**DCSCC vs Newcastle Wanderers**, MC1 10 June 2025

Newcastle Wanderers are captained by ex-DCSCC all-rounder Saidur, who claims he cannot turn out for us anymore since he lives now in Newcastle. A poor excuse! So instead, he brings a team from the Toon that apparently have no home ground of their own. Hence their name: they wander in search of somewhere to play.

These particular Wanderers – a very friendly and sociable lot - arrived late and understrength to a damp-but-drying Maiden Castle. DCSCC captain Pat, in discussion with Saidur, agreed that we should field first to give more time for others to wander in - our opposition at this stage having just enough for three batsmen to pad up, two to umpire and one to score.

Your Chairman-correspondent opened the bowling from the Shincliffe end, paired with Jemima who opened from the Durham end. The batsmen alternated between numerous dots/ near-misses and the occasional boundary until, in the second over of yours truly, the opener top-edged a catch to Ashish at mid-wicket. A new man came in, made the occasional risky shot, and more dots followed until Jemima clean bowled their number two.

After six overs came a bowling change – new man Junaid and Ian took over. (A score at this stage would have been reported but regretfully the scorebook is incomplete.) The run-rate now was approximately four an over, assisted, it must be said, by some very tight umpiring - the slightest delivery down leg being given wide. Junaid, who sent down some flashing red bullets, was very harshly treated – conceding two runs and four ‘wides’ in a ten-ball first over, but he finished by hitting middle stump of the opposing bat. Well-deserved. Ian, who is typically very accurate, similarly suffered from over- enthusiastic umpiring but gained his reward by gaining a LBW in his second over.

Notice must here be made of some very effective fielding by certain members of DCSCC. (Not me, who lost sight of the ball in the sun.) Max (that is *MaX*) was tireless in deep cover, sprinting and plunging about to prevent any boundaries and he might have been entitled to the Tom Daley diving award had his efforts not been surpassed by captain Pat, who on one occasion spiralled to earth like an injured duck, landing flat on his back, yet simultaneously he flung an arm sideways to return the ball to bowler Ian. Stunning! An inspiration and source of wonder to all his teammates.

Max and Ben Shone came on to bowl next, against by now some determined batters who were worrying about a stuttering team performance. However, despite hitting fours, and one six to the nearest boundary, Max demolished the stumps of the next man who dared to accelerate the score. As for Ben, he endeavoured to puzzle the opposition, and his team mates, by a succession of deliveries of extremely variable length and line. No-balls, wides, boundaries, singles, dots; none of us knew what was coming next – nor did the batsman who he clean-bowled!

Theo came on to restore some predictability in the last overs of the match – some trademark rockets which kept the run rate down – and then the final over was given to Jemima who hit the stumps again with a beautiful delivery and added to that, in the last ball of the over, by dismissing the obdurate Saidur. He had attempted to smote the ball over mid-wicket, only for Pat to spin round once more and actually catch it without falling over.

Newcastle Wanderers finished on 109 for 8 in their allotted twenty overs, with no more batsmen to come in.

Vinay and Eckart opened the batting for Durham staff, with a nine-man Wanderers field augmented by two from DCSCC: Ben and Jemima.

It became evident that this Newcastle team were made up of mostly bowlers. Their two openers were fast; they came sprinting in with purpose. Vinay faced a succession of low-flying cruise missiles, dot after dot, then *bang!* He hit four. Then a single. Next over, still facing, Vinay did exactly the same. The bowling was quick, not always on target, but reaching for runs could be profitable. Third over, Vinay still facing, Eckart had yet to do anything but watch. Then a single, then Eckart could take guard, then a leg bye whistled past and he went back to watching again. By now Vinay had got his eye in and was hitting boundaries regularly. Four overs down and we were 22 runs to the good (I think!) with all the runs from Vinay, plus three extras. Fifth over, bowling change, still rapid stuff and Eckart lost his stumps so tramped off with no score. MaX came in as number three and the game proceeded with little change – Max defending well and scoring a couple of singles; Vinay accumulating most of the runs. It took eight overs until the next wicket to fall – Max was bowled – by which time the score was (approximately!) 40. Vinay retired on a maximum 30, leaving Ashish and Theo to face. Both buckled down to it with determination, striking a collection of smart singles and twos but then, looking for a quick single, Theo sent Ashish back, and crash - he was run out. Jumaid was next to face.

Your correspondent had not seen Junaid before. He had bowled well enough, but batting? I thought our newcomer looked somewhat nervous at first when he scrambled a single, but then the next-change Newcastle bowler sent down a veritable rocket… and Junaid simply smacked it for six over long-on’s head. Yes. Well, it seems Junaid *can* bat!

Theo and Junaid set about scoring consistently – ones, twos and fours – until Junaid reached a maximum with a final boundary, leaving the field on 32. DCSCC had now reached a total of over a hundred (approximately!) when Ben came out next to face.

At the fifteenth over, Theo was still striking the ball well, the score was advancing and then came the rumour from the field that we had reached 109. Ben took strike to find himself with the fielders all crowding round the bat to stop any quick singles. He batted solidly, but scoreless. Next over, after a dot, Theo swung mightily and at last the ball disappeared over mid-wicket. The scorebook awards Theo a single but it might have been a four. He finished with 21. In any event, Durham staff won. Totting up, the scorebook reveals a total of 111 for three, including 21 extras, in 16.2 overs.

In sum, this was an enjoyable evening’s cricket, in fine weather against a gentlemanly and likeable opposition. Special mention should go to captain Pat who neither batted nor bowled but organised both teams and entertained us with his inspiring leadership. Thanks also to Eckart who did his best to rescue the scorebook, and to our two umpires, Ian and he who should not be named.