

Match Report Westbourne vs HAWKS

"Luck favours the Brave", "It ain't over until it's all over", "Catches can win matches" are some of the famous idioms that we have come across so often in various articles but the one that stands out was Andrew Flintoff's comment when playing the West Indies, "Cricket has a very funny way of biting you up the a*".**

The HAWKS some way experienced that aspect on a bright but chilly early summer evening playing Westbourne CC in what was a most closely fought match. But, unfortunately the HAWKS ended up on the wrong side of this quote.

Going into the game, the HAWKS were focused with just one motto, "Win, win, win".

The toss was lost once again by Captain Marvel, Gareth Haskett, who seemed confused with the use of a Euro. Westbourne chose to bat so the HAWKS took to the field with a determined spirit and a hungry lean look determined to fair well in the field.

The start for the HAWKS was electric. David Loten's pace and accuracy certainly had the opening batsman worried. Our 'winter signing' has made a positive impact as a fine strike bowler. With Josh Haskett hurtling them down at the other end it proved to be an excellent opening partnership. Westbourne's batsman found difficulty finding a way to get runs on the board. With Gareth Haskett and Matt Chesshire also enjoying fine spells in the bowling attack it wasn't long before the wickets started to fall with Loten and Haskett senior each taking a well deserved wicket each and Chesshire taking two. One with the help of a fine reaction catch from wicket keeper Paul Walmsley.

The first seven overs saw the HAWKS well on top. The good bowling continued with medium pace and spin but the batsman started to increase the run rate and take the momentum. Rob Richards accurate spell was not enough to halt the blade swiping and Westbourne started to get the upper hand. A dropped catch by David Loten off Richards bowling at a crucial stage of the game didn't help matters but the introduction of spinner Gavin Fisher helped to slow things down. Fisher's efforts were rewarded by a well worked wicket which broke up the increasingly dangerous Westbourne attack.

Although sharp in the field, the HAWKS couldn't prevent a final onslaught from Westbourne. Even a final injection of pace from Chesshire and Loten couldn't prevent further damage. So after 20 gruelling overs the HAWKS were left to chase a total of 151.

The thought of scoring a further 20 overs in the increasingly chilly conditions seemed to cause Carol Haskett mild concern. So a tartan blanket and a Thermos flask of piping hot soup will be on order for the next match.

So, with the sun heading towards the horizon and the temperature beginning to drop, it was the turn of our batsman to turn up the heat in the middle. Enter stage right, Paul 'Woolmer' Walmsley and Matt Chesshire. These two boys were on fire in the middle getting the HAWKS off to a flying start and leaving the Westbourne bowling attack somewhat frustrated. The ball left both bats with ease and the two heroic opening bats peppered the outfield with some glorious shots. Chesshire wanted to go after the bowling, and he connected with some good balls playing exquisite strokes for his well deserved 25 before being caught.

Neil Phillips made his way to the middle with an air of confidence and a new bat. His trusted 'old blade' was demolished in his previous power-house HAWKS innings when he raced to 50 no. But the expectation of another fine batting display was soured when he fell first ball after swiping at a peach. He obviously bought the wrong bat.

Gareth Haskett scored a quick-fire impressive 13 before being frustratingly run out on a suicide attempt.

'Keep your head when all about are losing theirs' was obviously ringing in the ears of 'Woolmer' Walmsley as he witnessed yet another mid-order collapse.

Rob Richards failed to impress this time around with the bat. He was in positive mood after his overseas training in Menorca but it all went horribly wrong when he was caught after facing only three balls, scoring a disappointing 2. Fortunately his sun tan masked his embarrassment as he trudged back to the dressing room.

With the run-rate rising and some pretty tidy bowling from Westbourne, the HAWKS needed to pull something special out of the bag if they were going to win this game.

It was obvious at this stage Walmsley was eyeing a half Century and was keen to keep the strike. He was joined at the crease by Keith Davey who was determined to better his batting average. This looked as though it was going to develop into a useful partnership but an impatient Davey misjudged a decent delivery and was clean bowled for 8.

Josh Haskett played some delightful strokes, hitting the boundary for four with exquisite timing before rushing to play the same stroke and being clean bowled for 5.

This was no time for Jonno 'nudger' Keynes to be in Boycott mode. The HAWKS needed him to provide some boundaries and plenty of them. As the bowling seemed to get tighter the game seemed to slip away from the HAWKS. Even Walmsley was playing and missing as the frustration mounted. Jonno Keyes was eventually dismissed for 9 by an athletic run out after chasing a second run.

Andy Gubbs will be happy he survived with 1 no as the game petered out and Westbourne were crowned victorious with a 26 run win.

The star of the HAWKS batting line up was Paul 'Woolmer' Walmsley. He went the distance scoring an unbeaten 41 in a quality innings with a mix of patience, charisma and aggressive menace.