



ALMONDBURY CASUALS CRICKET CLUB MATCH REPORT

Cambridge Meths Away July 8th 2007

Casuals: 149 for 9 Joe Cooper 39*, Dan Cooper 36, Ward 25, Lockwood 21 P Bone 10 – 4 – 24 – 5

Cambridge Meths: 150 for 8, Normaschild 44* ,Britton 39, Rhodes 20, J Cooper 11 – 3 – 31 – 3, D Cleave 9.5 – 0 – 30 – 3.

Veterans of our limited campaigns against the Meths may still be suffering, either physically or mentally from the experience. Two years of sound thrashings tend to scar even the hardened carapace of a Casual. In the hottest game I have ever participated in, the wicket keeper had to be retired to a cool place to recover his sanity after 20 overs, and our strike spin bowler had to be retrieved from the top of a large horse chestnut tree on a long boundary (the ball, rather than Mr Umbers...). Batsmen too will have little in the way of fond memories. It was not so much the quicker bowlers who did the damage, but the MP for Wellingborough, and a host of sub-Continental spinners who relished the less than perfect wicket at the Clariant ground.

Following the wettest June and longest run of rained off fixtures that Statto could bring to mind, a hopeful Casuals team took some encouragement by the lack of devious Asian magicians, and the fact that their resident MP had a broken finger on his bowling hand rather fetchingly encased in a vivid pink contraption that probably contravened ECB regulations. Certainly the team selection showed promise – two young Coopers (Cooper Senior being otherwise engaged...) and the younger members of the Rugby Club, only lightly hung over (or was it lightly hung?). Stewart Larnar and Steve Bindman, while possibly lacking some fluidity in the field, offered deep and penetrating insights into the abilities of their ex-team mates in the Methodists line up, a fact greatly appreciated by Captain Umbers who nearly made the mistake of believing them.

An opening partnership of 20 between Ward and Bindman started us off well, before Steve was out for a duck. Unfortunately the pink fingered Peter Bone found a teasing length and varied flight from his first over, and he started to reap reward.... At 20 overs a painstaking 61 were on the board for 2. At the start of the 21st over we were 61 for 5, with a varied hat trick from Peter. First to fall on his sword was Zorro Lockwood, falling to a soft catch. No relation Nick Bone marched out and in again after a similar catch. Tension rose as Skipper Umbers took his time to take guard, kiss the bat, and reach well forward to take the next ball comfortably on the pad. Wild

appeals and the Bindman finger goes up – uproar and tumultuous celebration on field, not so much off it!

The Coopers came to the rescue of the flagging tail – Joe and Dan keeping up with each other in a 73 run partnership, before the innings tailed off to a reasonable 149 for 9.

By the time tea had been despatched, the wicket had taken on a more batsman friendly air. Steaming downhill, Joe generated decent pace and a welcome tendency to avoid the legside deliveries which plagued him last time we played here, and deserved his miserly return. Uphill into the wind, Dan found life a bit harder, and was given an object lesson in this delicate art by the senior pro. Dunc, having his first extended spell of the season made immediate inroads and for a while the Meths wobbled.... until Normaschild (crazy name, crazy guy!) maintained his calm progress to take the game by 3 wickets.

Licking our wounds, the Casuals retreated back to the fastnesses of the Holme Valley to plot revenge for next year, and reflect on how lucky we were to have had a full match uninterrupted by this year's weather plague.