

LNZCC v Number 10 Downing Street CC

17 May 2023

Match report by Peter Bellamy

“Don’t bring politics into cricket” is the rallying cry of many a cricket fan, but politics and cricket have always been inextricably intertwined. Maybe it’s the strong opinions and large crowds both draw, but from politicking cricketers to statesmen who have tried their hand at the game, the two fields have long been bedfellows.

Sport and nationhood have also been tightly entwined, our beautiful but quirky game is not immune especially for young Commonwealth countries that have sought to break the shadow of their Colonial past. In Pakistan and India the links are obviously strong with Sachin Tendulkar and Imran Khan transforming into leading lights in their countries political systems. In New Zealand, Parliament has had some form of cricket team since at least 1884. Team alumni include Sir Robert Muldoon, Rt. Hon. Sir Geoffrey Palmer, Jim Anderton, Rt. Hon Bill English, Sir Roger Douglas and Sir Joseph Ward. Closer to Blighty there has also been a long line of prime ministers who have played at a senior level, or did not play but had a deep and abiding love for the game, including Clement Attlee (prime minister 1945-1951), Alec Douglas-Home (prime minister 1963-1964), and more recently, John Major (prime minister 1990-1997). The latter was not just a keen cricket enthusiast but also a promising cricketer in his youth before a plane crash injury ended his playing days. He was a devoted Surrey man all his life, becoming president of the club in 2000, and when his party was ousted in 1997 and he had to step down as prime minister, he ended his resignation speech by saying, “I hope that Norma and I will be able, with the children, to get to The Oval in time for lunch and for some cricket this afternoon.”

Set against these strong histrionics, LNZCC played our first game against a cricket team from Number 10 Downing Street. It is also noted that was also our first official T20 game against an opposition Club. The game was played in good spirit and LNZCC were to come out victorious having dominated initially with the bat (after a bit of a shaky start having Jacob Vanner doing his best impression of a mallard) and then making quick work with the ball. The game was to end with LNZCC 183/7 (20) and No. 10 89 (16.3). LNZCC winning by 94 runs. There were some strong individual performances - Kristy Havill continued to show her all round abilities (23 and 2-8); Andrew Haines 29*, Russell Kyne 26* and Josh Wright 25* all flourished with the bat; Jacob Vanner was imperious behind the stumps; and Shaun Raumatī (2-9), Mike McClean and Ryan Allan contributed nicely with the ball (Shaun just missing out on a very (very, very) close hat-trick). In the field Vaughan Robertson prowled like a Mack Truck and there were some great throws the stumps including a rocket from Ryan Allan that was eagerly snaffled by the author

for a run out. At the close of the game Kristy Havill was awarded Ma'am of the Match honors and following a some shared beers and a few conversations about party gate (yes - some were involved!) both teams went their separate ways - all well nourished from a fine serving of evening sport.