

Who: Kelawar vs Indian Cricket Club

What: 25 over friendly

Where: Kolej Tunku Jafar, somewhere in the boonies

When: 0900, Jan 25, 2009

Why: Because we're a bunch of clowns

There's something about scheduling a cricket match at nine in the morning that has a distinctly sadomasochistic flavour to it. Especially if the organizer(s) of said match are not listed to turn up for the festivities, and the venue for the event in question is a million miles away. A consolation, perhaps, is the fact that the weather was as perfect as it ever will be for a game of cricket in a country famed for midday deluges. At least horizontal lightning bolts only seem to appear in the night. In any case, the game did not start on schedule!

Brad Burgess decided to fill in the mandatory category of 'I got lost on the way down!' and was the only member of the side who was actually waited for before Kelawar took to the field – other notable absentees included the harmonic duo of Emes and Larsen; the latter later discovered absconding in Thailand, while the former remains MIA. The fourth late show, yours truly, was actually one of the first to arrive but unhappily chose this of all grounds upon which to discover upon arrival that his cricket shoes were still on a shoe-rack some forty-five minutes back in the direction of civilization. Needless to say, many speed limits were disregarded and a handful of Kancils were forced off the road in the process of retrieving the forgotten boots.

With three missing, the decision to field was a mystifying one; one that proved costly as one of the opposition's loanees put their key opener down while still on naught. His partner fell early after a direct hit from Scott Ferguson, but Venkat stayed solid, seeing out a rash of wides from both opening bowlers, Sam Barton and Yohan before beginning to cut loose. Yohan's medium pacers took a little stick, going for 46 off his four overs. Sam managed to extract some lift from the astro deck, finishing with a more economical tally of 0-33 off his allocation of five.

Storer Senior could do little to halt the flow of runs stemming from the middle of the log that was Venkat's bat, but at the other end fellow offie and new boy Phil Render bowled with both cunning and heavily accented sledging that got the batsmen thinking a bit too much for their own good. His very first over provided a wicket, Anir for 17, and he proceeded to continue with a spell of wily breaks that kept even the free-scoring Venkat relatively quiet.

As they say; cometh the hour, cometh the man – but the author of this little piece's coming was far from ceremonious, coming on to bowl soon after hopping back onto the field complete with shoes and speeding fines. The first ball, naturally, was a beamer that cleared the batsman's head by a good five feet, closely resembling the height of a later bouncer. Yet a ball or two later, Storer Junior was back into the groove, rolling back the years and running in complete with creaky bones to fire in a few ripe late inswingers. Nilesh and Raghu were dispatched with stumps flying, and at the other end, Render proceeded to deceive Raghu and have him caught at first slip for a handful. Top scorer Venkat soon followed, caught very neatly indeed by Darshan on the run from midwicket, the ball riding the gusty breeze but unable to clear the youngster's leap.

Phil Render completed his five with figures of 3-21 and Druvi's aching legs got a rest – Scott Ferguson, Brad Burgess and Darshan Govender had an over each as the bowling was shuffled around with mixed results; each bowled decently enough if three long hops an over may be forgiven, big hitters

Aman and Toby swinging their axes around to end up with thirty-odd each. Aman finally fell to the innings' penultimate ball, another of the author's late innies that was taken very smartly by Speedy behind the stumps – and hilariously enough, the batsmen had proceeded to sneak a couple of runs by means of a throw and an overthrow before the bowler was heard to venture up to the umpire with the meekest of inquires of 'Sir, may I appeal for a catch behind the wicket?' To the batsman's utter shock, the finger went up. The innings soon closed, with Kelawar having given away far too many runs!

ICC – 7/212 in 25.0

Venkat 64, Aman 34, Toby 32*

KLCC – 48 sundry, incl. 44 wides

P. Render 3/21, D. Storer 3/27

The break in between innings was a short one, but one that proved that romance has not deserted the grand old game – seated in one of the armchairs, Cap'n Phil had a relaxed puff on his pipe, contemplating a jolly good bowl and latest theories in ball-tampering, the wisdom of a few of which he'd shared with the team's younger players during one of the fall-of-wicket breaks. Meanwhile, Burgess and Govender donned the protective gear and strode into the middle, the former shedding some of his protection after a couple of overs, the opening bowlers having been determined to be on the slow side of medium pace. Cloud cover and a healthy breeze meant that the ball was going to move around, however, and Darshan was immediately a victim, falling for a handful. Brad fell for one less a few moments later, bringing together numbers three and four, Scott Ferguson and yours truly.

Sadly, the stand was not to be as Scott, perhaps having a hard time adjusting to the trampoline astro after a game on turf the previous day, nicked one ball too many into the vicinity of the slips and departed for 6. Storer junior was joined by Giri and a few minutes later Arvind, the two imports from the other team's retinue, but neither could hang around, falling for 1 and 3 respectively. Under orders to stop the rut and stay in, Druvi continued to exhibit his eclectic, if not eccentric collection of strokes; some of which could loosely be described as cricket shots while others closer resembled Viggo Mortensen's swordplay, he of 'Lord of the Rings' fame. Amongst the barbaric swipes and gravedigger jabs were a collection of artistic glides and clips; but despite managing to bat with the overall grace of a wounded hippopotamus, Druvi managed to keep the score moving.

Joined by his Captain and Pater, the pair kept things going but the target was looking more unattainable by the minute. The original required run rate of eight and a half was never going to be cut down with the steady fall of wickets, and so the two batted for pride, Storer senior showing that he too could play a Captain's Knock™ - of course, the author's definition of said knock involves a lot of playing and missing, and a great percentage of runs coming courtesy of nurdles behind square on the off side. Three slips came in to cut off the supply, and sadly the Captain of the day did not have the other Captain's Scoring Shot™ - also known as an agricultural hoick in the general direction of cow – and fell trying to develop it on the go for a nicely worked 14. One must wonder, however, if the accepted standard for the Captain's Knock™ will change in the months to come:

Leave, leave, leave, leave, square-cut-for-four!, leave, leave, leave...

The game was beyond reach, but there was time enough for a cameo by Speed Maximus, coming in and turning on the heat from the word go, running the field hard and giving the ball a good heave, punctuated by a walloping shot over extra cover that didn't have to bounce too many times on

the way to the boundary. Storer Junior, the Tardy, fell soon after; getting caught at cover and therefore sparing himself the ignominy of having to go down in the book as 'Retired Bugged' for an eventful 66 off 75 deliveries.

Yohan was next in and faced out a few uneventful balls while Speedy jogged his way to 8* before the innings closed, Sam Barton and Phil Render in the hut without having had a bat. The target was never really in reach but it is perhaps fair to say that a good time was had by all, despite the cricket on offer not being quite as good – though one must imagine that with a full complement of players, Kelawar might have had a chance. Let's blame the guys who didn't show up!

KLCC – 7/143 off 25.0

D. Storer 66, C. Storer 14, M. Speed 8*

ICC - 31 sundry, incl. 29 wides

Anirbhan 3/17, Prassana 2/15, Murthy 1/0