**LNZCC vs Oxford Downs CC**

On Sunday 30 June, in the wake of a disappointing days cricket at Lords against

the old enemy, a hardy XI (including 3 debutants) from LNZCC set out for

Abingdon on a sunny day for the annual declaration fixture from 2pm v Oxford

Downs – a game we had not won in a while.

As it turned out my only job as MM was to select a good side and to win the toss,

and frankly I excelled in both capacities. I had demanded of the side to contest

and win those 50/50 moments and sure enough there was some early

controversy when their captain tried to both toss and call in the same motion.

Am I right Sunny? Having rectified that and absorbed Sunny’s data packed pitch

inspection I overheard that the opposition had been bowled out for 50 the day

before on the same track. So, when the head requested duly landed I had no

hesitation inserting. Besides the Downs have a penchant for batting at least 10

overs more than they return so my cunning plan was simply to bowl them out.

Which we duly did. Leith bowled a fairly hostile and accurate spell down the hill

for 9 overs on the hoof and took a couple of wickets conceding 34. Mostly leaked

through the cordon and he caught a few edges and deserved at least 2 more. JD

meanwhile proved an able foil into the gentle breeze and trundled through 9

also, conceding 35.

A double change saw Bassett introduced and he duly captured a wicket with his

slow left arm twirlers conceding 34 off 8. Raumati (a debutant) and McMullan’s

nephew bowled 5 overs of medium pace, getting a bit of shape after trying both

ends before ending up with 2-35 and a smart catch to boot. Tait an 18-year-old

youngster and son of my local bank manager captured 5-29 off 7 with his off

spin. He plays for the Banbury first X1 and Oxfordshire so was a handy recruit.

There were a couple of decent catches - none better than a one hander from

another debutant - Pankhurst who had spent the afternoon floating around the

mid-off region. All out for 168 off 38, their captain insisted on an international

30-minute interval rather than the customary 20 minutes, conscious no doubt

that a par score would have been north of 200.

Having enjoyed their tea, Khanbhai and Lambie opened our reply having earlier

shared the keeping (spilling no more than 3 or 4 regulation chances between

them). They quickly made amends and in Roy and Bairstow style plundered 124

runs before Khanbhai departed with 73 to his name, and a couple of proud

parents looking on from the pavilion. As is often the way, if you get one you get 2

and Lambie, exhausted by his extra duties as VC and keeping for 20 odd overs,

departed soon thereafter for a well-made 53. Sunny came in and Vengsarker like

carried his bat for a crisp and learned 11. Burdon attempting to finish the match

in the over because he had a dinner party to attend chimed in with a well struck

and rapid fire 17 before being completely castled. Pankhurst sporting a

fashionable thigh pad outside his creams made a very watchful 2 as the suspense

built almost allowing the match to go into the final over); before falling so that

Bassett had to stride out and crack his first ball for the winning single.

Ultimately, we received only 29 back but Cricket and LNZ were definitely the

winners.

R Boon