

After snow flurries and treacherous weather leading up to the first calendar match of 2022 against Wimbledon CC, cricket on a grass wicket looked ominous. However, due to a hybrid pitch investment of 1 million artificial stitching's on the Wimbledon block, and better weather over the weekend, we managed to get a full game in.

Courtesy of **Vaughan Robertson's** excellent administration talents, many of us had a chance to break in our bats - and bodies - at The Oval nets during preseason giving LNZZCC a bit of confidence before the start of play.

Match Manager and Captain, **Josh Wright**, lost the toss but it didn't matter, we got our wish of bowling first.

Nick Teulon and **Ross Haines** opened the year with the red pill on a delicious looking green track for the bowlers and created early opportunities as the ball predictably jagged around. Ross was on the money from ball one beating the outside edge regularly and landed LNZZ an early dismissal by surprising the batsman with a short one caught at Square Leg. Unfortunately I managed less than 3 overs, pushing the Friday net sessions a little too hard in a determined response to silence **Cheyne Vossy's** Matthew Hayden-esque's advances, and hobbled off after bowling the opener with no further on-field participation.

LNZZ fielded like jets and kept the pressure on. Debutant **John Shea** demonstrated his rugby talents early on diving across the outfield and chasing the ball with the unbridled enthusiasm of a man half his age. The McLean brothers also covered much ground taking a catch each. Batting looked tough on what was a 2 paced pitch. It could zip through when pitched up, with spongy bounce short of a length, making it difficult to get one's eye in. Outside of one Wimbledon bat, no one made it pass 50. Wickets were shared around in tidy spells mid-innings from **Mike McLean**, **Shaun Raumati**, **Dan Robinson** and **Brogan McIlwrick**. Many thanks to Wimbledon for providing fielding cover, and Vossy for providing the fans with real time social media updates - from Cover.

Wimbledon managed to eek out 148 from their allotted 40, which felt like par given the slow out fielding and challenging nature of the wicket.

LNZZ opened the ledger with **Dan Robinson** and **Shaun Raumati** who gave the pitch the respect it deserved and managed to bring up an unbeaten 50 run partnership off the first 20 overs, albeit with a bit of luck, Shaun was dropped a handful of times.

Although LNZZ still had 10 wickets in the shed at the drinks break, no one was prematurely opening the Rose as winter still had a bit of bite left. Batting looked difficult

and the required run rate was closing in on 5 an over. After quick departures of Raumati (13 of 70) and Robinson (34 off 65), the RRR edged to 6 and Wimbledon had gained advantage. **Tim Barringer** (13) brought stylish stroke-making to the crease but was undone by his own good timing with a flick off the legs that reached the long-leg boundary. The Voss came in inspired by the footwork of Voss Jr in a recent BYC outing, but sadly was also undone by his own footwork as M Conway awarded the first LBW of the season.

With scoreboard pressure mounting wickets fell in quick succession as 6 an over felt more like 10 on a tricky wicket with tight bowling. LNZZC regulars from last year might be able to predict what happened next... The collapse! The final 9 wickets fell for 46 runs. LNZZC 98 all out from 33.2 overs. Unable to walk I didn't bat leaving Mike Mclean high and dry. Extras second top scored with 18, showing how impressive **Dan Robinson's** knock was.

Dan Robinson was voted LNZZC Man of the Match and received an excellent vintage of red wine as reward.

Umpire **Marty Conway** had a quiet day with just one LBW (Voss) but plenty of fun in the sundries as cobwebs were aplenty.

Special mention to the thumping cover drive by **John Shea** who brought some self-identified South Island mongrel to the fight.