

Phoenix 2 v YMCA 2 - Claremont Road, YMCA Sunday 22 May 2011

We turned up at Claremont Road, to play our old foes YMCA, in optimistic Mood, after last week's fine victory against Laois and buoyed by the clubs appointment of professional Siphe Mzaidume as 2nd Team Manager.

The team showed 2 Changes from the previous week, with Vish and Kaleem being away in the UK on an exchange visit that saw the Queen and Prince Phillip in Dublin. Unfortunately Phil wasn't available, being a fine opening batsman. Ronnie Haq, making his debut for the 2nds and Aaron Joseph stepped into the breach, Meaning the team that stepped onto the field was as follows Luke Savage, David Ford, Thomas Anders, Masud Ahmed, Jonty Wardell, Asim Nazir, Amit Battan, Junaid Ashfaq, Ronnie Haq, Chris Cavanagh and Aaron Joseph. There was a change of the field as well, with regular scorer Conor Dillon making his annual scoring pilgrimage to Surrey, special thanks to Helen Caird for handling the pens in her usual superb style.

Phoenix won the toss and after looking at the wicket decided that we would make use of the wicket first. It was a used wicket and the Phoenix brains trust was that it wouldn't get any better and the spinners would be very effective in the 2nd innings. Also the skipper didn't really fancy being out in the field with the force 10 gale that was blowing across the ground, in the hope that the wind will have dropped by the 2nd innings.

So it was that Luke and Fordie went out to open the innings with thoughts of a total of around 220. As it turned out we didn't get anywhere near that total. One of the reason was Warwick Armstrong bowled a superb opening spell, bowling his 10 overs for only 13 runs, in 1 spell while removing both openers. He was well supported throughout the innings by Wilson-Moore and Ali. The main problem though was the loss of wickets at regular intervals and some very ordinary shots. There was only 1 partnership over 50, between Masud and Jonty, which with the batting talent in the team isn't good enough. The main contributors were Masud with a well made 42 and Asim making 31 not out and marshalling the tale very well. There were a number of double figure scores, of which mention must be made of Junaid, who in his first innings for the 2nd team made a decent 18 and look good doing so. With that said the team battled hard to finish with 160 all out in 47 overs.

There then followed an unusual tea of Pizza, which was well received by the team, although not so good for the bowlers. It also had the captain regretting that we didn't field first, as he couldn't fully indulge.

The chat was although 160 was below par, if we bowled good lines and fielded well then we could still win the game, even though YMCA had a long batting line up.

As it turned out that is exactly what happened. Phoenix decided to open up with Cavanagh and, the spin of Masud. The plan was to put pressure on YMCA by keeping it tight and taking early wickets. In the 3rd over Cavanagh trapped Cole LBW with the score on 5. From then on Masud took over, threatening to take a wicket nearly every ball. In his 1st spell of 7 overs he ripped through the YMCA top order taking 3 wickets, while conceding only 10 runs. YMCA were soon 4 down for 26 and in big trouble. At this point it was time to bring the change bowlers Thomas and Amit on. They both kept to the plan making the batsmen earn every run. Amit bowled a fine spell of 8 overs for only 18 runs taking the important wicket of Bhandari. At drinks the score was 64 for 5. We were on top but there

was still a lot of work to do. Partridge was in and going well and Harte was also still there, with skipper Streek (surely too low at number 8) still to come. It was time for more spin and Azim came on and with his last ball of his 1st over bowled Partridge for 29. Azim next over was a triple wicket maiden leaving YMCA reeling at 70 for 9. Streek stranded at the other end, shaking his head at some of the shots his team mates were playing. The first ball of his next over Asim bowled a full toss that Streek lobbed back to him. Unbelievably the ball was dropped and the 5 wicket haul was gone. YMCA put a last wicket stand of 18 on before the skipper had to bring himself back on in the attempt to get the last wicket. This was achieved with the 5th ball of his first over back, leaving YMCA 88 all out.

Bowling figures

Cavanagh 6.5 - 1 - 17 - 2, Masud 10 - 3 - 19 - 3,

Amit 8 - 1 - 18 - 1 Thomas 5 - 1 - 22 - 0, Asim 5- 2 - 9 - 4.

This was a fine performance especially with the ball. All the bowlers bowl as a team, backed up superbly in the field.

Man of the Match: Joint Masud 42 and 3/19 and Azim 31 n/o and 4/9.