

Phoenix v North County 27/08/11

Having dented Merrion's title bid the previous Saturday Phoenix were now looking for a win against the league champions to help stay out of the relegation zone. Ted Williamson, Coach Bray and Thomas Anders returned to the side with Rory Flanagan unavailable and Stephen Neill and Asim Nazir surplus to requirements. The eleven was: Captain Dickeson, Coach Bray, Ryan Gallagher, Conor Kelly, David Langford-Smith, Desmond O'Leary, Osama Khan, Amit Battan, Ted Williamson, Thomas Anders, Sadaf Raza. North County won the toss and elected to bat.

In Flanagan's absence Khan returned to the new ball pairing and began with a maiden but the early action came with Langford-Smith running in from the Chesterfield Avenue end. Tomas Sheil perished in the third over with Coach Bray taking the catch behind the stumps and in the fifth over Lawrence was caught by Raza. Khan's moment came in the next over when Battan caught Hay. There was a brief lull but although the ninth over cost Langford-Smith 13 runs he managed to bowl Coughlan and have Mooney caught by Anders. Captain Dickeson decided to keep two overs in reserve for Langford-Smith and also rested Khan which meant Coach Bray handed over the gloves to Desmond O'Leary and joined Conor Kelly in the bowling attack. Kelly kept Getkate and Reeves at fractionally under 3 runs an over and the coach conceded fractionally over 4 runs an over but the magic ball did not come until the coach's final over which meant that the stand of 83 had recovered things somewhat for the visitors. Gallagher bowled a steady spell from the magazine fort end but it was Raza who got the glory at the other end as he removed McLoughlin, Nolan, Casey and McGovern for 0,4,3 and 4 using a different method of dismissal for each with a catch for Raza and a stumping for the coach. However, the last wicket stand added 41 in 23 minutes.

Rain had reduced the match initially to 49 overs each and then curtailed the Phoenix innings to 41 overs with an adjusted target of 167 at just over 4 runs an over. Things began to unravel for Phoenix when Williamson was bowled in the first over by Mooney. Anders struck a boundary against Reeves and he and Gallagher had taken the score to 20 when he was bowled by Reeves. Reeves quickly defeated the defences of Conor Kelly and the exit of Gallagher at the hands of Mooney was quickly followed by Captain Dickeson and Langford-Smith both being caught by Casey off Reeves for 1 and 0 respectively to leave Phoenix on 30 for 6 as Desmond O'Leary joined Coach Bray. With the game almost up for Phoenix the burly Munster man played with a little more freedom than he had the previous week and contributed 15 to a stand which almost doubled the score. Battan struck two boundaries and when he was out Phoenix were still 96 shy of victory when Osama Khan came to the crease. Khan struck an early six and the coach's confidence began to grow when his partner patiently defended the next five deliveries. The coach hit three consecutive boundaries to force Mooney out of the attack and the pair added 25 in 4 overs against Hay and Lawrence to bring the stand to 52 and raise the possibility of victory. Disaster struck for Phoenix when the coach was given out lbw to Hay and Raza survived just long enough for Phoenix to eke out another bonus point with a final losing margin of 35 runs.

Phoenix bowling S Raza 4-22 D Langford-Smith 4-35

Phoenix batting O Khan 38 not out J Bray 36