

Letter no. 14 from an unhappy Gibbo.....

January 18th 2010

Unfortunately today we didn't bring our "A" game and after bowling OK to restrict South Launceston to 272 the previous week we offered very little resistance this week getting bowled out for 145 in little under 3 hours. We lost a wicket in the first over which never helps and then a group of wickets during the middle order in a pretty ordinary display of determination and guts. Yours truly top scored with 42, and surprise surprise I got out to a half tracker from a dibly dobbly medium pacer!!!

The wicket was less prepared than last week and there were overcast conditions which made the ball move all day and added to two rough decisions for our batters we could probably make excuses. Unfortunately they simply don't add up to losing this game especially given that we scored 250 off 52 overs in the second dig.

Hence we will be training 3 times a week this week and probably every other week leading up to the finals.... last night we did a boxing gym session which Horspath should look forward to because I'm bringing it there! The positive aspects still outweigh the negatives, we trained well all week and the guys are taking responsibility for their games which is a necessity and they all took it pretty hard, so we now move on to the next game.

This week we have Mowbray who have won the last three titles (including beating us in the grand final 2 years ago), it is actually the best game we can hope for after a bad performance as the recent history against Mowbray has been getting close to winning without actually getting over the line.... it will be the best test to see where we are at.

Unfortunately one of our players, Geoff Mohr, has his wedding the second week which is annoying so that takes him and one other out of the equation, so players will have to step up in both grades to get us some wins.

One another note - and I have a feeling that the common link here is me! Our under 18 team is on the same road as Horspath's under 17 team this year, they have won the regional final of their 20/20 competition and they need to win a state semi-final this week and they play the state final next week for a chance to go to Canberra for a tilt at a national title!!! Like Horspath, our youth structure is getting somewhere near the mark.

Hopefully next week I can report a good win....

Letter no. 15 from a VERY unhappy Gibbo.....

January 25th 2010

Gday Horspath, a quick history lesson for those unacquainted with the Riverside Cricket Club....

It is one of those quirks within our history that after Xmas we have lost more games than we have won. There could be a number of reasons for this, but the two that stand out to me are that the pitches get harder and faster and thus easier to bat on and we have failed to contain oppositions, coupled with the fact that for the most part the club has been a bowling side rather than a batting side and as a result we have lost games. The second reason we have lost more than we have won after Xmas is because Captains can't win a bloody toss!!!! Again, I lost and we were made to bowl on a placid pitch offering nothing to the bowlers.

In these games you have to take every opportunity you can, so consistent bowling and good fielding are essential. Unfortunately it was a day where we rarely delivered any of that. Mowbray have won the last three premierships and are a steady-bat-down-to-9 batting line up, with only two guys that could score a hundred.

After having them 1 for 0 in the first over and then 3 for 51, we let them off the hook with too many four balls. We dropped their number 3 on 60 just before lunch which could have been a momentum shifting wicket. Even though he only made another dozen or so, it was an important time to get a wicket. More disastrously we dropped their number 4 on 5. The last game we dropped him early he made 140 out of 240 to win the game for them. It was a simple catch and he made us pay for not switching on in the field with a steady, though not attractive, 125 not out.

In the second session we had an exceptional first hour, they only lost one wicket but we fielded and bowled really well to restrict them to around 40 runs. Unfortunately all that good work was undone by the most juvenile effort I have experienced in my senior cricketing life. They scored 80 runs, 21 which were off misfields, and 26 off terrible short balls. Couple that with the fact that Mark Ludlow bowled three head high full tosses in an over which meant he couldn't bowl for rest of the innings and Alex Gibbins hurt his shoulder celebrating a wicket of all things we were staring down the barrel of not only a big first innings chase but they looked like they could get their runs very very quickly.

Mowbray started the final session at 4 for 225 and if we let them go they could have declared with an hour to go and had a real dip at us. But we went defensive, with Brad Scott-Power and myself bowling unchanged for 80 minutes they managed only 75 runs for the loss of 2 wickets. Brad bowled well and the fielders, led by Sam and Tom Hay, picked their game up. They eventually declared for 300 leaving us 9 overs to negotiate.

It was a disastrous start, Mark Hollingsworth LBW first ball, again dubious, again the same umpire late in the day..... but we held on with some positive batting for the next 53 balls and we are currently 1 for 32, with Sam on 17 and Matthew Shipp 13. This week, our sole aim is to bat for 6 hours. We do that the worst result is a draw, but realistically we will get the runs. The pitch is a road and we have a history, recently anyway of playing some close games with Mowbray. If we are able to scramble some points out of the match we will set ourselves up for the rest of the year.

Today's theme: Catches win matches.... I don't play blokes that can't field