

## **PHUKET CRICKET UNION SENIOR TOUR TO KUALA LUMPUR 29/08 TO 01/09 2008**

**FIXTURES : 30<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST VERSUS ROYAL SELANGOR CLUB AT ROYAL SELANGOR CLUB**

**31<sup>ST</sup> AUGUST VERSUS KELAWAR CRICKET CLUB AT ROYAL SELANGOR CLUB**

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The PCU are very proud to have sent a team of local Thai school children to Kuala Lumpur for the FTCA / RSC International Youth Under-15 Cricket Carnival held at the Royal Selangor Club last year. The tournament was a tremendous success and thoroughly enjoyed by all concerned. Thanks to the continued success of our youth development programme we will be once again be entering a team in the same tournament next month. It was this that opened our relationship with cricket in Kuala Lumpur and lead to our senior team being invited to tour there for our first time this year. Two games were arranged against The Royal Selangor Club and Kelawar Cricket Clubs respectively with the tour party departing on Friday 29<sup>th</sup> August.....yes unfortunately that Friday was when Phuket Airport was besieged by protesters. The tour party was split over early and late flights with only three of us making it out of Phuket before the runway was closed. Once again sport was a victim of political unrest. Three of our team had come from other destinations which meant that we only managed to get six players to KL with the remainder left angry and frustrated on Phuket.

Fortunately our opposition very understood about our predicament and pulled out all the stops to provide players to fill our vacant boots. With our depleted party we met up in the hotel bar for a couple of liveners before heading off to meet our hosts in the Kudu Bar just 50 yards from our hotel.....perfect convenience! This is a fantastic sports bar which Kelawar use as their head quarters and club house and it's run by Dave Solomon and his wife and chef Debbie, both from South Africa....just in case you hadn't guessed!! Straight away we were made to feel completely at home and slotted comfortably into their philosophy of beer and light hearted banter. Never ending jugs of Tiger just kept arriving on the table and then Dave served up some nibbles.....the best medallions of steak I think I've ever had. The usual suspects of Mark Whetton, Jason Phillips and yours truly, Richard Brown, finally managed to escape their clutches (Kelawar is Malay for 'fruit bat' by the way) at about 3.30am and we meandered and wobbled our way back to the 'team' hotel.

We awoke with pretty sore heads but with the first game not starting until 1.30pm we managed to recover with a couple of 'dog hairs' in the hotel pool before being collected by Graham Witt, an old adversary of ours from the Phuket Sixes, for our short trip to the RSC. On arrival we realized how much we missed a facility like this on Phuket, an immaculate ground and club house with all the amenities you would expect from a famous club formed in 1884. (Please visit <http://rscweb.org.my/history.htm> for more background information well worth reading). If only we could find the funds to build something similar here we could really promote Phuket as *the* cricket destination of Thailand.

### **Match report : Royal Selangor Club v Phuket Cricket Union**

RSC captain Murali (not the Sri Lankan of the same name thank goodness) won the toss and decided to bat, much to my team's disgust and I was fined the appropriate amount of 100 ringgit. Murali also opened their batting and played a watchful knock of 35 runs before being well bowled by Andrew Beeley with the score on 83 off 13 overs. He was well supported by Haren with 25 runs before he also departed in the next over before the heavens opened and we scattered for shelter back in the clubhouse. We waited and eyed the skies hopefully but the pitch was totally waterlogged after just half an hour's deluge.

So the captains agreed that it really was too wet to continue and the ritual of never ending jugs of Tiger resumed. Every time we tried to buy some beer back they just said 'You'll have to wait, we haven't drunk our quota yet'. Apparently the club provides them a large quota of beer after each game, what a club!! Before we got too carried away I got through the formalities of thanking them for all their hospitality, for providing willing players to replace our missing comrades and present PCU caps to their captain Murali and the man of the match Chris Speed, a talented 13 year old from Kelawar for an impressive spell of medium paced bowling (5 overs, 0-23). Finally their 'quota' did run out so we tried to buy some jugs.....fat chance. Charlie Chelliah, a PCU member and Cricket Commissar for the RSC, beat us to the chair and refused to be removed from it. We must say thank you to Charlie for his amazing generosity, I think he ended up buying 25 jugs. Now after every game we PCU boys usually conduct a fines session in the nearest pool to cool down and discuss the day's activities. However, with these bottomless beer jugs we decided to hold it at the table with our full complement of PCU members and local replacements in full party mood. We managed to collect a total of 1,350 ringgit which is about 13,500 baht to be spent in the Kudu Bar later. We'd only played 14 overs so you can imagine the 'off field' fines being enforced. The cash was collected and it was time to finally leave the RSC to spruce ourselves up for further evening adventures and Henry Tattersfield from Kelawar very kindly squashed us all into his people carrier to ferry us back to the hotel. After a quick dip in the pool and a freshen up we were back to the Kudu Bar for more delightful tidbits, Tigers and a big screen for the SA v Oz rugby match. There were a couple of Aussies in there and they struggled to come to terms with the hiding they got from a revitalized Bokka outfit and it was a short string of starry gold jerseys that filed out of the bar soon after the game. This left the cricket boys to kick on with further bonding and tour revelry. I am pleased to say that the Phuket 3 (as we had been affectionately nicknamed) were the last to leave again maintaining our fine reputation of strong staying power. Cricket is such a fantastic way of making new friends, it doesn't matter where you go, if you report to the local cricket club you will always find like-minded people who enjoy the simple things in life.....good sport, good humour and good beer.

So we awoke again feeling a little tender and assembled in the hotel pool thus avoiding the dreadful breakfast on offer. Our lifts arrived at 9.30, we had a 10.30 start for our last game, and with the weather looking much more promising we started to focus on the game ahead.

### **Match report : Kelawar Cricket Club v Phuket Cricket Union**

This time our opposition allowed us to bat without the formality of the toss. Jason was extremely happy with this as he had been experiencing a dodgy tummy just before we left the hotel. So I did what any caring captain would do and told him to open the batting along with Ben Webb who was on loan once more from KCC. Once I'd persuaded Jason that I was in fact serious he padded up and strode to the wicket with his partner. Surprisingly he seemed to harden up and set us off to a good start with some lusty blows scoring a quick fire 17, despite being dropped twice, and with Webby (25 runs) looking fluent at the other end we were happy with our first few overs. Once these two departed Dill (20 runs) took up the reins with teammates chipping in at the other end, although Mark Whetton had failed to produce the runs he had promised us the night before. But it was George (another on loan from KCC) who upped the run rate at the end and he took us to 148 for 9 off our 25 overs smashing 31 not out, including some impressive 'switch hitting' and KP styled whips through mid wicket. So we were pleased to have set a reasonable target, although I couldn't help thinking that we might be 10 or 15 runs short. The pick of the KCC bowlers was young Chris Speed again, showing great potential as an opening bowler and he finished with 3 for 23 off 5 overs.

With 148 runs to defend I opened up our attack from the pavilion end with Diwan Mydeen, a PCU member now living in Singapore, and he bowled with much better control than the previous day when his first ball when skyward without reaching the batsman, instigating a shout from the slips that he should have pulled the pin out! At the other end we had the youth of George, who was half the age of most of us,

and he didn't disappoint by firing in a hostile spell of 5 overs taking 2 wickets for 25 runs. Unfortunately KCC maintained the run rate throughout their innings, although we were always in the game with some excellent leg spin from Dill and even the captain picked up a couple of wickets towards the end! They needed 11 with 2 overs left and our last hope was a catch spilled by Graham at mid off which could have kept the pressure on. Maybe he was getting his own back for the PCU beating his team in the spoon final of the Phuket Sixes a couple of years ago, who knows but the chance went begging and KCC ended up winning quite comfortably with an over to spare. So all in all a close fought match, thoroughly enjoyed by all with cricket being the real winner at the end of the day!!

Our livers were extremely relieved to have got a full game of cricket in, otherwise we would have found ourselves in the 'bar of bottomless beer jugs' far too early on, especially with the closing function KCC had organized not starting until 7pm. So I think it was a manageable 2 o'clock when I started the presentations. There were a few performances of note for man of the match, but for his all round contribution with bat, ball and athleticism in the field, I called up young George to come and accept his PCU cap to the accompaniment of enthusiastic applause. I also felt that for all their help over the week end and the fact that they had umpired for 50 overs through intense heat that Mike Speed (KCC President) and Henry Tattersfield (KCC Club Captain) should also get one of our splendid caps. They were most appreciative and announced that they would delay their response until the evening's festivities down at the Out of Africa Restaurant. So on to free flowing Tigers and then back to the hotel for a quick power nap.

Unfortunately at this point we lost Diwan (bus to Singapore), Mark (plane to Singapore) and Andy (AWOL shopping with missus – massive fine by the way Andy). That left Jason, Charlie and me flying the PCU flag at the tour's closing function. A little embarrassing really as they had put on a fantastic curry buffet and all their members, wives and children had come along in force. For this we must thank Jonny and Diane for all the effort they put in, it really was delicious. Jonny is a lively old soul, and with the help of his sidekick Tim, he launched us into an evening of singing, dancing and general tom foolery, including choir practice for their Christmas Carols would you believe. He continued to entertain us by thrusting the mike into the faces of unsuspecting guests for comments and songs but finally he called upon their Club President Mike Speed to say a few words. We were now known by all as the Phuket Three. However, they were gracious and understanding about the predicament we had been left in by the airport protesters and thanked us for at least getting six there and playing some half decent cricket. I responded by thanking all our 'new found friends' for their amazing hospitality, tremendous good humour and all round good company. I apologized for our poor showing but ensured them that we would be back next year with a full tour party to give them a good run for their money. To all RSC and KCC members reading this, on behalf of the PCU, many, many thanks for making our tour such a wonderful experience and we look forward to seeing you on Phuket for the Sixes next year....if not before. You are of course welcome at any time.

**Richard Brown**  
**Honorary Secretary**  
**Phuket Cricket Union**

**PCU Touring Party : Richard Brown (captain), Mark Whetton, Jason Phillips, Charlie Chelliah, Diwan Mydeen and Andrew Beeley.**