**DCSCC vs Sunderland NAS,** Thursday, 29 June 2023

MC1 provided a firm, good batting surface on a dry, cool evening with the boundary closer on the side of the ground nearest the river; the outfield sloping down a longish way to the boundary by the road. Not that the lopsided layout deterred Guy and Mujeeb who opened the batting for DCSCC.

The nature of the contest was established in the first over: Sunderland bowling being somewhat erratic (including a wide and a no ball); DCSCC batting being forceful and punishing. Mujeeb in particular was anxious to get going – he must have been at the crease for only ten minutes before retiring on 33. Five fours and one towering six which threatened to go into orbit was the measure of his impatience. Kris came in as number three to continue the onslaught. Guy, as ever, flashed the blade elegantly and, in driving to the long boundary, demonstrated three times his enthusiasm for running threes. An enthusiasm, it must be noted, not matched by Pat, who replaced him when Guy retired on 30, despite encouragement from the galloping Aidan. Those of us gathered on the side-lines guessed Pat must be suffering from a life of debauchery, whilst he - despite carving another six into the distance – later claimed it was whiplash that impeded his running. Whiplash from what, eh?

The runs kept coming. Kris retired on 30. Vinay maintained his reputation as one who prefers the aerial route – one six and one four just short of the boundary – before being caught at deep square leg on 18. One superb four from Aidan before he was bowled and then it was one last over to go and DCSCC racing to finish. Hilal came in and went back again with a mighty swing and a miss. Eckart faced one ball, scored a single and gave the strike to Pat who concluded with a couple to make his total of 30. The team finished twenty overs on 161.

What could the opposition do in response? Faced with the bowling attack of Jimmy Anderson and Stuart Broad (aka your chairman correspondent and Hilal Misgar), not much.

There are days, dear reader, when the appearance of a winning partnership strikes panic into the hearts of the most fearsome of warriors and wins the wonder and admiration of hordes of onlookers. Anderson and Broad; Wasim and Waqar; Lillee and Thompson; Morecombe and Wise…they were all nothing on this occasion to the pairing of Cleaver and Misgar. The combination of late swing from yours truly and arrow sharp attack from Hilal brought wickets in rapid succession. Your chairman hit the stumps three times in three overs; Hilal likewise hit the stumps once and enticed catches to Mujeeb and to Vinay in his three. In six overs, Sunderland had garnered eleven runs for the loss of six wickets. (DCSCC had scored over 60 for nought in the same time, earlier.) Captain Ian B then changed the attack to give the opposition some hope but DCSCC’s devastating duo of openers were not to be finished yet. Nigel’s bowling soon served up a catch to Hilal, and then – not to let him get away with this – Nigel’s next over brought a catch to your correspondent. Nigel finished with two for 22 off three overs.

Sunderland battled on with their chances vanishing. Ian bowled three overs for one wicket and three runs. Aidan’s spin nonplussed them. Guy’s accuracy similarly gave them little. Mujeeb bowled two overs for one run; Kris finished the last over with the wicket of their last man standing. The dominance of DCSCC was summed up by the winning margin: Sunderland had scored just 59 - 102 less than their opponents. A contest that last time proved to be close and interesting, this time Durham Staff vs Sunderland NAS was so uneven as to be more one-sided than the ground it was played upon. But all very good for the club’s records!

Let the sparkling run continue!