

MATCH REPORT

UCC VS PSCC - 1 FEBRUARY 2015

By Jon Aspin



A new month but same old UCC - winning.

Challenged to chase rather than set a total today, UCCians had to bowl well to restrict a strong Pakistan batting side in the early morning dew at RMIT. Looking to beat the league leaders and make it 5 in row, there was confidence in the UCC team given recent form, even though Pakistan had come off a big win against the SACC last outing. In pre-game despatches Vijesh kept up his record as the captain who can't win a toss, and Chetan was still operating on Singapore time. This meant when he saw Guy 'don't tell anyone it's my birthday' Dormer casually buying banh mi's in phu my hung at what he thought was game time - 8am - he nearly freaked out. Turns out Singers is an hour ahead Chetan! Luckily the birthday boy managed to calm the pocket rocket down and a cardiac arrest was avoided. It wouldn't be the only way the kiwi educator would distinguish himself on the day, nor Chetan, who was later instrumental in instigating a strange medieval Hindi tradition (one that's been shrouded in mystery for thousands of years) on Dormer called... 'birthday bumps'...eh?

Opening the bowling were skipper Vijesh and Malone, with Pakistan showing their early intent. Having trouble gripping the moist ball Malone went the distance a couple of times before the skipper made the first early breakthrough. I can't remember if it was clean bowled or caught. Anyway, not his usual self out there, the big Cumbrian Malone was replaced by Aspin before his allotted four, and he struck immediately, taking two in two balls including the dangerous Suleman. The first was after Malone took a good catch at deep backward square leg to dismiss the opener, the second when the incoming batsmen lobbed a straight forward one to James the very next ball, leaving them three down for not many. After that (timelines of events can get shady here) everyone got in on the act. Bala held a tough caught and bowled, Vijesh took two more important wickets, also finding himself on a hat trick, and then Panku

pretty much cleaned up, taking three as the tail-end wagged a little, but not a lot, and the PCCS were up all out for 114 -- well below par in a league where 160 is only considered a decent total.

After the traditional samosas and rolls from Babas, a couple g-stats and a sermon by Reverend Green; (this month's topic: the value of a good late bar exit strategy*), there wasn't much else to talk about. Having already posted a high score against Pakistan earlier in the season, we were fairly confident our top order could get the required 115 without trouble.

And so it was. The basic premise of our win from there was 'If you believe it, it will happen', so our 5th win on the trot was never in doubt. James continued where he left off last week, riding his outfield luck and punishing the attack from the beginning. He smashed three or four maximums to get past 40 - AGAIN - and give the UCC a comfortable platform to complete the task. We did so in under 12 completed overs. The only dismissals in getting there were Chetan, who tried to cut one too close to his body and was caught behind, and Guy, who gave himself out, nobly doing what no Australian should ever do - walk! Thus showing why his mother was not let into the continent of 'Straya' and forced to live in New Zealand. For the act he was rewarded with good bloke points from the opposition (immediately forgotten), umpires (confused for most of the day) and cricketing gods (completely made up) everywhere, followed by a face-cake ceremony. This was administered by the captain Vijesh at the behest of another sacred Hindi tradition and not discouraged by anyone other than the recipient himself, who did so only meekly, -- accepted his fate of a face full of cake. For the record it was a spongecake with some kind of buttery filling and firm icing of non-descript flavour but good enough moisture level and sweetness to make palatable.

After James retired it was the "Steve show", my favourite comedy-cum-action adventure series in Vietnam. In today's episode he laconically blasted three creamy maximums to all parts including one pull shot that looked so completely effortless, I wondered if it Steve hadn't cloned himself and was controlling his double remotely from the Tavern. Regardless Pakistan's bowlers and fielders looked beaten, dropping just about everyone who batted to keep themselves out of the game, and in the 12th over when Pankaj struck the third ball powerfully for four, we put the final punctuation mark on a resounding victory for the men in purple.

Vijesh's three wickets and good captaincy, ably assisted by his team, earned him the MOM biccies, but it was an even contribution with good men like Geoff and Danny left in the shed with angry willow at their mercy.

Far too good on this occasion with bat and ball UCC, another bonus point. Bring on SACC next week, we'll have to raise our game against a strong team.