

LNZCC v Broadhalfpenny Brigands CC

21 May 2023

Match report by Hamish Falls-Anderson

"A Long Wait Between Overs"

After a long 5 year absence, the fixture against the esteemed Broadhalfpenny Brigands finally came back to fruition. Unlike the previous few years there was no rain nor coronavirus to spoil our day but quite the opposite as our patience to play this fixture was rewarded with barely a cloud in the sky.

Making our way through the glorious Hampshire countryside on a rather fine Sunday morning one and all flocked to the 'Bat and Ball' pub adjacent to the Brigands' ground for a pre-match spot of lunch and perhaps a libation for those who saw fit. The lunch was absolutely sublime and as one outlined at the table the food must have been so good due to how quiet it was at the dining table while eating and given the beloved and equally talkative Marty Conway was in great form as always, for there to have been almost total silence while eating that goes to show the quality of the spread. Following some great conversation which turned political at one point, Roast Pork, and Peroni's we made our way across the road to the ground to get play underway.

The ground itself is very well positioned and one could not help spending some time admiring the rolling hills and crops of Hampshire in the distance. However we weren't there simply to admire the view but play game of cricket - so a coin was tossed, in which Tony Penman (TP) "loomed in the background and ensured it was conducted in an orderly manner" Skipper and Guardian of the club treasure chest Ryan Allan (Rhino) called correctly and asked The Brigands to have a bat.

Play got underway at 2pm with Rhino and Griegan Pankhurst taking the fresh rock, both opened up very tidily. Despite both bowlers hitting a consistent line and length outside the off stump the most notable thing to come from the opening overs was the extreme carry through to keeper George Moore off the recently relaid Brigand's pitch.

Captain Rhino continued to hone in on a superb line just outside the off stump, and was rewarded after he clattered the front pad of one of the Brigand's openers only leaving current club umpire George Doughty to do the rest and raise the finger, which he most certainly did. With the score at 8/1 and the ball coming on nicely the remaining Brigand's opener got underway well with some textbook batting to all parts of the ground most notably with some flowing cover drives one of which I was unfortunate to wear on the foot at short cover.

It looked like there would be a good contest between bat and ball right throughout the day with the score at 24 for 1 when Rhino struck again, cleaning out the Brigands No.3.

Griegan then got in on the wicket taking and removed the No.4 catching his outside edge for a regulation catch through to b. At 3 for 39 bowling changes were made with Shaun Raumati and Tony Penman entering the attack. John Dennis (JD) was soon to replace TP and bowled tidily in a partnership with Raumati. JD well and truly had his bag of tricks on display and absolutely bamboozled the Brigands batsmen, his spin wizardry proved immensely fruitful when after 4 overs he had 2 for 2.

At 90 odd for 5, more spin was introduced from both ends in the form of Angus Philpott and Hamish Falls-Anderson. This spinning duo didn't take long to make a breakthrough when umpire Doughty adjudged the Brigands No.6 to have been struck in front off the bowling of Falls-Anderson, at the fall of this wicket drinks were taken with the score at 104 for 4.

Following some incredibly concentrated Raro, well I assume probably not actual Raro but nevertheless some very concentrated orange concoction, play got back underway.

Soon after drinks, Philpott opened his wicket account catching the batsmen's bottom edge and leaving George Moore to take a very sharp grab behind the stumps. The batsman, hailing from South Africa, stood his ground but then the umpire showed no inclination to change his mind and suitably gave the batsman his marching orders. The score now sitting at 110 for 7.

The Brigands batsmen delivered a couple of lofty blows towards the surrounding fields before Falls-Anderson struck again with a well flighted ball getting the Brigand's No.9 through the gate. Philpott continued to bowl well from the other end and made the most of the hard pitch generating some considerable turn. Following some agricultural batting in direction of the neighbouring cornfields on the leg side, Falls-Anderson picked up another two wickets in quick succession to wrap up the 1st innings and leave the men of London New Zealand 148 to win in the second innings.

A very honourable fielding mention must go to debutant Cormac Hodson who fielded superbly all innings and would have easily saved 30 runs when you add his superb stops at short cover and also the countless balls he chased out to the boundary and prevented going for four. Cormac, very deservedly, was awarded the 3 fielding points.

Following some on field interviews, yet another splendid afternoon tea offering was served featuring a quite delectable rocky road slice which I would hate to think how many pieces of it I had throughout the afternoon. Thankfully the only treats being enjoyed were the Rocky Road, and no Rosé, so clearly we were there with the intention to do business and chase down the first innings total of 147 set by the Brigands.

George Moore and Cormac Hodson opened up and it didn't seem to get off to a great start when Moore edged the very first ball of the innings through to the Brigand's keeper only for him to forget you aren't supposed to catch like a crocodile leading him to picking the ball up off the floor. Unfortunately, Hodson couldn't add to his fielding heroics and was soon to find out what the phrase "You're on the gear bag" meant when he was cleaned out.

Moore was keen to capitalise on the lifeline he'd been given by the Brigands keeper and along with Nick Ratcliffe got the score ticking over nicely with some intelligent stroke play around the ground, when Nick was caught the score sat at 40 odd for 2 bringing Angus Philpott to the crease, Moore continued on well and Philpott got in on the run scoring with some batting that was very easy on the eye unfortunately his innings could only be described as "a good start" when he was dismissed for 11.

Whoever scored our second innings made the ill-fated mistake to not record any of the scores when wickets fell so I am going to say that at this stage we were around 75 for 3. Moore really upped the ante and started to put some of the Brigands bowlers to the sword in what was fast becoming a superb innings, he was a pleasure to watch bat with elegant strokes coming in abundance. As we were steadily on our way to victory John Shea and Josh Wright both added tidy cameos before also both being bowled. With what I can only describe as "Bugger all" to win we lost a few more wickets than we would have liked, with Raumati, TP and Falls-Anderson all falling in quick succession.

Moore, determined to put an end to the nerves starting to enter the LNZ dugout, finished the match off with a well struck boundary leaving him undefeated on a very well compiled 78, awarding London New Zealand the victory by 3 wickets with a good hour or so still left to spare in our timed innings.

Post match, we enjoyed speeches from both captains where John Dennis was awarded man of the match for his superb spin bowling masterclass. I'm not sure what it is with our opposition providing flat beer as of late but some keg of South African brew was brought out. Unfortunately it didn't quite hit the spot so we all headed to the 'Bat and Ball' for a pint or two, where we enjoyed the sight of the sun setting across the playing arena.

An absolutely superb day was enjoyed by all, a great level of appreciation must go to Ryan for all his efforts in arranging the day's play. Rhino achieved the main roles of a match manager perfectly by ensuring a victory was captured and everyone had an enjoyable day. Thanks Rhino!