

DUNSFOLD CC vs THE WOODPECKERS

Sunday, 28th August 2016

One of the highlights of the season is upon us as we welcome Patrick Owen-Browne and his merry band of Woodpeckers for the Wings & Wheels match on Bank Holiday Sunday. But for some strange reason our skipper has decided he'd rather spend the weekend in a traffic jam on the M4 as he heads out west. I take over the captaincy and sandwich making duties whilst Mrs C takes inspiration from the Bake-Off to produce what my 12 year old, Max, later overhears being described as "f***** great brownies!".

Anyway, to the game, or rather to the pre-match BBQ accompanied by a display from the Red Arrows. Great to see the Woodpeckers arriving early to join us at lunch.



Over lunch Patrick and I have a genial chat about the relative strengths of our sides, that doesn't take long and we soon move on to our relative weaknesses and we come to the conclusion that with the 'peckers having a weakfish batting line-up Dunsfold would bat first and set our visitors a target. An added twist at Patrick's instigation is that each player has to bowl a minimum of 1 over. I consider for a moment the talent at my disposal and who wouldn't accept such an invitation and the opportunity to see Bezza, Will and Rob turn their arm over? So, game on, 40 overs a side.

Max Bell has been in scintillating form recently, only narrowly missing out on a ton the last time out so Max and I make our way out to start things off. The Woodpeckers opening pair are bowling at a decent pace and give nothing away. Max gets a short one and is caught between leaving it and playing and ends up leaving completely, caught for 1; a week is a long time in cricket.

Will comes out to join me and immediately has difficulty finding the middle of his bat, in fact he has difficulty finding any part of his bat. Still, Will manages to nudge some singles whilst I decide to up the tempo a bit finding cow corner before the two openers give way to a canny Aussie left arm over and a chap coming up the slope going by the suitable moniker of the 'Canon'. I take a liking to the Canon's fuller length and club a couple more boundaries before playing on for 25. No sooner had I reappeared from the changing room than I find Will occupying the bench I had coveted, out for 14. Dunsfold 3 for 46.

Still, Rob and Paul are at the crease and the 'Canon' is replaced by the 'Baron' who sends down some tempting slow stuff. After a couple of watchful deliveries Rob decides to tuck-in lofting the 'Baron' for a flurry of boundaries. Paul also starts to set about the Aussie left arm over with some trademark drives and the scoreboard gains some momentum. Rob's eyes light up once too often and is caught trying to heave the 'Baron' to Chiddingfold, but has made 27 in the process. Mike joins Paul, but Whitney soon follows Rob back to the pavilion bowled by the left armer for 15 so that a promising 86 for 4 becomes a precarious 92 for 5.

Sebby is keen to get to the wicket (but seems to be taking the bowling a bit too lightly.....)



Olly comes in at #7 in time to face a young chap who comes steaming in down the slope and fires down a few short ones. I happen to be walking past 'the Baron' at this point who uses some mildly colourful language to leave the young-un in no doubt about what he thinks of anything short of a good length. Not put off by the vocals, Olly and Mike get the measure of the bowling and keep the score ticking over. Olly, in particular, is timing it well but struggling to pierce the field, still he and Mike make good ground against the Woodpeckers' one over specialists.



The opening left armer comes back into the attack and bowls Mike for a very useful 24. I promote Ross up the order to #8, but my confidence is misplaced as Ross soon departs for 2. Conrad joins Olly at the crease and looks in good nick straight from the off, in fact he is in too good a nick as he middles a rising delivery straight to point, out for 4.

Sebby takes delight at outscoring Max with a couple of well-placed strokes plus a helping hand in the field with some overthrows taking him to 6 not out, but both are eclipsed by dad who finishes with 22 not out.

Dunsfold 159 for 8 off 40 overs.



Time for tea and the second instalment of Wings. And what a sight it is as we are treated to various displays including Spitfires, Hurricanes and Lancasters.

The airshow continues as we return to the fray. I decide to open with Rob and get his over out of the way. Grumpy Bell grumbles about not wanting the new cherry knocked out of shape and is sent to patrol the boundary. I have a little more faith in Rob but still dispense with the usual 2 slips and a gully. Rob fires it up and goes for a more than acceptable 6 off his over. Thanks Rob, good spell.

Usual service then resumes with Adam and Olly sharing the opening overs. But as the slips cordon takes its customary position our attention is caught by the Woodpeckers' opening bat who is wearing a natty pair of golf shoes! Some banter ensues but 'Faldo' carries on undeterred as he opens up with some powerful blows. Olly grabs the first wicket bowling the 'Canon', who is replaced by the Aussie lefty who soon hits a couple of juicy boundaries. Olly starts to rev it up and tries a bouncer, we all then watch in amusement as the Aussie nonchalantly flicks it for six over third man narrowly missing the pavilion roof. However a full one from Adam and a little help from the Dunsfold pitch mean the Aussie is a little early on a drive and Mike, clearly inspired by the aeronautical displays above, leaps and twists through the air to take a tremendous catch. A catch that, together with his batting efforts, would later earn him the man of the match award – well played Bezza! Two down, but the 'peckers have made a quick start and the game is finely balanced.

Just as 'Faldo' threatens to cut loose the Eurofighter Typhoon arrives and grabs everyone's attention, including Faldo's, who loses concentration and then loses his middle stump to Olly. 'Potty' comes to the crease and is skittled second ball to a beauty from Olly. Four down and a change in bowling as Sebby takes over from Adam and Ross takes over from Olly.

It's not long before Sebby has his first and Ross has found his line and length. Still the 'peckers' #4 is knocking the ball around nicely and together with the #6 put on a stand that it starting to look ominous until Sebby induces a wild hit and Rob does the rest taking a good catch on the boundary. Ross then dispatches the #8 LBW first ball and Dunsfold are back in the driving seat.

Conrad takes over from Sebby and after a few looseners bowls a steady spell. Patrick has joined the #4 and together they set about knocking off the remaining runs and so the game still hangs in the balance until Ross produces a good one to get rid of the #4 LBW for 36. Patrick is joined by the 'Ranger' and I turn to Mike to wrap things up. Bezza takes up the challenge rolling back the years to send down 6 straight ones. Thanks Mike, take a blow. Conrad is still persevering as I take over from Mike and send the 'Ranger' on his way with one that keeps low.

The final stand with Patrick and the 'Baron' between Dunsfold and an early finish. We're getting a little thirsty and so Conrad gives way to Adam who obliges removing the 'Baron', leaving Patrick undefeated and Will having to wait until next week to turn his arm over. The Woodpeckers all out for 138; Dunsfold win by 21 runs.

We adjourn to The Sun and are joined by a near full contingent of 'peckers.





The Firebird Brewery stall is still up selling off discounted beer, both teams don't need a second invitation as jugs start doing the rounds.

A few stories and a couple of speeches later and it's time for the presentation of Mike's man of the match award and the broken bail.

