

Rain Stops Play – Kelawar wins moral victory

Kelawar CC v Palm Court CC

25 over match

Played at STC, 23 Aug 2008

“Go to foreign countries and you will get to know the good things one possesses at home.”

- Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe

And so it was that Cranners went home to enjoy real ale, cool weather, village cricket, respectable umpiring, and gentlemanly sporting gestures (like Murray Mints on a cricket ball).

When I put my name down for a match against the infamous Palm Court CC (what is the CC an abbreviation of again Cranners?), I wasn't sure if it would live up to expectations now that Cranners has gone back to Mother England. I also wasn't sure who would be wearing the gloves and antagonizing the opposition. Having seen the Kelawar team list and deciding there were far too many bowlers and my chances of doing just that would be diminished, I figured I could give it a go. How hard can it be? Catch a few balls, swear at the batsmen – easy.

Webby lost the toss and we were fielding first on an STC wicket that actually had some grass coverage, and on the surface, felt a little moist and sticky. As I took up the unfamiliar position behind the stumps and prepared to face Willow, I commented to first slip Sharrad that “He's played a few games in England recently, so these should come through quickly”. Ball 1, bounced three feet in short of the position, off the keeping glove and away for a bye. Great start. Perhaps Willow playing in England means he is sore and stiff? Bloody Cranwell never told me that one. Re-adjust position. Ball 2 – nicely into the gloves at waist height. Ball 3 – edge. Caught. Ah yes, this job is easy after all.

Graham bowled as he normally does (except for that first ball which was far slower than his normal 145km/h), and claimed two wickets. The second being to a superb reflex catch at first slip by Sharrad. On the subject of catching – I think this was the best team Kelawar catching performance I've witnessed – eight catches held and not a single one dropped (dropped defined as ball making contact with hand en route to ground). In addition to Sharrad's effort at slip was a finger bruising c&b from Jawad, a diving one hander from Webby at short cover, a lunging one hander from Witty at extra cover, a sharp grab from Andy M-W at gully, and a couple of superb efforts behind the stumps (they were really hard catches made to look simple through absent footwork).

It wouldn't be a game against Palm Court without some controversy. Would it be bent elbows from the fast bowler or the spinner? What about the blind man umpiring? Errant scoring perhaps? And so it happened, in Sharrad's first over. Using his left arm over the wicket natural angle, he found the outside edge for a regulation caught behind dismissal. The batsman took two steps towards the pavilion, and then realized his team mate umpiring didn't raise the finger. So he stands his ground. Something must happen when

the keeping gloves are donned and an injustice is witnessed. Whilst doing my best to retain a semblance of modest stillness and humility – the batsman was told of his particularly unsporting behavior.

The indifferent umpiring continued, with 4 byes awarded to an inside edge from the bowling of Anu. Yes, I know that does mean a missed catching opportunity, and as I watched the ball go past my full length dive, I started to think that maybe this keeping lark is a bit harder after all.

The match also saw the Kelawar debut of former Kenyan U19 International, Mufaddal Najmi. Unfortunately the rain put an end to his debut before we could see him bat, but I can attest to him possessing an arm ball that was more surprising than Willow's first ball.

Palm Court 10 for 101 (20.1 overs). Wickets were shared (G. Wilson 2-17, J.Khalid 2-15, M.Sharrad 3-14, A.Mediwaka 2-19, S.Emes 1-8). Top scorer for the batting team was Wides – 23 (I don't remember that many...). Byes totaled 6 (including the inside edge 4).

No sooner had we left the field, than the ground crew had the pitch covered – and it wasn't even raining. Sure, a real umpire may have offered the light, but you never know, it might go around the ground... no chance. Torrents were soon pouring off the field and into the flood prone tunnel under the horse track. Thankfully there was enough cold beer to keep us busy until the floodwaters subsided.

Match abandoned. As we shook hands with the opposition – the batsman who refused to leave the crease apologized and said it was his fault. He also congratulated Sharrad on dismissing him twice in the same innings....

So here I sit, Tuesday afternoon post match. The soreness has eased; normal leg function returned only yesterday. I think I might have a bowl next week. Someone else can try out for the vacant keepers union presidency.