

1st XI – Saturday 6th May - OCC win by 139 runs

OCC 250-6 (50ovs)

Hythe 111ao (38.5ovs)

With the cobwebs just about blown away after 2 Saturday friendlies, the league season proper started with an away game against Hythe. Moans and groans were inevitable with the 10:30am meet time, but interestingly enough over half the side managed to still find time to 'stock up' in the cafe across the road from the club prior to departure.

Thank you to all those that undertook the lengthy drive down. Unfortunately after a fitness test in the car park Pablo's car was declared unfit to travel (in fact it was so tired it stayed put until Sunday afternoon).

After a good warm up, OCC duly lost the toss, and were asked to bat. The final score posted of 250-6 was well above par on a difficult wicket but it does not tell the whole story. At 65-4 our innings was at a crossroads. OCC openers Lessey and George was both unlucky in suffering downfalls to balls that spat and shot respectively. Rich played yet another OCC cameo, looking great for his 34, but trying one too many big shots and top edging to mid-on. The evergreen Prince, after surviving a scare first ball, got to 20 before his stumps were uprooted. To lose Pabs so soon after Rich was disappointing and brought Robbo to join Rat at the wicket. After the odd scare, including Robbo nearly having a heart attack trying to keep up with Rat running between the wickets, the partnership progressed to over 150 before Robbo chipped to midwicket to depart for 72. Rat was out in the final over for an excellently compiled 80. Mike chipped in with some quick late runs including a trademark boundary!

After an excellent Hythe tea it was time to field. Maybe it was just us, but the sun seemed to go in, the wind got up and the temperature plummeted the moment we walked out to field. To bowl out Hythe for just 111 was a job well done. We knew that the key would be the taking of early wickets and Benny C duly obliged bowling Hythe's opener and number 3 for ducks in double-quick time. After Rich followed up with a wicket, our opponents were 30-3 and well behind the run rate needed. A frustrating period then followed when our opponents batted well and we struggled to make wicket taking opportunities. Our opponents remained 3 down until after drinks and the prospects of OCC winning the game were definitely diminishing. Cometh the hour, cometh the man, and last season's top wicket-taker Village was summoned into the attack. Would the reworking of his run up and remodelling of his action, all completed earlier that day, be successful we wondered and would he conquer his fear of bowling over the wicket? We need not have worried as Village walked off with 4-28 from 9 overs. Hayden bowled well at the other end and on another day would have returned even better figures than his 1-20. A run out and Benny C returning to wrap up the game were the other wickets to fall. The highlight in the field was a very sharp chance held by George at silly mid-on. And fair play to George, he called that fielding position and was proven right - albeit it might not have felt like a victory as the claret poured out of his finger after taking the catch!

So all in all a great start to the season. Hythe we believe were missing a few players and there may be sterner tests ahead. Nevertheless it was a great workout for all concerned and will stand us in good stead as we approach our next fixtures. Thanks to Frank and Shirley for scoring and umpiring and our away day supporters of Sam, Julie and Kelly. We would also like to extend our thanks to Hythe, they hosted us excellently and the game was played in a good spirit throughout which we hope will continue to be the case for all games going forwards.

After a few drinks with our opponents and the post-match fines all that was left to do was order some takeaways for the non-drivers for the journey home, and to go back to the club and celebrate.