

Phoenix at YMCA 03/09/11

Having snatched victory from the jaws of defeat at home to Clontarf, Phoenix needed a victory at Claremont Road to finish above the home team. Osama Khan dropped out ill on the morning of the match but fortunately Desmond O'Leary had been pencilled in as twelfth man and he was called into the side. This gave the option of deploying Coach Bray as a bowler while the Munster man deputised behind the stumps. The eleven was: Captain Dickeson, Coach Bray, Ryan Gallagher, Conor Kelly, David Langford-Smith, Desmond O'Leary, M D Masud Ahmed, Rory Flanagan, Ted Williamson, Thomas Anders, Sadaf Raza. Phoenix won the toss and inserted the home team.

Langford-Smith began economically with just 4 runs off the bat from his first three overs while there were contrasting moments for Flanagan at the other end. The Dubliner's first two overs saw a boundary for Cole and three for Strydom but the first ball of his third saw Kelly catch Strydom. In the next over Langford-Smith had Cole caught by Bray. Ahmed only made 2 before falling lbw to Langford-Smith and Lewis fell for 3 in Kelly's fourth over to make it 57 for 4. Dutt had batted almost the whole innings at Phoenix for 97 and he now joined Van Der Merwe at the crease. Coach Bray and Conor Kelly have become a regular combination in the middle overs for Phoenix and there were not that many scoring shots between overs 17 and 28 as the score went from 57 to 83. Kelly finished on 1-18 and the coach on 0-29 and it was Gallagher and Raza who came into the attack. The Ulsterman's 5 overs went for 18 and although he was more expensive Raza managed to break the partnership when Van Der Merwe was lbw for 35. Dutt continued taking singles and Dunlop made a spirited 22 at the other end but both perished in Langford-Smith's first over back as the bowler's reflexes allowed him to take two impressive caught and bowleds. Masud Ahmed struggled to keep the runs down but managed to have Walsh caught by Flanagan and Langford-Smith completed a 5 wicket haul when Jehangir was caught by Raza. Garth and Ali added 16 in 6 minutes as the innings closed on 195 for 9.

Flanagan and Williamson were watchful against Strydom and prospered a little more against Garth and after 10 overs Phoenix had reached a satisfactory 38 for 0. Jehangir and Ali kept a tight grip and the next six overs yielded just 14 runs. In the next over Flanagan was the first to go for 18 with Ahmed taking a good catch off Jehangir. Williamson scored 6 runs from the 19th over but called a quick single off the final ball and was run out by a direct hit. At 65 for 2 after 20 overs it was now a match and with the rain holding off Phoenix needed 131 to win from 180 balls with 8 wickets in hand. Van Der Merwe now made some serious inroads for the home team with Anders and Gallagher both out for 1 and Kelly caught for 6. Phoenix's two heroes of the last decade and a half, Bray and Langford-Smith came together at 80 for 5. A stand of 29 was a partial recovery for Phoenix but the loss of the coach for 18 was a blow. While Captain Dickeson stayed with Langford-Smith, David Streek reckoned that Phoenix were favourites but the fall of both to Strydom in the same over piled the pressure on Masud Ahmed. O'Leary was run out for 0 but an uncharacteristically productive outing for Raza with the bat kept the outcome in doubt until Masud charged Garth and probably would have been stumped if he had not been bowled. Phoenix lost by 20 runs and will be in Division 2 in 2012.

Man of the match

D Langford-Smith 5-19 and 37 runs