

Swannanoa vs Rangiora at Swannano, 27/2/10:

This was a battle at the top of the table, and the game lived up to it's promise.

A late change was made just prior to the start of the game, seeing the introduction of the 12th man Lance Ryan - Lance did not disappoint. The new Oligarch of Rangiora had apparently been delayed whilst he counted his newly found fortune at the expense of Telecom and their mighty XT network.

Hayden won the toss and elected to bat. This was a decision he may have been rueing 6 overs later when at 2 down for 3, we were in a spot of bother. Tim Osbourne and Hamish Dugdale dug in and saw off a couple of the grades best bowlers and steadied the ship. Runs however were still not flowing at any real rate. The total was around 45 in the 20th over and the general feeling amongst the troops was that 120-130 would be a fine effort from there. Tim finally lost his wicket with the score of 77, for a well grafted and important 38 runs. Luke O'Donnell met Dugdale in the middle and the score really started to push on. Opening his innings with a straight 6 gave us all a taste of what the partnership could offer, and the pair surged through to 122 with some lusty blows before Dugdale lost his wicket for a brilliantly crafted 53 - his first dismissal of the season. O'Donnell followed shortly after (also his first out of the season) on 137 and Woodsie on 141. Had the impetus been lost - well no. Two of the elder statesmen of the pack stepped up, Geoff Olsen and Lance Ryan crafted an excellent 42 run partnership featuring some superb and aggressive running (several 3's amongst the runs), glides, parries, and the odd Lance Ryan hook shot. A very respectable 187 for 7 was reached. Geoff compiling a very useful 26, and Lance a timely 21 not out.

We turned for the break thinking at least we were in with a show. We did know that Rangiora had several very capable batsmen, with two recently having come off centuries, albeit against some lesser opposition.

Rangiora progressed through very calmly to 46 before we took the important wicket of their captain and no.1 batsman, it was then we really thought we had a chance. The opener at the other end was offering up chances, which we just couldn't seem to hold, although he never seemed to really pose any great threat. From an initial run rate of 4.5 being required, we steadily built pressure with some good tight bowling. The required rate climbed to 5, then 5.5, and 6. This forced incoming batsmen to play more aggressive shots than they might have otherwise selected, and so we gladly took the wickets as they were offered. Rangiora eventually petered out and we took their final wicket in the 40th over with their score on 162. The bowlers all bowled well and a great win was taken - one step closer to the final!

The bowlers:

Geoff Olsen, 8o, 0m, 3 for 38

Hamish Dugdale, 8o, 0m, 2 for 33

Phil Heffernan, 8o, 0m, 2 for 28

Hayden Ryan, 8o, 1 m, 2 for 26

Lance Ryan, 4o, 1m, 0 for 14

Jason Findlay, 3.4o, 0m, 1 for 18