

LNZCC v Hartley Wintney CC

1 May 2023

Match report by Scott Baldwin

"The day that started well"

The day started well. Unbelievably, everyone was on time and relatively sober. The pub lunch undid at least one of those two good things. It is possible that the pre beers may have had an impact on later events. The Hartley captain, also a kiwi and LNZCC member, James Mulvey, joined us for a beer (*author notes the obvious tolerance being shown by James in comparison to LNZCC usual lack of checks and balances!*) and the toss was done over the table. We were to field first.

Dion Laban-Jeffries, on debut, heroically bowled the first over - and the only one of his spell. He was not cruelly subbed by the captain, but instead had risen from his deathbed earlier in the day just so he didn't feel he had let the team down. What a hero! ...and I feel there will be more than just that over in his LNZCC tally before the end of the season. Down the other end was Ian Souness, also on debut. Both did well, but the wet made it hard to control the ball. Shekhar felt the same, and Hartley got off to a good start hitting some nice boundaries aided by a few wides.

Souness, after consecutive boundaries and a requested field change from the captain, replied with "How about I just bowl a good ball instead" - this got the ball rolling. He was as good as his word. Hartley were soon stuttering at 55/4. Souness with another. But, as they were to do throughout, the home side were able to get a partnership on the go. Kristy Havill bowled very consistently, as did Griegan Pankhurst, but we just couldn't nab the wicket. Hartley batted well as conditions improved and the sun came out. Angus Philpot, also on debut and one of the finds of the day, and probably of the season, volunteered to bowl at the short end (which is a 30 metre straight hit, traditionally a spinner's graveyard) and displayed great control, breaking the partnership. (*Editor's note: Scotty is too modest to mention his role in this key wicket. The set batsman took on the short boundary, smashing an uppish drive between the bowler and the LNZ skipper at mid-off. As the ball rocketed towards a seemingly-inevitable one-bounce four, out of nowhere came the right hand of a fully-horizontal Scott Baldwin, mid-Superman dive, to pluck the missile out of midair. One of the best catches you could hope to see at any level of the sport!*). Hamish Fall-Anderson also chipped in with a wicket down the other end and Hartley quickly found themselves in a lot of trouble at 107/7.

As skipper I had asked Hartley to put together a strong team for the match as I felt we had one. So, batting nine and looking the part, out walked their strongest player,

recruited by yours truly from a neighbouring club. It was a decision we were to regret as he belted some enormous sixes, lost a couple of balls and got them to 208. Probably just above a par score, but gettable all the same.

Lunch was to die for. Hartley put on a great spread. The scorer, Colin, produced 2 boxes of beers, one of Tui and one of Speights. He also produced some authentic NZ lollycake, baked for the occasion. Total legend. James, their skipper, produced some classic cheese rolls. On top of that there was the actual lunch! Amazing stuff and a huge thank you to them for making us feel so welcome.

Whether it was overindulgence in the beer or a feeling of comfort based on home cooking, or maybe a ruthless and unrelenting Hartley side, who can say? All there really is to say is that there is not really much to say about our batting (I confused myself writing that). We lost regular wickets and found it very hard to score runs. Kristy did well to hold up an end and make it through to 20. Sadly, no-one could stay with her long enough to make an impact. We were bowled out for 87.

Kristy got player of the match for her consistent bowling and stoic batting. Colin the scorer got person of the match for his generosity. He has also said that he is keen to score any LNZCC games, so match managers, do get in touch with him!

It was great to see so many on debut, sadly we didn't get the result, but we did have a great day out. I hope to see some more of you there next year!