

MATCH REPORT
LNZCC vs FLASHMEN CC
3 JULY 2022

Chris Martin once said, “confusion that never stops, closing walls and ticking clocks.”

With two variations of the team sheet on Google Drive, and a revolving door of participants on the Signal group chat, a bit like Boris Johnson’s caucus, it was anyone’s guess who would make the final XI at Culham Court on Henley against the Flashmen - a dynamic expat side from South Africa. A war of attrition flared with the Rona, an Achilles Heel, and a faulty alarm clock causing chaos for LNZ’s panel of selectors.

The toss fortuitously took place at 11:40am, 10 minutes after the scheduled 11:30am start, at which point LNZ had assembled a Last Man Stands side of 8. Fortunately, we won the toss, creating some breathing room to field an XI by electing to bat on a rather juicy green wicket with blue skies above.

Adam Khanbhai and **Shaun Raumati** were thrilled at the opportunity to open the account for LNZ and face up to Morne Morkel’s doppelganger as the sun danced on the morning dew.

Khanbhai quickly assessed the situation and began flashing his hands, blazing a couple of boundaries before departing on 8. Score 17/1.

With Google Maps causing navigation mischief on the back streets of Henley - and in the scorebook - **Jacob Vanner** strolled out at number 3 under the name of **Richard Burgess**. This turned out to be a blessing in disguise, as **Vanner**, who learned his craft and gained wisdom at Marist Harewood CC, the gritty club that boasts the **Hairy Javelin** as alumni, would give the Flashmen a taste of their own medicine. **Vanner**, in just his 4th LNZ outing, made no comment on the wicket, and quickly went to work helping get LNZ to 50 in the 12th over with support from **Raumati**.

Raumati did a fine job taking the shine off the new ball in his innings of 22 that included a couple of stylish boundaries and a well-timed 6 over long leg before being bowled. At 73/2 after 17 overs, **Tim McClean** joined **Vanner**, who both went to work on accelerating the run rate with a 49-run partnership off 7 overs as Vanner brought up his run-a-ball 50.

After a series of elegant strokes and boundaries from McClean, he too was undone and bowled by Flashmen skipper Wes Gouverneur. LNZ 132/3 off 24 overs. It was around this period LNZ technically had 11 players present with **John Shea** arriving. Unfortunately for **Shea**, who was originally selected in the XI, could only spectate, as he hobbled on crutches and a moon boot. The Taranaki Massive, **Leith Cowie**, still yet to be seen.

The wicket of **McClean** brought **Ben Fulton** to the crease who suspected 250 might be par as the wicket began to flatten out. Over the next 12 overs the Cantabrian pair of **Fulton** and **Vanner** went into magician mode scoring 82 runs, pushing the run rate close to 6 runs an over. The flow of runs only temporarily halted due to the delicious banquet of food served at lunch (32nd over) from Baron Wrottesley’s marquee.

As **Fulton** departed for 44 off 40, **Jacob Vanner** soldiered on racing through the 90’s to bring up a better than run-a-ball maiden century for London New Zealand. **Vanner** provided a masterclass on how to build an innings, turn over the strike, and show aggression when needed. **Vanner** was eventually out caught for a magnanimous 109.

London New Zealand scrapped to a more than respectable 246 off 40 overs thanks to some selfless batting from **Brendon Read**, the real **Richard Burgess**, and **Vance Thompson**, in the final overs.

Even more respectably, LNZ took the field with XI fit players, as the Taranaki Massive, **Leith Cowie**, arrived after several train swaps, and an SoS pickup from **Shekhar Aryan**. Better late than never. (*Chairman note to all players to please try and ensure that you make the start of games*).

As promised, **Cowie** was given the new ball alongside **Nick Teulon**, with instructions to mark out the long run-up for the sins of his faulty alarm clock.

Teulon and **Cowie** both dusty from Saturday adventures, battled away. **Teulon** managed to get a lucky breakthrough, an LBW, without even appealing...

With the Flashmen cruising at around 5 an over, and some wayward bowling, Brendon Read and **Shekhar Aryan** made it into the attack. **Read** consistent as ever, tied up an end and forced scoreboard pressure. **Aryan**, in just his second delivery took out the off peg of Flashmen skipper Wes Gouverneur, putting LNZ in pole position. This was a major moment in the game given Gouverneur had smacked LNZ to all corners of the park last year.

After 16 overs at Tea, Flashmen made it to 72/2, with the RRR now over 7. Tea, once again, was a real treat, with cakes, scones, and sandwiches aplenty. Coming into the final stretch of the game, and without the risk of Rose derailing hopes of an inaugural 2022 victory in sight, LNZ walked back onto the field with some swagger.

Vance Thompson led the attack after Tea, collecting two LBW's in consecutive deliveries, as the Flashmen started showing signs of a dangerous counter attack. Score 153/4 at 26 overs. Unfortunately for LNZ all the wickets had fallen from one end. Another major story was emerging at the other end. The story of opener Andrew Mills.

Whilst Mills had toiled away to his half century off 69 balls, what came next was pure devastation for London New Zealand, with Mills accelerating from 50 to 100 in just 24 deliveries, bludgeoning **Aryan**, **Raumati**, and **Fulton** to all corners of Culham Court.

Cowie and **Teulon** returned to the attack but without the luck of magical LBW's in the final spell to conjure up a last minute comeback. Mills, the real wizard, finished up with an unbeaten 135, and secured another win for the Flashmen, who completed their mission with 3 overs to go.

London New Zealand would like to extend our gratitude to the Flashmen for hosting us in another fun outing at the picturesque Culham Court at Henley and providing enjoyable after match activities that included a pilgrimage through fields of gold for a dip in the Thames.

Congratulations once again to **Jacob Vanner**, on his maiden LNZCC century, may your fine form continue this season.