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A SILVERWARE FOR THE STARS

Bob Parker Cup Finals victory by Anthony Brand

Bob Parker Cup Finals 2011

12Stars vs DHL, Tue Jul 5 2011

What a difference a day makes!! Or in this case – a week. Just 7 days after the first final was abruptly aborted by heavy rains and black thunderous skies 12Stars C.C. *errm 'Brussels International 12Stars C.C.'* (*excuse me*) emerged victorious over DHL in the 2011 Bob Parker Cup Final. The day of the replay could not have been more different. The gorgeous RBCC ground was adorned in bright sunlight throughout. Both teams boasted strong sides on the day. DHL, were deprived of their talisman, captain Chris Weeks due to injury and appeared to have replaced him with a few new young energetic players. Whilst Mahesh made his midweek debut for 12Stars in the absence of the holidaying Loic Defaye. Robert Goodchild, a long-serving 12Stars midweekender was also strangely absent.

Having won the toss, Vivek elected that 12Stars should have first knock – a decision which proved spot on. Manoj (19) and Shashi (25) got the score moving in the right direction as they put on a useful 50+ run partnership for the first wicket in just under 8 overs. After Manoj was out, Mahesh came in at #3 to lash an enterprising quick-fire, yet strangely responsible innings of 29 which included a straight hit for 6 when he was on 23. If Tue's knock was an indication of the change that fatherhood can bring. Then we all wish that Mahesh has many more children soon. Amit K (18), Anirudh (13) and Som (10) kept the scoreboard ticking as the run rate climbed above 7. And at one stage it appeared as though the Stars may exceed 175. But RBCC were able to tighten things as 12Stars slowed towards the end. 4 runs came off the final over as Paul Harris and Dave Aslett defied the bowlers as 12Stars finished at 154 for 7 off the allotted 20 overs. Jon was the pick of the DHL bowlers as he generated good bounce to pick up 2 for 18 off 4 economical overs. Whilst Guy finished with 2 for 26 off 3.

DHL signalled their intent to chase down this challenging target by opening with the destructive Shahab. Vivek responded by opening with Amit K and Anirudh – his two most destructive bowlers. This was a short but riveting battle with 12Stars gaining an early upper hand when Shahab fell for 10. Amit and Ani picked up a few other quick wickets. But with the score around 27 for 4, DHL went on the attack. Manoj who is 12Stars' highest wicket taking bowler this year, came in for some rough treatment as his offspinners were deposited straight into the golfing green at the far end of the ground as DHL's middle order led by Jon (25), Guy (22) and Sauid (25) began to assert themselves and threatened to turn the match. First Anthony and then 12Stars stalwart Ken Broady risked their lives to retrieve the ball as the golfers practiced their clouts onto the range. Later on, Anthony, who had been the only 12Stars not to score during the innings, was brought on to bowl and claimed 2 wickets off a super slow 5 step run up. However a wonderful 25 not out by Rob ensured that DHL remained within striking distance of victory. With 60 runs needed off the last 6 overs and Sauid set to return to the crease, DHL's task was not impossible. But the wily old Vivek was able to call upon the talented Mahesh who exchanged the keeping duties with Sashi. Thus freed of his gloves, Mahesh

A SILVERWARE FOR THE STARS

Bob Parker Cup Finals victory by Anthony Brand

proceeded to bowl 3 very tidy and economical overs including a wicket in the last over which finally extinguished the DHL challenge. 24 runs were needed off the last ball. And though Mahesh did bowl a wide and gave away 4 byes off the last ball it was a case of 'too much, too little, too late for DHL in this game.



The 12Stars players returned to the pavilion to warm applause by DHL and their bevy of female supporters which not unexpectedly outnumbered those of 12Stars by around 8 to 0 (what else is new). During the award ceremony DHL's Chris Weekes reminded those present of the history of the Bob Parker Cup and thanked both teams for putting on a great final, which was played in a good, friendly spirit which would have pleased Mr. Parker no end. In accepting the winner's cup Vivek, after first being reminded to put down his Jupiler, graciously thanked DHL for a putting on a great game and their continued sponsorship of the competition. Afterwards the victorious skipper, having played so many years in vain, raised the cup high above his head which sparked a wild 12Stars victory celebration which included several players drinking beer directly from the trophy (photos to be provided by Dave). The 2011 Bob Parker cup is the first piece of silverware that 12Stars has won in at least 11 years and very likely ever. But hopefully it will not be the last.

A very special word of thanks must be said to Dave Baker and Peter De Boeck who umpired on the day. To recently retired DHL employee umpire Andrew 'Scotty' Scott and Ken Broady who came out to view the game. And finally to the DHL ladies who prepared a tasty bbq which was eaten heartily at the end of the game.

HISTORICAL CHASE of 2011!

A match report for a memorable chase of 336 by 12 Stars

12Stars vs Mechelen Eagles, Sun Jul 31 2011

Sports do not build character. They reveal it – John Wooden

Last Sunday's league game against Eagles surely revealed some character when 12Stars were presented the most arduous of tasks of chasing 336 in 45 overs. The end result held great significance since this whole season there had not been a successful run chase of more than 200. The day started with the promise of sunshine and a big relief after last Sunday's cancelled game due to bad weather. After winning the toss, as always the potency in the 12Stars attack urged Amit to put the opposition to test. Previous week's failure to chase was still firmly in the mind but it seemed like a good idea to test the batting strength by again going through the drill.

12Stars, like any other star on the planet, reached the ground sashaying, without any regard to the reaching time of 12:30 PM. With only 7 players available at the time of toss, 12Stars players showed the awareness of absence of umpires and consequently no penalization. No urgency in moving before the game and the lack of need to practice shows the amount of self confidence we have as a team to win the games disregarding most of the general sports conventions. Someone has rightly said about cricket being played 90 percent in the mind but one had no idea that 12Stars is always pushing that percentage.

Eagles traditionally bat with this utter disregard for the opposition bowlers and hence give many chances on the field which, if the opposition takes, can finish the game quickly. As a close group should be doing, 12Stars players gave full support to other fielders by dropping at most one catch by almost everyone. This solidarity, previously unseen among teams, let alone 12Stars, let Eagles make a monumental 336 in 45 overs at the loss of 7 wickets. Some glitches, like a catch, were taken by 12stars teammates with utter surprise and a direct attempt at not being 'one of us' kind of glares with very quiet and low 'high fives'.



With everyone acting together as partners in crime, the team learnt its' biggest lesson about trying not to find one culprit, as no one, including oneself, would have gone unscathed. The tea break became one of the light hearted ones which eases your tensions and gave the feeling that now everyone is in it together. The tea time banter bought back the much required life and breath of fresh air.

HISTORICAL CHASE of 2011!

A match report for a memorable chase of 336 by 12 Stars

12stars batting started off with Amit making a quick reshuffle with Mahesh and Sunil opening the batting. Mahesh nicked a wide delivery in pursuit of pushing the scoring rate in the second over. This bought Aniruddha to the crease. Aniruddha looked determined from the start and seemed to be in prolific touch with first four scoring shots as the boundaries. Aniruddhas' innings of 26 consisted of 5 fours and one six, with the risk quotient to a bare minimal in all the shots. He was utterly unfortunate when he top edged the flick to covers. Sometimes the broad edges can be a problem as well. At the other end Sunil kept hitting crisply in the 'V' with some delicious drives. The run rate at one point reached 10 after 7 overs. This partnership bought the required run rate considerably down and well in reach. After Sunil got out to a mistimed shot, Amit B and Shashi calmed the nerves with a stable partnership of 35 but the required run rate kept them under pressure. Amit B timed a ball too well to deep cover and lost his wicket. Shashi followed soon after and gave a catch to gully; 12Stars were looking fragile with 120 odd for 5 wickets down.

Another star, Paul, joined to see how 12Stars were handling the pressure. His suggestion to have fun in the middle, had an immediate impact on the next pair as Amit R and Ganesh joined to form a 140 odd runs partnership at an exceptional rate. Both kept hitting boundaries when needed and concentrated on one over at a time, trying to keep the sound of Rocky's 'Eye of the Tiger' firmly in their minds. Running with Ganesh has its ups and down. Mostly the ups are with Ganesh and the downs with the partner. Amit R felt his smoked lungs lunging out, all courtesy Ganesh. Ganesh departed for a very well made 44 at a time when winning was no longer a possibility but reality. Amit R was joined by Som, and was relieved to be the faster runner this time. Amit R got out to the worst ball faced, trying to cut too hard to point and giving the catch to fly slip position.

Eagles were back in the game, with 104 runs at 7 per over still required and 3 wickets in hand-the task seemed harder by the over. Though Manoj and Som had other ideas. Som broke the shackles with a flick six. Now the players from outside cheering every run, Som and Manoj got their engines revving and started running for their lives. Manoj kept cutting the ball into half and Som kept nudging it back into shape, this partnership bought Eagles into panic mode as they were already considering the match to be over by then.

When Som got out, 12Stars still needed 34 of 24 balls. Eagles were two good balls away from victory. Ganesh V was seen practicing at the back and the team was confident of him connecting a few hits as running between the wickets is not his forte. Connect he did, with a prolific flick over mid-on's head for a much needed boundary. At the other end Manoj was playing the knock of his life as he kept pushing for doubles. The boundaries were hit when utterly needed. Ganesh V was made to run for two's by the cheering mates. The pitch was behaving flat by now considering the role of heavy roller these two played by running the singles and doubles on the pitch.

Among all this chaos, people were shouting in at least 3 to 4 languages from the outside. Among all this Eagles shouting at themselves and then the umpires, Aniruddha and Sunil kept shaking their heads horizontally when an appeal was made. With 11 needed of last 12, Sunil gave Ganesh V lbw under extreme omnipresent pressure. Ganesh V later claimed it to be a nick but Manoj, his running partner, refuted his claim. With even DRS a point of contention these days, it is safe to stick to the vintage umpire's call. To Ganesh's credit, he took it really well in a sporting manner.

This bought Anthony Brand to the crease. Among some of the dismissals which Anthony has invented this year, run out has been very common. The situation demanded a determination which was evident when Anthony was seen doing push-ups vigorously at the back before he was needed. Anthony hitting a boundary in the last over to bring the equation to 3 off 2 was a classic pulling of good length ball. Another dot ball and Anthony had to hit a boundary to win or take 2 runs to make it a tie as running three was a rare possibility. Anthony hit the last ball to long on and Manoj sprinted two to make it the most memorable tie. Manoj ended with a brilliant 50 not out and subsequently fixed his batting spot at number 7 J. Anthony made the most important 8 runs of his life, and his sigh of relief could be heard within the universe and beyond...

The team spirit shown in both the innings deserves a second thought for obvious reasons. It was a day of laughter and camaraderie and enjoying in the times of adversity. Some say enjoyment is the recipe to any success and nobody was denying it that evening!

*If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;*
Rudyard Kipling

NETHERLANDSSSSSSS!

Peek-a-boo at the incriminating evidence of how the Stars let their hair down and had fun ...



stumps up .. Brussels 12 Stars International Publication

THE REVIVAL

End word by Amit Bhalerao



Generally there is a foreword, an editorial or a preface to any publication. But, it wont just be cricket if we had a foreword for Stumps up .. that would be so clichéd... So, here is end word!

Stumps Up; first published in 1993 and whose last read issue by me was the edition 49 – November 2004; but which was apparently published till 2007; was a delightful newsletter published by the 12 Stars Cricket Club for the club members. The passion, the spirit and the banter that the newsletter espoused was such that only a die-hard romantic can evoke it.

When this was discussed last year, we felt we are losing a great deal of “12 Stars culture” of self-deprecating humour and indeed, a vow was taken to bring back the behind-the-door news and views as also indeed, a mouthpiece that shouts everything ‘Cricket’ to all the near corners of this small Belgian country and to “spread the word” and bring about renewed cricket baptism in this ‘new land’.

This first re-edition is a humble attempt by inept writers like me to have their two minutes under the non-existent Belgian summer sun and to poke fun and shoot wordy arrows at our detractors within and out (read wives and partners but not including WAGs, if that impossible thing is possible!) of the club.

We thank everyone who made contributions to this one. Also, we look forward to more club-men putting their writing hands to where their mouths are for the future editions and make this newsletter a shining beacon of the very best of the club literature there can be in the cricket world.

Special thanks has to be mentioned to Ganesh Venkatsubban, Anthony and Amit K. who cheerfully wrote their columns and exhibited some serious passion with their serious writing tones (especially our new chairman Anthony and captain Amit) which the editors hope they will shed in the upcoming written material from them! Failing which, they should have no misconceptions that their columns will have to be ghost-written!

Any brickbats and destructive criticism needs to be turned to appreciative support and constructive changes suggested and sent to the editors via any media that you deem fit. We will try to incorporate the same. Do ensure you read this newsletter and join in the spirit, camaraderie and fun of being a Star!

Let’s put Stumps up back up and hope we can carry this wonderful literary torch ahead with the same enthusiasm and honour and humour that made it so special in its previous avatar.

Buon reading!