

LNZCC vs Royal Household - Saturday Sept 2nd

Match Manager – Gerard Walsh

This year's fixture vs RHCC can be summarised thus: A very low-scoring game that saw a great deal of cricket (82 odd overs and 19 wickets) but not very many runs.

Having negotiated the various requirements of Royal Protection squad security in the days leading up to the fixture, we made our way once more to the ground at Frogmore Estate in the shadow of Windsor Castle. LNZ had assembled what looked like a very strong batting side but it was to prove to be a wicket that was challenging.

RH won the toss and elected to bowl. Big hitting Richard Lambie and Andrew Haines opened with Ben Fulton and Adam Khanbai to follow. Unfortunately, Ben was pressed into service on the 5th ball after Richard returned to the pavilion, out LBW to RH skipper Steve Nutt for one. Remarkably, Hainsey saw out an over without scoring which might be some sort of inter-galactic first. Ben too watched a couple, hit a four and cut the next ball straight to gully. 9-2 in the 4th. Adam K and Hainsey consolidated for a few overs, with the latter slapping some trademark backfoot boundaries before he was dismissed (bowled Glenn Morrissey) for an uncharacteristically-subdued 16 off 28 balls. That bought Justin Fredrickson to the crease to join Adam K. The Curse of the Boundary struck a second time – Adam smacked a big 6 and was out next ball. Hamish Lain looked relatively comfortable, putting together a quick 14 before Morrissey bowled him too. 56-5 and now TP was in with Justin. The two put on a crucial partnership of 35 runs from 19-odd overs, in the face of some tight accurate RH bowling. By the time Justin was out caught (an important match-high of 20 off 73 in 84 minutes) we were in the 35th over with only 91 on the board. There was much chat on the sidelines about needing to add another 60-70 quick runs before declaring somewhere around the 46-50 over mark. RH's bowling was so tight, the 36 balls from over 26th onwards went for only six run, and 4 of them were one shot. TP saw out an hour at the crease before he was caught (second catch for RH's Craig Burns off Chris Moore) for 14. The second of the 20-year plus LNZ veterans Richard Fish came and went for 3 and Adam Horvath and Vaughan (*Ed's note: that's in fact how you spell his name*) Robertson put on 20-odd important runs before Adam was out bowled in the 45th over.

Tea was called. We didn't declare fearing 118 runs was an uncompetitive total. There was much chat. Then we declared. RH needed 119 to win with 20 overs from 5.15pm.

Adam and TP opened up for LNZ. Batting was tough. The first wicket fell in the 4th over with 9 on the board when Vaughan Robertson executed a very tidy run-out. After 7 overs, RH were 17-1 then TP and Adam H both picked up wickets with Adam being on a hat-trick having dismissed opener Andy Crofts then bowling Nathan Gee first ball. Adam H got another in his 5th over, TP picked up yet another in his 9th and final over (Dave Gander LBW) and RH were 26-6 in the 17th over. The ultra-tight, accurate and successful opening spells were closed and Ben Fulton's leg spin was called in with Vaughan's seam bowling from the other. RH's best partnership (23) then followed before Vaughan kept himself in the game by snaring a catch off Ben. As the bowling figures can attest, Ben and Vaughan were proving very difficult to get away, the run-rate had slowed to a crawl and it seemed much more likely that the overs left (now down to fewer than ten overs to bowl) or the wickets remaining (three to get) would dictate the outcome of the match. It was either going to be a rear-

guard action by RH to save a batting draw or an LNZCC win. Two further wickets fell – Ben and VR taking one each - before I came in and took the last wicket with the first ball of his second over. RH were all out for 64 in the 36th over and LNZ had won by 54 runs.

It was an unusual day of cricket. None of us thought we'd scored enough runs. We thought we were at least 60 short and we turned out to be almost 60 runs long. There was some very good fielding to support some tight and miserly bowling. The Martin Conway Man of the Match award went to Adam Horvath for knocking the top of the RH innings on a day in which the bowlers did the job they needed to do to defend a total the batsmen had battled manfully to put together.

Thanks to Martin for umpiring, to Guy Walsh and Ben Walsh for maintaining the iPad scoring with David Easter from RH and to the various family, friends and supporters who came to enjoy a relatively warm summer's day in the sun.

Thanks too to RHCC for hosting us for a lovely tea and a few beers and a bit of a yarn again.