

LNZCC vs Idlers Cricket Club

23/7/2017

MM Cheyne Voss

Heavy rain the day/night before left the fixture in doubt. This was a much anticipated chance to play against fellow LNZCC'er Elliot Jaffe, who happens to be the Four Elms Pro for the season. We arrived just in time to see the end of what looked like a strenuous pre game warm up.

Skipper Voss negotiated a 45 over fixture with Idlers captain Andy Stephens. The toss was won by Andy, who duly elected to bowl first; the prospect of fielding with 9 outweighed the thought of sending his openers out on a rather soft green top. Michael Gaine kindly offered to make up 10 for them in the field.

Openers Adam Khanbhai and Chris Nolan strolled out to face the new ball of Jaffe and Sean Teasdale. A couple of looseners were bowled then Jaffe quickly found his line and length, with early movement evident. Nolan edged an excellent delivery to sub fielder Gaine, who, not so gazelle like, spilled a sitter. There were 3 further chances in the next couple of overs, although nothing stuck.

Khanbhai started to swing hard, and a number of boundaries followed. The run rate came up to 5 an over.

The first wicket down was Khanbhai: a loose shot caught for 31 (35 balls, 6x4s) off the bowling of Alex Williamson. Into the middle strode Kieran Donnelly, his first game for LNZ in 2 years. Time didn't seem to have hampered his ability to play the game, immediately striking the ball off the front foot, unfortunately most of these found the field.

Lunch break: LNZ 100/1, 21 overs. What a fantastic spread, freshly carved meats of 3 types, cheese board, beautiful salads and a selection of sweets for after. This has to be why we play cricket.

Returning to the crease, the base platform laid, could the boys press on to the much needed 250+?

Nolan fell the over after lunch. Williamson now had 2, out for 33 bringing captain Voss to the middle. After a couple of sighters, he found the middle, driving Williamson to the boundary for 4. In typical Voss fashion, he called a couple of rather tight singles, almost leaving Donnelly high and dry. Jaffe came back to the bowling crease, could it be that he would go wicketless? Donnelly/Voss did their best to see out his remaining overs, until a brilliant change up slower ball yorker that undid Donnelly, out for 21. To the crease came Richard Burges who didn't waste much time finding the boundary, before coming unstuck for 5.

Debutant Sam Grayling came to the crease, a watchful 12 with some lovely cricket shots.

142/5, in strode aggressive batsman Mitchell Diamond. His previous innings for LNZ was ripping apart the North's attack (controversially on debut), in the annual North vs South

Island match. Diamond quickly launched into the slow bowling of Miles Walker, only mistiming his 4th ball straight up. Big celebration/send off from Walker, Diamond walked off with his bat between his legs.

To the crease came LNZCC's all time highest run scorer, Tony (TP) Penman, quick to remind Voss to watch his running, it was clear quick singles and 2's were out of the question.

Fear not TP, Voss fell soon after, bamboozled by a leg cutter, top edge, easily caught, 19. 152/7. 10 overs to go with 250 looking a very very long way away. TP found the gaps, as did debutant James Duncan, rotating the strike at regular intervals. Duncan unleashed a lofty off drive, unfortunately caught at deep long off right on the boundary (would have cleared the rope by 2+ had it not have been from a magnificent leap from Kevin Arnold), off the bowling of Miles Walker (finished with very respectable bowling figures of 2/39 (9)). Michael (Ganey) Gane, who had been itching to get a bat on the day, immediately intimidated the bowling, advancing down the wicket, putting them off their length, smashing the ball to the boundary.

The innings finished with LNZ 197/8, leaving TP 12* and Gainy 10*. Pick of the bowlers: Williamson 3/36 and Walker 3/39.

What LNZ game isn't complete without a full batting collapse? 197 felt very short of a par score, creating a somber mood in the dressing room. There was a quick turn around and out the boys went to field, in what felt like might be an uphill battle.

We then had one of the best LNZ fielding performances I have been a part of. Everyone added value, the bowling was extremely tight, wickets falling at regular intervals preventing any partnerships from forming, each bowling change added value. This was backed up by fantastic catching: 3 extremely sharp from keeper Duncan (standing up the the wicket vs pace), 1 stunner from Khanbhai in gully, 1 from Donnelly in the covers and then 3 LBWs from Umpire Martin Conway (two trapped in front with low full tosses, and the 3rd back pad without offering a shot; no one can complain with those, even on a Sunday).

Diamond finished the game with excellent figures of 3/11 including the first 2 wickets and the last, with a couple of overs spared for the death (but not required).

Pick of the bowlers and man of the match, Vaughan Robertson for his spell of bowling, perhaps his best for LNZ, moving the ball both ways of the seam, leaving many of the Four Elms batsmen bamboozled taking 3/24 from 8 including the prized wicket of Jaffe for a duck. He received a fine bottle of wine from Berry Bros. & Rudd, donated by Martin Conway.

Four Elms 124/10

LNZ pull off a famous victory in the end by 73 runs - Catches win matches.

Thank you to the Four Elms boys for a fantastic day of cricket, and to the team in the kitchen for a fantastic spread. If, like me, you choose your LNZ fixtures by the quality of the lunch, I look forward to seeing you next year.