

PHOENIX 1ST XI

1980s



The Phoenix Club House

1980

The focus this season was to celebrate the club's 150th anniversary. The playing highlight was a game against Somerset CCC on the 7th June. This reciprocated a match the previous year in Taunton, when Phoenix were on tour. The fixture was "drawn" but a very large crowd enjoyed exhibition cricket from the visitors who included captain Brian Rose, Vic Marks (both who played test cricket for England), Peter Roebuck, Peter Denning, Denis Breakwell and Colin Dredge in their side (see article from the *Irish Times* displayed nearby). The team finished second to Malahide by one point in the Leinster Senior League. The first cup game for 6 years was lost to Pembroke in the quarter final having beaten Carlisle in the first round. Some would say that the most significant happening of this season was that Alf Masood made his senior debut for Phoenix.

1981

A disappointing season, although the team, by now clearly past its peak, did finish second in the Leinster Senior League to Leinster CC. The team from Rathmines was seriously challenging Phoenix for the title the "best team in Leinster", when also winning the Leinster Senior Cup. However, a notable first was achieved, the Alan Murray Cup (20 overs a side) was won for the first time.

1982

The centrepiece of this season was the winning of the Leinster Senior Cup for 15th and most recent time. After preventing Clontarf from playing in a cup final on their own ground by defeating them in the semi-final, they defeated Malahide in the final at Castle Avenue. When the game stopped due to bad light on the first day, Malahide were 99 for 3 chasing 235 to which Man of the Match Alf Masood contributed 87, Stan Mitchell 48, Rod Young 29 and David Ensor 22. On the second day Malahide lost three wickets due to run outs and were eventually all out for 169. The Alan Murray Cup was retained but the club finished a modest 6th in the Leinster Senior League.

This was the first year of the Irish Senior Cup, a competition the club openly embraced. An away win over Breda, notable for an Alf Masood century and the manner in which Gerry Murphy performed his 12th man duties was followed by a successful trip to Lurgan, thanks mainly to another superb knock by Alf Masood. The eventual beaten finalists, Leinster, won the quarter final by 10 wickets at Rathmines.

1983

A very good season with the successful 1975 treble captain, Stan Mitchell, back at the helm. Both the Leinster Senior League, now a two section competition with the winners of each section contesting a final, and the Wiggins Teape league were won. Phoenix topped their group in the League, winning 4 of their 5 games and thus qualified to meet Pembroke in the final at Kimmage. The era of clubs employing professionals had very much arrived and Pembroke fielded Chris Kuggeleijn from New Zealand. He was dismissed in the nineties thanks to a superb boundary catch by Stan Mitchell and Phoenix knocked off the required runs chiefly due to a century by Man of the Match, Alf Masood. In the Wiggins Teape League, a rained off "no result" of the Clontarf fixture at Castle Avenue gave Phoenix the title. However Pembroke achieved revenge for the League final defeat when winning the Leinster Senior Cup semi-final in the Park. Both sides scored over 300 and this time it was Chris Kuggeleijn who scored a match winning century and won the Man of the Match award. The quest for the Irish Senior Cup continued, trips to North of Ireland C.C and Waterford C.C were successful but the NCU kings, the star studded Waringstown XI proved too strong in the Phoenix Park.

1984

Under the captaincy of Neil Taylor the highlights were finishing second to our old nemesis Leinster in the Leinster Senior League and in the longest Irish Senior Cup run so far, the semi-final was reached. This run featured a memorable win and revenge for the previous year's defeat against Waringstown (Alf Masood again scoring a century), a one wicket win away to Coleraine thanks to an undefeated tenth wicket stand by Dick Forrest and Hugh Milling, a quarter final defeat of Downpatrick and a semi-final loss away to Brigade.



1. Alf Masood, man of the match v Sussex, 1983. Godfrey Evans, presenter.

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1985

Stan Mitchell led the 1st XI for the fourth time and once again led the side to the Leinster Senior League. It was a wet summer and three re-fixtures meant that the competition was not decided until late September. Clontarf, Old Belvedere and Railway Union were all defeated and unusually, the 1985 club president Stan Oakes played in and took the last wicket to fall in the final game. The Alan Murray cup was won for a third time in the decade. The Irish Senior Cup campaign had a “North West” ring to it. Limavady were defeated in round 1, Ray Tilson performing well, but Donemana were successful in a rain affected tie in round 2. The one day rules that existed then meant that a very promising 80 for 1 in 20 overs turned into a simple chase after a lengthy rain break. Donemana had 20 overs to chase 80! Scant consolation was Neil Taylor’s Man of the match award and the memory of Gerry Murphy’s stumping off the fast bowling of Hugh Milling.

1986

This was a memorable season with the undoubted highlight being the capture of the Irish Senior Cup and becoming the first Leinster club to do so. Gordon Black captained the side to victories over Strabane, Clontarf, Ballymena, Bangor and, in the final, Donemana. The side were fortunate in playing four home ties prior to the final and noteworthy performances in those games were Alf Masood’s Man of Match winning innings against Clontarf, Gordon Black’s hat trick against Ballymena and Stan Mitchell’s Man of Match winning innings, when promoted to No 3, and his superb catch to dismiss Irish international Michael Rea against Bangor. Donemana were dismissed for 109 in the final at Rathmines and Phoenix knocked off the runs for the loss of one wicket. Alf Masood was named Man of the Match for his innings of 51 but many present felt that Michael Halliday for his three wickets in an economical 10 overs would have been a worthier recipient. The club finished second in all three Leinster senior competitions.

1987

David Pigot Junior took the helm of an ageing side and proved to be a very successful captain in winning the toss during the league campaign. It was becoming increasingly difficult to win matches bowling second as the batting side could play for a draw so it was vital to win the toss and field. This David did with amazing regularity and thanks to fine bowling by Michael Halliday and batting by Alf Masood the Leinster Senior

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PHOENIX ROUND OFF TROPHY TALLY IN STYLE

by SEAN PENDER

With victory over Donemana in the final of the Schweppes Cup at Rathmines on Saturday, Phoenix have now won every trophy available to them. Their eagerly awaited success in the All Ireland competition, the first by a Dublin club, was as decisive as the nine wicket margin would indicate, for, put into bat, the Northerners made only 109 and that was much too small a total in the circumstances. Most surprising was the failure of the Donemana batsmen to play their normal attacking game. Amazingly, no one attempted to knock the Phoenix bowling off a length and several of the shots that led to dismissals were both ill-judged and careless.

For all that, Donemana had started the match confidently enough, Junior McBrine and Angus Scott putting on 27 for the first wicket in promising style. But the dismissal of McBrine to a good length delivery from Brian Freer precipitated a collapse there was no checking. In fact, but for a last wicket stand of 14 between Raymond Mitchell and Roger Kerr, Donemana would have been all out for less than 100. There was nothing whatever to suggest that the pitch had been instrumental in the debacle. It was purely a case of steady bowling, backed up by a judiciously placed field, proving too much for irresolute batting.

If proof were needed of this, it was forthcoming in the manner in which Phoenix set about scoring the 110 needed for victory. Never afraid to put bat to ball, Alf Masood and Gerry Murphy put on 85 for the first wicket, effectively killing off any hopes Donemana may still have entertained of pulling the game out of the fire. Eventually out to a brilliant catch on the long

off boundary by Roger Kerr, Masood had thrashed five fours in his 51 which, coupled with his two wickets for 18 in ten overs made him man of the match. For the second of his wickets he can thank Collie Daly, who brought off a great diving catch to dismiss David Leckey. Much more important bowling wise, however, were the contributions of Freer, a man for the big occasion whose early dismissal of the potentially dangerous Ivor Dougherty as well as McBrine, put his side on top, and Michael Halliday, who with nagging off spin skilfully pressed home this initial advantage. Both claimed three wickets, Freer’s costing 25 runs in 8.3 overs and Halliday’s a mere 13 in ten. But both have bowled at least as well in other matches and finished up with less to show for their efforts. It was all too easy for Phoenix.

DONEMANA	
A Scott c and b Streek	21
A McBrine b Freer	7
I Dougherty lbw Freer	1
D Curry b Halliday	12
J McBrine c Black b Halliday	14
R McBrine b Halliday	2
R McGonigle b Black	15
B Curry c Freer b Masood	5
D Leckey c Daly b Masood	1
R Mitchell not out	9
R Kerr b Freer	10
Total	109
Bowling: Freer 8.3-4-25-3; Streek 8-0-17-1; Masood 10-1-18-2; Halliday 10-4-13-3; Black 10-0-26-1	
PHOENIX	
MA Masood c Kerr b R McBrine	51
GF Murphy not out	40
NC Taylor not out	10
Total (for 1 wkt)	110
Did not bat: DR Pigot (Jun); JSL Mitchell; DBB Ensor; D Streek; M Halliday; C Daly; GH Black; BCH Freer	
Bowling: Mitchell 5-0-30-0; J McBrine 10-0-12-0; A McBrine 9-2-21-0; Kerr 3-0-24-0; R McBrine 5-1-11-1; D Curry 1-0-7-0	

League was won for the fifteenth time. The defence of the Irish Senior Cup lasted two rounds, Bangor were defeated in Round 1 but North Down defeated Phoenix in the next round at Comber.

1989

Following a disappointing 1988, Gerry Murphy took over the captaincy and with the nucleus of the successful side of the previous 16 years and with the addition of Sam Deight, an Australian on his “grand tour” led Phoenix to their fourth Wiggins Teape title. YMCA were defeated in the final of this competition at Malahide thanks to a Man of the Match performance from Sam stoutly supported by Stan Mitchell.

Alf Masood, who first turned up at nets one evening in 1980, has several extraordinary records. A boyhood friend of Imran Khan, who described him as the best young player in Lahore when they were growing up, was in Dublin setting up a clothing business. He had failed to get a contract in Northants due to the quotas of the 1970s but set about becoming Ireland’s most talented batsman of the 1980s. In Leinster cricket he scored 9477 runs with an average of 51 with 23 centuries and 48 fifties. In the interprovincial competition of the time he scored 1313 runs for North Leinster at 69. For Ireland he scored 1940 runs at 38.5 with 4 centuries and 11 fifties. This included 138 scored before lunch at Lord’s against the MCC in 1985. To say he had a major role in keeping an ageing Phoenix team competitive in the 1980s is an understatement.

Phoenix, over the two decades of the 1970s and the 1980s won 1 Irish Senior Cup, 6 Leinster Senior Leagues, 7 Leinster Senior Cups, 4 Wiggins Teape titles and 3 Alan Murray Cups.

These posters, whose purpose is to interest all who read them, members or visitors, in this historic club was researched by Mike Halliday. David Ensor and Ian Mullen assisted with the 1970s and 80s. Helping with decisions on hanging and placement (and with encouragement) were Aidan Chester, John Mullins, Michael Brown and Michael Fanagan. The IT magician who produced the finished product was Lir Mac Cárthaigh of Veritas.