

Gargolyes' Dream of Sunday Cricket Season Launch comes good Vs. Sheffield University Staff C.C. (SUSCC)

Sunday, 12th July 2020

On an afternoon only painted in one's mind eye for many weeks now, it was once again a pleasure to tread the esteemed turf of Alstonefield C.C.; so diligently maintained and prepared by Steve King, our gallant grounds coordinator. Whilst presented with a resplendent arena viewed against the stunning backdrop of the rolling Derbyshire landscape under a warm blue summer sky, the nerve endings were beginning to tingle and resonate a bit; and then the knees began to knock on the appearance of our somewhat more youthful and confident looking opponents!

Just for a moment, one could almost believe that current events were a passing bad dream, had it not been for the endeavours of our industrious chairman who ensured that all necessary plans had been undertaken for a safe and regulated environment being adhered to; before and during proceedings.

Welcome to the new world of social distancing cricket



Indeed, it was Jon who opened affairs by leading us into a minute's silence to acknowledge and pay our respects to those NHS and key workers who have died during this pandemic and to others who have kept us safe and supplied throughout this period. It was also a poignant moment to remember a dear colleague, Ian Longdon, our former club secretary who sadly lost his battle against leukaemia in the week – long will this club honour his memory, friendship and contribution, RIP.

Chairman, Jon Lane, leading the tribute to former club secretary, Ian Longdon

On the field of play, not sure who won the toss, but in to bat first was SUSCC – Was it a mirage or had we been promoted to county status, as the batting talent before us seemed somewhat ominously skilled; and quickly the realisation dawned that, ten to one, it was going to be an ordeal in the field, as likely designed to soften up our notorious batting attack – *Hmmm!*

In just the second over, Tony Guest, quickly into his stride, dismissed Young for 0 and then Maddocks with the very next ball; so 8 for 2 – *a dream start!*

However, at the other end Panday was stroking it magnificently to and over the boundary before a real jaffa from Captain Bray, in his third over, had him clean bowled for 18. Wickets then began to tumble rapidly as Andy Farmer (3 wkts) and Brian Stack (1) took the next four to leave the away team on 65-7, with the prospect of an early trip back east.

Should have quit whilst we were ahead!

At this point, the Gargolyes (*derived from the French gargouille, meaning "throat" as in 'going for the...'*) hatched a devious plan to extend the agony and torment for our visitors by introducing the unlikely bowling partnership of John Curry and Mark Farmer; but not before debutant Andy Baldwin, who fielded magnificently, showed his future potential with a couple of overs – *who knows off a full run-up, he could make a regular turbocharged interjector.*



The Curry / Farmer (m) bowling combination produced some entertaining variety, with figures of 19-1 from their last 6 overs, combined – *more of the same in the future please, gentlemen!* The final bowling flurry was the preserve of Liam Gray of SUSCC, kindly loaned for the occasion due to unavailability of home players. Liam showed some fine line and length, and brought the opposition's innings to a close on 145-9 from the allotted 35 overs; with that perennial thorn in the side, Extras, top scoring with an unimpressive 38. The pick of the bowlers being Andy Farmer with 3 wickets for 16 runs off 5 overs. Well, a fair score achieve on a drying field; surely not beyond the realms of the Gargolyes, even if pre-season practice had been severely curtailed.

Usually at this time, reference would be made to the delightful spread, eagerly to be devoured, prepared by our wonderful tea ladies, but due to COVID, we had to make do with DIY fare and the message emanating from the trenches that the pub had run out of beer – *another casualty of the current circumstances.*

Back onto the field of play, and into bat strode Captain Bray and Chairman Lane. Van Dyk opened the bowling and finished with impressive figures of 3 overs for just 4 runs, but it was in the first over from his partner at the other end, Stride, that saw Chairman Lane plumb before after just four regulation balls, and off he strode. John Curry then came to the crease, stayed for a while and then departed; plumb before, to the final ball of Stride's fourth and

final over. Unfortunately, after nine further non-scoring balls, Steve King came and went, caught behind; leaving the Gargolyes on 13-3. It was then, a one Tony Gray? (*who seems to have mysteriously crept onto the field of play and into the scorebook from nowhere, so possibly either Cassels or Young*) again in the next over who captured the wicket of Captain Bray; leaving the home side now on a miserable 14-4!

Up for the fightback, Liam Gray was joined by Tony Guest who between them compiled a quick 23 with great gusto evidenced by balls crossing the boundary ropes; but then Gray holed out to Van Dyk off Panday's second ball, and in came Brian Stack who succumbed not long after, caught and bowled to the last ball of Fairburn's second over. 43-7 was starting to suggest a rather bleak outcome for the Gargolyes – *a bit of an emerging nightmare one might say!*

Next in was Andy Farmer who was bowled by the impressive Maddocks – Surely, surely the mercurial conscript Baldwin would save the day; and had the swashbuckling Tony Guest who had amassed an impressive 32 or Mark Farmer stayed around with him, it could have been a fable to be retold many times over and over to the grandkids on those cold winter nights. But sadly that man Maddocks put paid to both and any such aspirations, finishing with 3 wickets of 3.5 overs for 0 runs. Very notable figures indeed, thus redeeming his sudden rush to the head whilst at the batting crease; ever so briefly.

So, honours to our guests, SUSCC, and a well-deserved win; but the real victor was the return of cricket and the spirit in which the match was conducted. Once again it was a great joy to hear the sound of leather on willow (*with the occasional thud of leather on the dry stone walling beyond the boundary*) on a beautiful Sunday afternoon; to be in the company of fellow team mates, old and new; and to participate in the glorious game with such amiable opponents.

We look forward to meeting again in less perilous times – but may have to take more heed in future of the SUSCC motto: 'rerum cognoscere causas' (translated as 'knowing the causes of things').....*But that's for next time!*

Gargolyes – More (batting) practice, More Participation please - Onwards and upwards! - DREAM ON!



***The Gargolyes before battle commenced.
A warm welcome to Andy Baldwin, our
latest recruit (bottom right)***