

Stonor Shield vs Royal Selangor Club (11th October 2009)

If memory serves correctly, the last ever Stonor Shield game to take place, before its resurrection last weekend under the auspices of the PJ Club, was way back in 1992, when the writer - a lithe, lissome, desperately good-looking opening bowler – took the first over for Royal Selangor Club against Kunta Kinte in the Final, only for that nasty bully Asgari Stevens to smash the second ball of the day straight back at him into his kneecap, whereupon he collapsed retching on the turf and had to be carried from the pitch. This was the last action he saw in the game until, hobbling out with a runner at Number 11, he was bowled first ball and RSC lost by a margin.

Plus ca change, plus c'est la meme chose, as our garlic-munching friends across the Channel say: the writer is still lithe, lissome and desperate good-looking; he occasionally opens the bowling for Captains of Vision; and he was once again involved in something of a train-wreck of a match as Kelawar took on the might of RSC in the opening game of this year's revamped Stonor Shield 2009.

He arrives at the ground to find 12 Kelawarians in the nets at 8:45am, a good 45 minutes before the game is due to start. What's more, some of them are sweating, suggesting that they haven't just arrived. It's scary stuff.

However, at about 9:15am it starts to drizzle in an irritating, Northern Hemisphere sort of way, and the start is delayed until 10:30, at which stage Skip, in the form of GDZ, playing in what is probably his last game at RSC, wins the toss and elects to field first, the sound logic being that, as always, the pitch should 'do a bit' in the morning, we can restrict the runs to something gettable, and then go out and get them as said pitch usually gets better to bat on as the day wears on.

We take our second drinks break at 30 overs, by which time RSC are 217 for no wicket. We have bowled too full, we have bowled too short and Damit (138) and Vicky (65) have batted beautifully to show up our limitations. Vicky has very much played stolid second fiddle to Damit, who has lit up the ground with some awesome shots including a series of terrifying cover drives that scorch their way to the offside boundary.

Nevertheless, a plan is formulated during the break.

Skip, slurping at his too-cold water: Right lads, this is where we have 'em. They are getting tired now so let's not get them out because they are so knackered they won't be able to score any more runs. Fair dinkum.

Sage nods all round as eleven fielders rubber-neck round to Damit, who has barely broken sweat. He and Vicky are discussing their training session after the game.

31st over – Skip puts himself on and immediately traps Damit leg before. What about the plan, Skip, everyone asks. Damit wanders off the pitch, looking disappointed at not equalling last year's score against us of 187 but manages a smile at H at long on. He's a friendly chap is Damit, always smiling whether he's smashing you around the park or stitching you up with his bowling.

Number 3 batsman enters the fray and is trapped LBW first ball. He really does look disappointed as he wanders off. H wonders aloud that it must really, really hurt to get out for nought when he's just come in with 217 on the board. He doesn't smile. Don't know why.

We have a couple more successes as the bowler formerly known as Druvi and formally known as Drudas (when he's not playing for Kelawar) clean bowls Vicky, and Kelvin, back for his second spell, cleans up Anwar (a very quickfire 36) and Navin (9), but the whole scenario has a wearing inevitability about it. Geoff has bowled well (2 for 38 off 8 overs), as has Kelvin (2 for 26 off 4 overs), and H not too expensive (8 overs for 43) but there are some sorry-looking figures among the rest with runs per over all in the region of 7 to 10. Neither have we fielded particularly well, with a couple of catches going down (Druvi x 2) and some overthrows.

RSC's innings ends on 280 for 5 in 40 overs.

NEVERTHELESS, where there is life, there is hope, and our openers, in the form of Andy M-W and Sri Lankan university accounting student Azhan, who is playing his first game for Kelawar, go out looking determined to see off the hairy (both of phizog and speed at which they release the ball) opening pair of Hiran and Hassan. Azhan certainly looks the part and plays his first few balls with admirable ease and is perhaps a bit unlucky to be

adjudged leg before to Hiran, seemingly shaping up to glance a ball down leg, but perhaps he has shuffled across a wee bit too much...Kelawar 3-1.

Wickets fall thereafter at regular intervals at 23 (Andy M-W - 6), 23 (Dil - 9), 40 (Andy Scott - 13) and 52 (Druvi - 13, solid planting of foot towards mid-wicket and thrashing through covers - great to watch) until H and Tim stick around for a while and put on 26 for the 5th wicket.

Tim, at mid-wicket conflagration with H after 20 overs: All right, then, H, how's it going, mate, not too bad, is it, lovely day, right let's just keep going and see how we stand at 30 overs.

He is out (14), caught and bowled next ball, followed by Skip (0) the ball after that. (*in my defence, can I say...er...nothing, carry on - Ed*).

H (23) and Kelvin manage another 14 before the former, knocked out of his 'zone' by the umpire's pleading for a lift after the game to 'anywhere near Ampang', hits a long-hop tamely to square leg. Kelvin (10) is joined by Anu (15), who add 16 entertaining runs before both falling to Dr Navin, bowled and LBW respectively, leaving Andy D on 0 not out and our total on 115.

Thus we come second by 165 runs.

RSC, as always, are charming victors and buy us lots of beer afterwards, Rohan complaining all the time that he can't find anyone to play for him! I would suggest his team is not in bad shape at this point.

I myself look forward fondly to the return of B. Webb, R. Gunavanthe, D. Murali, S. Little, and not forgetting Humpty Wilson.

May he get well soon!