

Swannanoa Match Report Saturday 17th January 2009 vs Southbrook at Southbrook

Swannanoa turned up in some strength at Southbrook to take on the locals. The forecast for the days play slightly inauspicious, however the only moisture that would be felt would be from the sprinkler on the adjacent pitch being forced onto the Swannanoa lads by the Wellington like gale blowing from the North.

With the opposition warming up in international like fashion, and wristbands and headbands in place, the Swannanoa boys thought they might be in for a tight encounter. Further evidence appeared of this with names emblazoned on their shirts like 'Prowler' and 'Spider', leading some of us to think we might have a real match on our hands. It's not every opposition that carries with them a team supply of Fruit Jubes for the drinks break!

With Captain Mike Hamilton winning the toss, Swannanoa elected to bat to test the waters on the grass track. Derek Scott bravely took guard following his previous innings when he played a hook with his jaw, and top scored with a useful 39 before being undone by a straight full one. Derek's opening partner, Lance Ryan scored a lowly 14, putting him in grave danger of being on the bags, Lance dealt with this in his own way as you'll read later.

Up next were Tim Fulton and Mark Woods, both being promoted up the order. Tim scoring a very solid and elegant 23, helping set the foundation for Mark 'Lance Klusener' Woods to stride out and hit the sh**te out of the ball from ball dot. Mark, feeling well at ease on the now drying out track, and seeing it like a beach ball, spotted a gap through point. The bowler, not obliging with deliveries to suit, Mark had to take it in his own hands and duly reverse swept, one handed through the vacant point region for 4. It was said after the match (I believe by Mr. Woods) that this may in-fact have been the best shot played by a Swannanoa batsman in its 125 year history! This miraculous shot may well have been the undoing of Klusener, as the next ball he was bowled by a loopy full toss. However the damage had been done, the pitch hitter had delivered, and Klusener's knock of 35 had raised the run rate from under 4 to nearer 5 per over.

This brought in Nathan Lang. Quietly concerned that his father-in-law Lance was umpiring, Nathan played cautiously, and quite soon was playing into some nice form. This is where he was savagely cut off in his prime. Lance, knowing he was in real danger of being bag boy, felt that one drifting down leg was straight enough to fire Nathan back to the dressing room for a paltry 6 runs, thus relieving Lance of his duties. It was of no great consolation to Nathan when Lance later said he had only ever given 3 LBW's in his 28 years at Swannanoa.

All this while Andy Pope was ticking along nicely at the other end, seeing partners come and go, and collecting into his mid 30's. Pope feeling he might be in for a tidy 50 faced up to one of Southbrook's bearded wonders. The bearded wonder, bowling from 30 paces, down the now hurricane like Northerly, delivered a searing full toss. Pope played this ever so nicely with his left elbow, unfortunately not into space and didn't collect a run. The delivery, and more likely the pain, put Pope off his next delivery and he was cleaned out by the bearded wonder with a well disguised slower delivery. With 35 elegant and useful runs to his name, Pope went home a happy man with a sore elbow.

Shane Murdoch, saving himself for an important bowling spell, gathered a useful 10 runs and Richard Cherry and the captain Mike Hamilton returned 6 and 9 not out respectively. Mike chipping in with 2 well struck 4's at the end of the innings to creep the Swannanoa team over the 200 mark, finishing with 203 for 7. Jock McDonald and Geoff Olsen didn't grace the cease.

The opposition looked confident at the turn. Wristbands were replaced. Fruit Jubes were eaten. Beards were stroked. This looked a team that might give Swannanoa a run for its money!

However, the reality was a little less challenging. The openers poked and prodded their way through at about 2 an over, until the bearded wonder committed hari-kari and was out flailing at a ball from the consistently accurate Geoff 'The Power' Olsen. The miserly Olsen going for 8 from his 5 overs. Generally, most of the batsmen threw their bat at it, mostly with their eyes closed, enabling the Swannanoa pace men to pick up some easy wickets. 'Mad Dog' Murdoch being the most savage collecting 3 wickets off his 6 overs for just 11 runs.

'The Metronome' Hamilton, Lang, and Cherry all had useful spells following The Power and Mad Dog, and put the game beyond doubt.

Lance 'Judas' Ryan lying on a hat trick from early October (as he had told us all on about 87 occasions previously) had spotted his target early on in the piece. The Prowler was to be his victim! Southbrook, 7 down, sent in their secret weapon, the wristband clad Mr. Cricket, that is The Prowler. Lance spotting his opportunity jumped up and down Captain! Captain! Sir! Captain! Can I have a bowl please?!. Lance was duly given his bowl. On a hat-trick, the ball was delivered, what a letdown - no wicket. The next two deliveries were flogged for runs, and it was then on the fourth ball a wicket was taken. Lance thus claiming a fourth ball Hat-trick, quite an achievement!

Fulton, Jock and Pope wrapped up the tail with some quite entertaining deliveries. Pope at one stage threatening his 14 ball over, with 7 balls (3 legitimate) to take the last wicket and seal the match for the men from the Noa.

It should also be noted that '4 wise men' of Swannanoa cricket (Gardiner, Findlay, Fulton and Polson) graced us with their presence and wisdom during and after the match which was great for all concerned.

All the best for next week.

Nathan Lang