

Letter no 16 from an increasingly disappointed coach

We again let ourselves down this week. Chasing 300, which is never easy, we were bowled out for 164. The whole plan for the day was to bat the six hours and be somewhere near the target for a launch at it in the last hour or so. We lost our last 5 wickets for 18 runs and were bowled out at about 4.20. It was a frustrating day, we had a number of terrible umpiring decisions go against us but the reality was we lost wickets as each partnership was getting going.

The boys were trying to do the right thing but a couple of major executional errors, and a couple of brain fades, meant we never got any momentum and were never on top. I topped scored with 34 off 167 balls, but as I went through the minutes batted with the guys after the game, only 3 batted for longer than their average.

All in all it's back to the drawing board for us and get the simple things right. We bowled between 15 and 20 short balls that were dispatched to the boundary, dropped two regulation catches and misfielded 21 runs in a crucial hour of play, and we played some rash shots or no shot to balls that shouldn't trouble us.....

There are two major positives though for the last three games of the year.... the first is that there are only three games left and barring a major catastrophe, our start to the season will see us into the Finals

The second major positive is that finals cricket doesn't necessarily rely on form leading up to it.... it is who is the most switched on during the one weekend it takes..... there have been plenty of occasions in any sport where teams leading in with less than brilliant form have turned it around for one big occasion....

This week we are training three times, tonight (Monday) we had a gym session which nearly made me spew my guts up (our club Vice Captain had his wedding on the weekend and I was still recovering from that!) and on Thursday we are having a practice match against one of our feeder clubs in a lesser competition to keep that connection going....there is nothing like quality match practice, centre wickets can get boring but match practice is the best you can get.

Heard it snowed in Oxford on Sunday night, all I can say is its 25 degrees and muggy at 9pm at night here, we have had rain on one day since Xmas and we're expecting less till the end of Feb - soooooo, I don't envy any of you!!!!

That said I hope people are getting fit, and I don't find you all in the physical condition I found you all in last time!!!! If that happens, spin classes and kickboxing classes may be the norm!!!

Hope you are all well and hope I can definitely bring you some good news this week when we play the top side (who got knocked off by the 5th side last week).

Cheers