

New Order Wins Thriller For Gargoyles



Rob Handscombe delivering flight and guile against Wootton

A thrilling victory off the last ball of the game saw Alstonefield win against the ever popular Wootton CC. Bon ami was abounding on a rather damp and drab day...

Winning the toss, Wootton elected to bat and the desire to make up for his duck the previous day spurred on opener Peter Fielding to show us how he can play. 50 not out with an array of quality shots was his contribution. He was ably supported by various players, but it was clear that Fielding was the main threat. Decent bowling throughout the innings from Alstonefield, highlighted by the Stack/ Handscombe combo. Starskey and Hutch, Lillee and Thomson, Little and Large, bacon, lettuce and tomato - all fantastic bedfellows. The guile of Handscombe and the pace of Stack bamboozled the Wootton players. An Alstonefield career best of 3 for 23 brought the captain's pint to Handscombe. It was wonderful to watch. In the field the commitment was superb, with Alan Hayes diving all over the place and three run outs. The best of these was a direct hit from Ali, which had all the hallmarks of competence. So, with the exception of Peter Fielding, the rest of the innings was tightly controlled and a score of 142 was posted. Game on ...

After the usual delicious tea in the Village Hall, Alstonefield set about the reply. The rather unusual pairing of Jon Lane and Alan Hayes took the field.



Jon Lane & Alan Hayes formed an unusual opening partnership

Haysey strode purposefully to the middle and proceeded to prod and push forward, frantically getting his bat back into his crease. Lusty blows came and when it looked as though he would go on to great things, he perished. Ben King stroked the ball around after Lane was caught at first slip. Steve King looked in great touch until he had to retire hurt on 11. The engine room of the innings took over with ruthless efficiency.



Syed Najibi hitting out

Syed Najibi, making a welcome appearance, smashed a quick 33 (including two sixes). He was ably supported by vicious puller Brian Stack (21), who is growing in confidence with every game. With victory in sight Duffy swooshed at a ball and was bowled for 19. Peter Fielding was bowling very well and there was a bit of a jitter in the stands. Needing 8 from the last two overs, the sight of the ball skipping to the boundary for 4 byes was joyous. Coming into the final over on 141, Bray and Handscombe were the last pair at the wicket. Wootton's fielding and bowling were tight. Dot, dot, dot. A run on the fourth ball secured the draw, and with Bray on strike the game will surely end in glory...

Fielding goes back to his mark. Having bowled beautifully for 5.4 overs he bowls a massive full toss which Bray sees, takes aim and misses! One ball to go, surely a more challenging delivery? But no, another waist-high full toss which the captain gladly accepts and the game is won!



Captain Bray hit the winning runs

Brilliant all-round performances from the team today and another memorable game to chat about in our dotage.

ALSTONEFIELD CC 143 FOR 8 WICKETS BEAT WOOTTON CC 142 FOR 9 WICKETS BY 1 WICKET

Chatsworth Outclass Gargoyles

Having suffered at the hands of the mighty Alstonefield last season, it is fair to say that Chatsworth have upped their selection game and provided tougher opposition for us this year. It is also fair to say they have deserved their two wins.



Chatsworth - a beautiful place even in defeat

With rain tumbling down in the morning we weren't hopeful of any play at all, but texts were received assuring us that all would be fine. Indeed the dark clouds threatened, but in the event we only left the field of play for five minutes due to rain. Moisture on the pitch seemed to spice up the traditionally docile Chatsworth wicket as Guest and Duffy opened the bowling.



Tony Guest in tight control

Guest bowled a beautifully controlled spell and only leaked 20 runs in his 7 overs. Everyone who bowled gave it his best with Brian Stack sending down some particularly slow left arm, which proved very tricky to get away. Siddons bowled well and with control, and Captain Bray looped his loop to effect. The Chatsworth lineup was definitely more focused this year as Alstonefield struggled to take enough wickets. Through a quirk of the innings everyone's last over went for considerably more runs than was desirable. Six bowlers, each in his final over, conceded a combined total of 54 runs. So, 112 runs scored in 29 overs at 3.86 compared to 6 overs for 54 at a rate of 9 runs per over! This is where some control was lost, as Chatsworth posted 166. The final total should probably have been 145. Those miserly overs from our esteemed chairman were sorely missed on the day, and we hope to see him on the field again very soon.

The Alstonefield reply was stoic, and in the face of hostile intent the team did well to get to the final ball of the 35th over. Sadly we were 36 short of victory but there were moments when Chatsworth were concerned. In truth, the opening bowler was the quickest anyone had faced all year, and he was much too good for us on the day. He removed Jones and Lane and we were reeling on 4 for 2. 'Lord' Shotton and Duffy steadied the vessel and battled through to the 14th over when Shotton swished at a ball and was bowled. Siddons joined Duffy and the Alstonefield stock began to rise. They put on 66 for the 4th wicket and had the game nearly under control. A fine diving catch by Everett proved the demise of Siddons. The writing was beginning to appear on the wall of oblivion as Chatsworth turned the screw. Fast bowler Everett returned to wreak havoc, and with one particularly quick one he struck Dr. Curry on the hand causing obvious pain and possibly short-term damage. Not too easy to face if the majority of the season has been of a more gentle persuasion. A chirpy cameo from Bray with the return of Duffy after retiring on 50 couldn't quite grapple the momentum from the home team. Dr. John returned to the crease at the end and was last man out.

A plucky 131 and still a beautiful place to play even when the result goes against you.

**ALSTONEFIELD CC 131 FOR 8 WICKETS LOST TO CHATSWORTH
CC 166 FOR 4 WICKETS BY 35 RUNS**