

PAT'S THE WAY I LIKE IT

By LIONEL B. WICKET

Following a complete washout on Saturday, it looked unlikely that DCSCC would get a game, but the cricketing gods shone once again delivered. Having received confirmation that the Hunwick groundskeeper had given the green light, DCSCC hot footed it south of Durham.

With Guy (c) away to ECB HQ to finalise Wednesday's test squad, the captain's armband was handed to Patrick Card. He had promised a 12:15 meet, but come 12:55, he was notably absent. Theo, assuming temporary wartime command, won the toss, elected to bat, and picked the top order with an authority not seen since Mary Berry told channel 4 to "stick it".

Vinay and Eckart opened on a damp outfield, under a greyish sky. The ball did not run, and progress came from deliberate singles. Eckart used his edge effectively, ensuring the 3rd man remained in the game.

Pat arrived at some point mid-innings, ready to take credit and override the comprehensive game plan.

With Hunwick cycling through bowlers like conservative prime ministers, rhythm was hard to find. Still, 25 from 5 overs wasn't shabby. Vinay brought out the fireworks, a stylish six before falling for a well-made 18.

In strode Rich Root, announcing (again) that he had never been dismissed at Hunwick. The gods listened. He wasn't.

Eckart eventually departed LBW, and Junaid joined Rich. The pair ran with intent. Rich opted for the steady, Paxman style approach whilst Junaid was a little more Bazball. Both seemed to work splendidly, both retired - Rich on 31*, Junaid on 30*.

Max and Ash followed. Max opened his account with a four, then ended it with a lofted swipe to leg. Ash played with his usual style and menace, finding the boundary with ease. Patrick, now officially present, walked in with just a few balls to go. Swing, miss, almost stumped. Then, the grand finale: a six that cleared everything but his GMC tribunal record.

DCSCC closed on 129-3. Given the damp, a fine effort.

Having listened to Patrick explain why 'patient safety', 'surgical consent' and 'GMC Ethics guidelines' were "Woke", DCSCC took to the field.

Theo and Max opened the bowling - the Hunwick top pair a classic mix: one junior, one elder statesman. First ball, four, small but mighty. The line was tightened and Max kept the batsmen pinned down.

In the 6th, a mistimed lofted shot was claimed at gully by an athletic Rich, with at least one juggle and several gasps. First wicket down. Ian and Saidur took over. Ian bowled wicket-to-wicket with brutal consistency. Saidur tested the batters with difficult spin and was rewarded with a sharp catch at point by time-keeper-in-chief Patrick.

A casual attempt at midwicket denied Saidur a second. At 12 overs, Hunwick were 46-1. Enter: Rich Root. A fine over,

with another catch for P Card.

Nigel took up residence at one end. Quiet. Steady. Attracting singles and mischief. Then - chaos: a quick single, slight hesitation and Patrick pounced with memories of C Cowie at Kimblesworth. The young female batter, caught up in a kamikaze single, was dismissed. Pat was unmoved.

Ash and Vinay bowled well, keeping things tight. Hunwick fought on gamely, but the rate was creeping beyond them.

Once Pat had done the maths to ensure we were unlikely to lose, Theo was allowed, for the first time in his career, to bowl an over of 'spin'. It was well received by the batters, not so much by the fielders - who had to collect the ball from various corners of the ground.

The final over went to Nigel. A mistimed drive fell to Theo - who dropped it ("his fingers were tired," he claimed). Thankfully, two balls later, Junaid cleaned up with a sharp catch at mid-wicket. That was that.

Hunwick: 115-6 after 20 overs. A win, a friendly and talented opposition, and an enjoyable game of cricket.

A classic DCSCC outing, Fine batting performances, strong bowling across the board, and some seriously impressive fielding work.

Special thanks to Hunwick for hosting us at such short notice and to all who turned out, trusted the weather, and stayed cheerful. If anyone has a spare satnav or timepiece for the captain - please donate generously.