

DATE : 15TH MARCH 2009

VENUE : CLUB AMAN

FIXTURE : KELAWAR CC V CLUB AMAN CC (Nava Shield)

PART 1 – XMAS COMES EARLY TO THE FIRST NOEL

It came upon the midnight clear, a day, a day of glory that a great and mighty wonder appeared bringing his brightest and best from the Eastern mountains great joy to the world. Not bad, 6 carols in the first sentence but can't keep this going – Noel, can't you have been called Norman. Anyway, more Noel, Noel, Noel, Noel (good words to this carol) later.

So after a delayed start, Commander in Chief (see later) Speedie won the toss and going against his own judgement elected to bat. Tim opened up with birthday boy and the new Kelawar run machine Rohit but unfortunately today wasn't his day as he got the only ball that swung in the innings and was out in the first over caught behind. 2 - 1.

Henry in a very unfamiliar position at 3 strolled out looking confident and both he and Tim began to consolidate the innings and build a platform for the later batsman. The bowling was either tight or too wide early on so not easy to score particularly on a slow wicket and an even slower outfield. The score board ticked over with Henry taking most of the strike and Tim sometime's struggling to complete the quick singles off the last ball of each over.

After around 10 overs the score had reached 48 when Henry smacked one to mid off – looked a certain boundary until one of Club Aman's youngster's plucked the ball out of the sky and took a brilliant catch – much to Henry's disgust as he then proceeded to drop everything else. 48 -2 with Henry out for 22.

Andy strode out (or is it in) confidently following some blistering blows in previous matches and this vein of form was to continue. However, Tim was out soon after his arrival, bowled following a big swing to cow corner trying to push the score along. Only 10 scored off around 10 overs but only 18 balls faced out of around 75 (!) including all the wides ...52- 3.

One of our youngsters Darshan then walked in and walked back soon after – didn't see it (*and neither did Darshan – Ed*) but apparently it was unplayable – 52-4 and Kelawar now in a spot of bother.

Darshan's downfall paved the way for Noel, perhaps a little disgruntled about being dropped down the order but it turned out to be his day along with Andy's – at least with the bat. Moving back into the Noel theme, while the Shephards Watched from the pavilion thinking 100 would be a good score, the pair muttered 'O Come All Ye Faithful', have more faith in us and promptly set about the bowling with a mixture of lusty blows (that's not a carol), graceful shots (neither is that but not a bad drink) and a bit of Ding Dong Merrily on High.

The next 10 overs resulted in 96 runs with Andy ending up 39 not out off 31 balls and Noel 54 not out off 35 balls. Both batted extremely well as the wicket and outfield obviously substantially improved and the boundaries began to flow. Noel even managed to clear the ropes 3 times with the last of his 6's bringing up his 50 in style. Despite both players taking the customary Kelawar pose at the end of each over (head on top of bat handle) and both barely able to walk back to the pavilion at the end of the innings it was good entertainment (watching them about to collapse as opposed to

the batting exploits of course) and 149 – 4 was a formidable total on this wicket. Rest you Merry Gentlemen (Andy and Noel).

PART 2 - ACTION STATIONS

Unfortunately there was no time for any rest as the change over was swift as a stream of footballers were arriving waiting to push us off at any moment. Our main bowlers were however fresh and included new member ‘Captain David Gandy of the Australian Infantry’ (CDGoAI) who had just marched up the North South highway from his military position in JB complete with cricket bag on back. However, it was noted that cricket boots were not included which consequently resulted in 2 weeks solitary confinement under new club rules.

After a speedy morale building speech by our Commander in Chief (as we now had an official Captain) and with everyone on their best behaviour in case they were frog marched back to the pavilion or subject to 100 press ups, Kelvin was summoned to attack from the Eastern front and Sam from the West, hopefully being ably supported by the troops veering in from the North and South frontiers and the keeper behind the enemy lines (stumps in cricket terms).

With Kelvin pounding in with his exorcet (excuse spelling) missiles in the first over, sadly some of the troops were still thinking about the earlier Xmas festivities or trying to work out what headgear to wear and 3 catches went down in the first over alone!

First ball Andy paratrooped to a lofted cut and failed to hold on, third ball Tim put down a straight forward caught behind with Colonel H screaming in his ear from one yard ‘Ground control to Major Tim, what the hell was that?’ to which ‘no time to warm up (writing notes from scorebook to write this silly report) and can’t see anything with this stupid helmet (to protect bump from last week’s battle ground)’ came the reply. Then the 4th ball floated up in the covers and with Kelvin and Noel heading for an almighty explosion, both pulled out leaving the hand grenade to plop tamely to the ground. Poor old Kelvin but his time was to come.

Second over Tim then dropped a difficult chance off Sam having disregarded his helmet but unable to see properly with the potent mixture of sweat and contact lenses. It’s my report so I can write what I want.

Kelvin continued to pound the opposition and wickets then began to tumble. 9 – 1 became 9 – 2 and the 15 -3 with Kelvin picking up all 3 wickets - Tim redeeming himself in comfy hat and snapping up two catches and one bowled with an absolute pearl of a delivery which would have had troubled any line of defence.

CDGoAI was then introduced into the attack from one front and Rohit from the other. During CDGoAI’s spell Andy and Henry took great delight drilling strategic motivational army terminologies after every ball towards the Captain none of which I can actually now remember. The tactics worked with the Captain picking up 2 wickets (another caught behind I may add) but should have been three when another caught behind was inexplicably not given out (sorry Kim Heng who otherwise had a perfect day!).

Rohit from the other end bowled consistently maintaining line and picked up a wicket – but should have two when another caught behind was turned down – note turned down and not put down! So, scores became 23 – 4, 31 – 5 and 67 – 6.

The cavalry remained active in the field of duty and the enthusiasm particularly from Darshan and Luke was a sight to behold. This was exemplified when 13 year old Luke chased after a ball with CDGoAI a few yards behind ordering him to flick the ball back so he could hurl the ball into it’s

intended target only for a brave young Luke to pick the ball up and hurl it himself right over the stumps! The troops watched in amazement and CDGoAI's face was a picture.

Is anyone still reading this?

For the one or two who are, Henry and Luke then came onto bowl and although Putra from Club Aman hit 41 with his own rear guard action, Henry employed a subtle tactic by lobbing the ball a la hand grenade into the air with the ball just having enough strength to knock the bails off. Henry picked up another wicket confidently snapped up by our Commander in Chief and so the scores ended up 86 – 7 and then 86 – 8.

This then became 105 – 8 off a few balls when the previous mentioned catcher brought himself on to bowl a few looseners in preparation of his next action in a few months time (wasn't my fault you didn't play last week!) (*and on current form he's lucky its an intraclub next week – Ed*).

A great morale boosting and comfortable victory in the end with the authoritative Speedie leading the troops well. Noel picked up a box of Xmas decorations for his batting efforts while Kelvin was rewarded a medal of the highest order for his excellent bowling. As for Tim's 'should have been' 5 catches behind the stumps, all he got was a bruise on his shin from slipping up in the drain earlier (no questions please) but could have been a lot worse when trying to mount both the stumps and the batsman all in one go with a not so graceful stumping attempt off Rohit.