with the new ball and bowled McKeon (A) (6) with a sharp yorker. Plahe, with 4-0-20-3, was the pick of the Superstars' bowlers, while three run outs did not help the Mandarins' cause much either, especially as two of them were Graeme Tunbridge (2) and Chris Healey (12). But Baxter retired on 25 and returned to top his score up to 38 which, with the addition of a generous 27 extras and a useful 11 from Andy Heard, was enough to take the score up to 108 before the Mandarins were all out with two balls unused in the innings.

It still looked a fair bit under par. But inspired by a rallying cry from 'keeper Healey ("let's go and show them what sh*t cricket really looks like!"), the Mandarins produced a stronger bowling performance that took the game into a tense death over. Openers Spencer and Diwakar were watchful against Martin Hurst's excellent spell (4-1-10-1) before Diwakar (6) let loose a cut and was well caught at point by Graeme. Spencer (25*) and Saunders (26*) both then bedded in for a while before retiring, aware that four or five an over was enough to keep the Superstars comfortably on track.

But things got a fair bit more interesting in the middle overs with Williams run out for two; danger man Anand (7) top-edging a pull to Healey from Randi (who fully deserved his 3-0-12-1); Hemingway run out for one; and then Hewlett clean bowled in the same over for two; leaving the score delicately poised at 82-5 with four overs to go. That left Gigg (12*) and Duggan (5*) to perform something a rescue act, but one that was not without its chances. Three were required from the final over which was entrusted to JC Gray with instructions to be as tight as his Treasury purse strings. And, HMT man in the age of austerity that he is, he willingly obliged. A dot, a single and another dot had the Mandarins daring to dream. But Duggan got his bat on the next one, set off for a sharp single and the run out attempt ended up being overthrows. The Superstars came back for a two and the match was won with two balls to spare.

A close game and cheap pints of good beer from the club bar in the evening sunshine afterwards - at what is always a beautiful ground with good pitches - led to talk of making this an annual fixture. Hopefully it is a relationship that will last.

Mandarins 108 ao. (19.3 / 20 overs). Superstars CC 109-5

Dan Forman

Tuesday, 11 July 2017

Not Close at Whitchurch-on-Thames

Whitchurch pitched up with a pretty decent batting side whereas we boasted 8 bowlers and a long, long tail.

A negotiated toss resulted in them scoring 241 - 3, but several costly drops, even from people who normally bag them, probably made a big difference. Both opening bats made 50s. Our bowling was all-round tidy with no-one taking any particular tap. Robin, JC & of course Martin probably performed best; Paul McIntyre rolled out his seam-up fare to decent effect, first time in a few years I reckon.

Robin and Jon Porter opened, Robin eventually making a 50-odd with a lot of support from David Williams (48, retired in frustration at the difficult in scoring). Oskar came in next, and once he'd realised the best approach was to "think hockey", did start to make some runs. But not the rest of us, who mostly went down in flames trying to squeeze too many runs from too few overs. We even managed to present a Whitchurch "novelty bowler" (he won't mind the term) with the rarest 4-fer.

Anyway, everyone seemed to enjoy this inaugural fixture and it looks like we'll do it again next year. The ground is one I play at regularly and is lovely, if perhaps bijou and with an occasionally perplexing surface. I forget to take any pictures but the one below I took in 2012 gives a taste.

Andy Heard



Monday, 3 July 2017

Mandarins Winning Streak Ends On One

Mandarins 109 all out (Forman D 41, J X Strass 18) lost by seven wickets to North Enfield 110 for 3 (Forman S 1 -16).

It was a perfect day, the Mandarins won the toss, the cumulative ages of the two sides probably just favoured the (younger) Mandarins, a rare enough event these days, as Mandarins fielded some exciting new talent, so all was set for a splendid contest.

Then we batted.

I blame myself. Should have anchored the innings so that mad fool Lowen could flay them at the other end. Runs were there on a slow but blameless wicket, for patient people. Sadly we didn't have any of them. 19 without loss became 53 for 8 before the 20th over. The higher and slower they tossed it the more we missed it. Humiliation was avoided by Dan Forman making his top score for Mandarins, well supported by Paul and JC as almost all the overs were used up.

We took tea buoyed by last year's fixture where 109 had been a competitive score. Stan Forman used the slope well, kept the ball full and claimed the prized wicket of the big biffer. JC was more expensive but bowled many juffers and got the other opener.

Now, could our spinners emulate theirs? They could certainly toss it high and slow. It is now necessary to describe newcomer Jaz's first over, bowling left arm leg spin, with two men correctly positioned to defend the very short leg side boundary. Third ball is hit straight to, and through, perfectly positioned Arvind, squeezing over for 6. The next is hit exactly the same, with exactly the same result except that Arvind uses his face as well as his hands to get it over the boundary. 6 and a bloodied lip. Challenged that he couldn't possibly do it again, the batsman rather unsportingly hit the next one well over Arvind and into the forest. Arvind retires for first aid (fans will be reassured that he is dentally intact, unblemished and ready for action).

So North Enfield triumph with 20 overs to spare and we are left regretting those 100 extra runs we needed to make a fist of it. But a friendly fixture at a pretty ground. Let's hope we can do better next time.

Chris Baker

Sunday, 2 July 2017

More on Streatham & Marlborough

Can I add a short piece to Tim's excellent report?

Some of us were disconcerted to see John Major come in to bat for Streatham at number 5. Not only was there a physical identity but he took up Major's classical side-on stance. On closer inspection, he was slightly taller and thinner than the real thing, and, over tea, he told us he was a socialist. But, when he came on to bowl later on, he wore his flannels tucked inside his socks, in a most uncanny echo of those Steve Bell cartoons....

Paul McIntyre

Monday, 26 June 2017

Mandarins Vs Streatham and Marlborough

Stop Press: First Mandarins Victory of 2017

Our correspondent writes: A first victory of the season at Streatham and Marlborough yesterday. They scored 225-5 in 40 overs. We reached the runs for 4 wkts in the 39th over, despite having been 14-2. The powerful Mandarins middle order came to the rescue - Brand (62) and Tunbridge (79) shared an excellent 136 run partnership for the third wicket, then Arvind (24*) and Baxter (32*) saw us home.

Full report to follow....

Well it was a long time coming, but finally there is a 2017 Mandarins victory to report.

It came against that notable South London club Streatham and Marlborough Cricket Club. Streatham won the toss and batted, with Hurst and Eastaway taking the new ball for the Mandarins. Both bowled well; Martin in particular could have picked up a very early wicket when a low chance to Pharaoh at slip went begging, the first of several tricky chances to go astray. At 30-0 after ten overs came the first bowling change. Robin Pharaoh found that one of the openers (inevitably the one he had dropped) rather liked his bowling and the scoring rate accelerated somewhat. Cooke (2-35 off 8 overs) and McIntyre (2-51) both bowled well, and Hurst further distinguished himself by taking two catches. For Streatham Gibbens scored a very good 92, before falling to Dan Forman, whilst Taper hit a quick 39* at the close. Streatham reached 225-5 off their 40 overs.

Fortified by a most excellent tea (for the record, chips and pastries featured heavily) the Mandarins began their reply. Pharaoh was promoted to opening ("I will aim to keep up with the scoring rate"); he scored 4. Dominic Herrington was cruelly bowled first ball by one which rolled back onto the stumps.

But if the beginning of the innings was weak and wobbly, what followed was strong and stable. The left-right partnership of Brand and Tunbridge took charge: Sam struggled at first, but got better and better over time and played the shot of the day, a clip off middle stump to the midwicket boundary off the Streatham skipper. Graeme played great shots all-round the wicket. Both ran very well. Streatham tried 9 different bowlers (and three wicketkeepers) in their quest for the breakthrough. The score had reached 150 when Sam fell for 62. A tiring Tunbridge followed run out for 79 on 170. Baxter (32*) and Arvind (24*) then put on a quick 50 partnership to take the Mandarins home to complete a 6 wicket victory in the 39th over.

A final word of thanks to Streatham who never tried to close the game down. An overs game played in a timed game spirit.

Tim Baxter

Monday, 12 June 2017

Mandarins Claim Unlikely Victory in Predicted Defeat

After five straight defeats, the pundits had written off the Mandarin Nickistas facing the "strong and stable" Ad Hocs in Dulwich. But what do the experts know?

Ad Hocs reached 214 – just short of their expectations after a bright early showing. The Nickistas responded with 160 for 9, far better than anyone hoped.

In a 40 over game, Ad Hocs celebrated (quietly) a victory. But since the Nickistas always prefer a declaration game (and, indeed, thought they should have been playing one) they reckoned the clash a draw – with a moral victory to the Mandarins.

Ad Hocs were away to a rapid start with the opening pair taking them to 100 of the first 20. The only pronounced swing was from Rob Eastaway (30-3) bowling into the stiff wind from offshore but there was some fine supporting performances from Robin Pharoah (38-1) and Paul McIntyre (37-1). The other bowling (Randi Barman, John McNerney, Graeme Tunbridge and Owen Cooke) held up well through the latter stages as did the wicket-keeping of an outsider called George (Warren), who never gave one smug smile when the going got tough.

There were, however, several vocal (indeed, liberal) suggestions to skipper Nick Davidson to re-shuffle his field placings and plug a contested gap on the right side of the batsman. These democratic urgings were mainly ignored by a captain who was not to be moved from his clear (and fully costed) action plan by mere advisers.

As the Nickistas, batted, there were some policy discussions over the rate required (“it’s 3 an over; no, that’s 6; oh sorry, let me check; where’s my calculator?; I don’t feel well.....”) and the best policy for ensuring it. Quick wickets (David Lowen, Tunbridge, Warren) suggested this would be a labour of some effort. However, a fightback from Sam Brand (35) and Barman (36) ensured a significant reply and Cooke (13) and Pharoah (26 not out) prevented humiliation. McIntyre with Pharoah saw out the close never looking in trouble but without forcing a re-count.

Clearly, there will need to be a re-think on some policies but I suspect the chairman and committee can be satisfied with the performance. There may need to be a re-match before season end to clarify “who rules the greensward?” It’s clear which side now has Momentum...

David Lowen

Monday, 5 June 2017

Defeat at Charlantans

Mandarins 89 all out. Charlantans 90 for 1 (after 14.3 overs). Charlantans won by 9 wickets.

For the second year running, the decision to reduce this game from 40 overs to 35 overs proved to be academic, as the Mandarins were inserted and crept to a feeble 89 all out inside 31 overs. We could blame the fact that we were at least one batsman short (12 year old Harry Forman was a noble stand-in at number 11), and that skipper Dan Forman had needed to bring Jeremy Jarvis out of retirement. Or we could blame the accurate Charlantans bowling which rarely gave an opportunity to hit to the short boundary on the far side. Then there was the pitch – slow and low as always, and seaming all over the place (at least for their bowlers). Or it could have been our running between the wickets. Lowen set the tone, calling Jarvis for a suicidal single to backward point when it wasn’t his call, to leave Jarvis a couple of yards short; later in the innings there was a Hurst/Eastaway mix-up followed by a McIntyre/Forman sharp call that proved to be too sharp, making three run outs out of ten dismissals. Or it could have been the misfortune of losing McNerney, who was batting confidently when he clipped the ball sweetly to backward square only to find the one Charlantans fielder who seemed able to catch on the day. Whatever, it meant a return to one of those sub-hundred totals that we hoped we’d left behind in 2016.

The ball was sufficiently unused that we had the option to stick with it instead of taking a new ball. There were as many opinions on this as there were players...“A new ball might move more”...“but it’ll go the boundary faster”...“but we need to take wickets”...“the spinners might prefer it softer”...“surely you’d never turn down the chance to use a new ball?”. In the end, with no bowler expressing strong preference either way, we opted to take the new ball. And lo, the ball did indeed fly to the boundary faster. The first six came in the fourth over off Hurst, though the batsman was then bowled by a beauty next ball. A strong lbw shout was turned down in the next over (looked plumb to me – Ed) but that was it – not a snifter of a chance thereafter. Number 3 batted as if he had a party to get to in ten minutes, sprinting for twos and threes and several times almost lapping his partner. By the time first change McIntyre came on, Charlatans need about 15 to win, and No.3 began launching into reverse sweeps – frankly by now it felt as if they were just taking the p*ss.

It was Dan Forman who bowled the final over (or three balls of it anyway) as Charlatans completed the formalities.

In the early years of this fixture, these used to be close, nail-biting, high-scoring games. That seems like a distant memory now.

Rob Eastaway

Monday, 29 May 2017

Mandarins Fail to Make Six an Over in Woolwich

Millfields (244-8) beat Mandarins (110-7) by 105 runs (chasing reduced target of 215 after five overs were deducted for rain)

Thanks to Dan Forman for arranging an attractive new fixture for the Bank Holiday weekend. Four union flags flew in front of the striking former Royal Military Academy in Woolwich (though the medieval pastiche of the building came in for some acerbic architectural criticism from McIntyre), with trees surrounding the rest of the ground to mask the proximity of the South Circular. The opposition were convivial and the tea excellent - quinoa salad a Mandarins first, as well as delicious carrot cup-cakes. And the Red Lion afterwards is a pub worth looking out if you find yourself in that part of SE London.

The Mandarins took the field with a novel side including three Formans, two McKeons and two Davidsons (Esther rather than Louis this time) as well as, crucially, new recruit, Simon Gundry, a friend and colleague of Dan's. Having won the toss and decided to bat in a 40 over game, Millfields had an uncertain start, with Gundry taking two wickets in his first over with fast, straight bowling. But those proved the only Mandarins successes for some time as Collis (133 not out) and Laghan (78) batted with increasing assurance, despite good spells from both Stan Forman and younger brother Harry.

Late drama was injected when Gundry, brought back for his second four overs, proceeded to take a hat-trick (bowled, LBW, bowled) with further accuracy and pace, finishing with an impressive 6 for 30. Had one of three or four chances in the field been taken the final score might have been somewhat more modest (but then, how often have Mandarins correspondents written that). As it was, 244 looked commanding, four ducks on the batting sheet notwithstanding.

After three overs the Mandarins innings was interrupted by a heavy shower which further slowed both the pitch and an already slow and large out-field. Apart from Gundry (34), no batsman really got going. Extras was top score with 36, including an impressive 19 wides. As this data point

suggests, although we were never in contention during our innings, nor did the game feel like a complete mis-match. As one or two nostalgic players commented from the boundary, if this had been a declaration game, with Forman *pere* and McIntyre batting out the draw under glowering skies, the last half of the game could have been quite a lot more interesting. But it was a very pleasant afternoon nonetheless.

Nick Davidson

Tuesday, 23 May 2017

Mandarins lose to BBC in high scoring season opener

On a gorgeous day at the cunningly concealed ground of Amersham Hill CC, BBC Mishits prevailed over Mandarins by 6 wickets in a keenly contested and amusing game. So warm were the conditions that there were two drinks breaks in each innings, a feature particularly appreciated by those Mishits whose favoured form of drinks were the flasks of rum cunningly concealed behind the scoreboard

Controversially opening in place of Temple ("Thanks Chris. Literally the first time in my entire career I haven't opened."), Manian and Lowen edged forward against useful bowling from Roop, and gentler stuff from Nav, before gamely departing. No.3 made little difference to Barrie's pet mode of dismissal, and the inevitable LBW followed. The meat of the innings was left to Sam Brand, whose composed 33 included a couple of marvellous back foot punches, and David Williams, who eventually got bored of scratching around and instead despatched everything that wasn't a half volley over square leg for a stream of much needed boundaries. One moment of outright controversy did occur though. Bottom edging a cut from a gentle spinner into the keeper's gloves, Narayan seemed to be the only person on the ground not to notice. Eventually he was alerted to his mistake by a combination of the umpire having reluctantly to actually raise his finger, and the keeper explaining at close quarters and indeed at some length what had occurred. Maximum style points in the innings was reserved for Eastaway, who made a superb unbeaten 30 at his usual number 8, reminding us all of what might have been a career spent up the order instead. 185-8 was about par, even if the declaration, slightly after the nominal tea time, did also leave open the prospect of bowling slightly more overs back than we had faced.

Rob and Andy then bowled tight opening spells (assisted by one of the openers being unwilling to run for more than a single at a time), Andy adding a wicket with a deliberate and skilful deflection of a fierce drive onto the stumps. Hurst came on and increased the pressure, although against good batting, runs were still coming. Martin eventually won a couple of battles, but this year the depth in the Mishits line up was just a little too much for us. A couple of huge sixes launched off the bowling of your correspondent by his old friend Maurice Sukul eased the tension, and from then on we were always second favourite. Still we took it almost all the way, but the chance never came and after 43 and a bit overs, Mishits crossed the line, if not at a canter or without alarm, then certainly without too much difficulty.

Chris Healey

Tuesday, 16 May 2017

Mandarins don't take it lion down in Naryan's last stand

WG XI 200-6 beat Mandarins 179 all out

You can sometimes hear the London Zoo lions from the cricket pitches of Regent's Park and, while the Mandarins didn't quite catch our kill on this occasion, we didn't roll over like the pussycats of last season's fixture either.



Your correspondent's late arrival meant that he missed the first six overs in the field but he was pleasantly surprised on arrival to find the WG XI already 41-4. He later discovered this was due to an inspired bowling change whereby Robin Pharoah asked to be taken off after just one over of his spell, complaining that the mild breeze he was running into was playing havoc with his run up. A surprisingly sympathetic skipper acceded to the request and brought on the ever-obliging workhorse Arvind Manian instead, who promptly took three wickets in as many overs, backed up by Owen Cooke who bagged a brace of his own and some most unMandarin-like fielding consistency in which no catches were dropped and a couple of good ones (McIntyre and Pharoah) were even taken.

The spin twins of Forman and McIntyre then put the brakes on the WG innings further, conceding just nine runs each from the first five over of their respective spells. But a late lower middle order blitz against all of the bowling nonetheless took WG to an imposing 200-6 from their 40 overs whereupon tea was taken amid not much confidence about the chase, given the previous year's paltry efforts on this track.

And at 33-3 (and the loss of Narayan for 19 in what we hope won't be his last ever appearance for the club but will be his last for a while) that lack of confidence was looking well founded. Yet that was before the arrival of Chris Healey at the crease. Ably supported by first Manian and then Pharoah, Healey's sparkling 78 was made all the harder by two rain delays which turned the outfield from a big cat-like to a sloth-like speed.

The weather was sadly also responsible for the end of his innings at 157-6 when his partner slipped and Chris turned back but failed to make his ground. The tail almost saw out the 40 overs but were never quite in reach of the winning score, ending up 179 all out. The lions roared, even if the Mandarins didn't. But we did at least restore some pride.

Danny Forman