

LNZCC v Richmond CC
27 August 2017

Whilst others were perhaps sunning themselves on the Continent, dancing in a South London field to EDM or grooving to Caribbean beats in West London, a clear and very warm late summer day greeted those LNZCC players who had chosen to spend their precious Bank Holiday weekend on the cricket pitch.

An unusual predicament faced the skipper Jonty Vavasour for the day, for once our team was stronger in the bowling department. No longer the need to rely on one or two strike bowlers, we had the pace of Club Professional (*Ed's note: for Four Elms, not for us*) Elliot Jaffe and Sam Two-vests Martin, the change ups from the Adam Horvath the Hairy Hungarian and V-for-Vorn Robertson who'd spent his night harpooning, the tenacity and guile of TP, and then not to mention the ever-reliable JD and his value- additive banter.

Having said that, the pitch looked flat and dry and it was without hesitation the skipper decided to have a bat in the 45 over contest. A few new faces in the side - Andrew "Gutters" Guthrie whose old man used to play for LNZCC back in the 70's was sent with in another earlier-in-2017 debutant Adam Khambai. After claiming he hadn't played in 8 seasons, the ease with which Gutters dispatched the opening bowler (nicknamed the Indian Karl Droggo) for two straight 6's, the trajectory of which resembled a crisp 9 iron into the fat of the green, there was a degree of "who is this guy" on the LNZCC bench. Down the other end the Richmond Gilchrist academy bowler was keeping things tight with some swift swing bowling, however after 6 overs LNZCC were well positioned at 40 odd without loss.

But as is so often the case the bowler you relax to is the one who get you, and after playing out the Australian, Khambai fell caught behind, and in strode our English import Rich Lingfield. The two combined well and knocked the ball around until Gutters' stumps were shattered for a very well made 37(31). The skipper then came in to support Rich, who after 3 consecutive boundaries tried one time too many and was caught in the covers. The skipper had scratched round for a few overs without much to write home about (or even in this report) and succumbed LBW to Droggo.

At this stage LNZCC were 3 down and at risk of floundering. Flounders ahoy! A steady procession of wickets followed and LNZCC were in some real bother at 84/5. Fortunately the mid-lower order showed some resistance with a number of useful runs from the bowlers, and as always our trusty friend "extras" was proving very effective. The Harpooner and The Hairy Hungarian chimed in for a few lusty blows at the end, however David Paice the ex-England rugby player sent out to bat at no.11 with instructions to "play out the overs" lasted only one ball, and LNZCC were all out for what was a really below par 180 some 70 runs short of what was initially the target.

The mood at the break was reflective, we knew we were short of runs. But firepower in the bowling was there. Past fixtures show the Richmond line up is top heavy and once you break the middle order, the lower order will fold fairly quickly. With that in mind and a new ball in his hand, a fired up Jaffe steamed in for his first delivery and was instantly rewarded with a crisp edge through to Khambai which was dutifully taken. The best possible start and this was immediately supported by Martin at the other end who knocked the stumps out of the ground twice in an over to leave Richmond reeling 3 down. From there, to be fair, Richmond rallied with a solid partnership to take them up into the 120s. But after keeping a lid on the run rate with tight lines from the Harpooner, JD and the yet-another-English-import named Richard (Lingfield), and some superb fielding (not

catching...) the pressure grew. It was Jaffe who picked up the crucial wicket to break the partnership and LNZZC were back in the game.

With only the tail left the skipper turned to his trump card Martin who kept it nice and full and picked up his third wicket by destroying the stumps (again.). Having noticed the marked dip in batting form, and despite suggestions from TP: "you know Vorn has a few more overs to go" the skipper selflessly bought himself on and with some support from Marty (they were all dead plumb) the last 4 wickets were wrapped up in a single over.

A come from behind win then, and one of the most satisfying fielding performances in a long time. Beers in the sun ensued - recommend the lads to get involved again next year.