

Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> X1

Welwyn Garden City 2<sup>nd</sup> X1 142 all out in 52.5 overs

Potters Bar 2<sup>nd</sup> X1 146-8 in 41 overs

Potters Bar 2<sup>nd</sup> X1 returned to winning ways on Saturday with a well earned 2 wicket win, away to Welwyn Garden City 2<sup>nd</sup> X1, in a good game of cricket in Saracens Herts League Division 2.

Skipper Greg Hodge won the toss and elected to field first on a reasonable looking Digswell Park wicket. Hodge opened the bowling along with younger brother Charlie and it was the skipper that made the initial breakthrough when he had his WGC counterpart Molyneux caught in the slips by Mehta.

Charlie struggled to find his line and length on a regular basis and was replaced after 5 unsuccessful overs by the wily left arm spin of Paul McGee. McGee joined Hodge and soon accounted for the 2<sup>nd</sup> wicket to fall, when Adam Norman held a fine catch in the slips.

Hodge continued to put in a fine spell of controlled new ball bowling and he was rewarded with his 2<sup>nd</sup> wicket when Dan Brown held a good diving catch at extra cover, to pick up the vital wicket of Dan Beynon.

Hodge then replaced himself with the right arm spin of Mehta, a decision that would prove crucial to the result of the match. The skipper was pleased with his efforts and rightly so as reflected by the figures of 11 overs, 4 maidens, 2 wickets for 26 runs.

Mehta bowled beautifully and with McGee began to strangle the life out of the home side batters. Hodge caught dangerman Damian English at mid on for a well made 40 and from then on the home side struggled to score runs. Whilst McGee plugged away without much return in the way of wickets, Mehta showed his class as he was all over the batsman like a rash as wickets tumbled on a regular basis.

None of the batsman had any answer to the variety of leg breaks, googlies and quicker balls Mehta served up and when the final wicket fell in the 53<sup>rd</sup> over of the innings Mehta had the superb analysis of 15 overs, 5 maidens, 7 wickets for 32 runs.

Bar set about the reply in patient fashion with Matt Evans and Mehta batting patiently until the players were forced off the park as the rain became heavier in the 11<sup>th</sup> over of the innings. 6 overs were then deducted by the Umpires thus leaving 41 overs to score the 143 runs required for victory.

Evans soon fell upon the resumption of play whilst Mehta began to cut loose as he feasted on all of the home side bowlers, almost at will. Unfortunately this led to a slightly overconfident attitude and Mehta perished when he was caught at long on going for one big hit too many.

Dave Pett hit 4 boundaries in his brief innings, however he soon fell in the same manner as Mehta, when he also tried to play one big shot too many and was easily caught at point.

Adam Norman, having only stepped off the plane from Australia 5 hours before the start of the match, then came to the wicket and played with ease as the visiting side pushed towards what should have been a fairly comfortable victory. However when Norman fell 21 a flurry of wickets in the middle order set the alarm bells ringing to such an extent that 12 runs were required off the final 2 overs with just 2 wickets remaining.

Fortunately, Dan Brown proved to be up to the task as he joined forces with skipper Hodge to calm the nerves that had set in. A single here and there were not going to be enough but Brown hit a boundary in the penultimate over to bring the task down to 5 runs from the last over.

This became 2 needed off the final 2 balls at which point Brown smashed the ball to the deep mid wicket boundary to bring up a tense victory by 2 wickets with just one ball remaining.

Next week Hodge takes his side to Knebworth Park for another tough looking fixture with confidence boosted by the victory knowing that they will face another good side that got the better of Potters Bar 2<sup>nd</sup> XI in the last over of the game when the two sides met last season.