

KING'S SCHOOL OH BOY THAT WAS CLOSE

By LIONEL B. WICKET

A warm, humid Tuesday evening saw DCSCC head to the coast for a fixture against KSOB at their stunning home ground in Tynemouth. Sloping down towards the coastline and past the allotments, the pitch provided a short leg-side boundary one way and a very long uphill drag in the other.

With the toss won by Guy (c), DCSCC were batting first, and the team padded up amid a strong breeze and questions about how many singles it would take to reach a defendable total on such a slow outfield.

Openers Vinay and Guy (c) began steadily, showing respect to a pair of slow, accurate KSOB bowlers whose lack of pace proved more awkward than expected. The pair moved the ball smartly through cover and point, nudging singles and the occasional two, but the longer boundary uphill made scoring boundaries difficult. A couple of well-placed drives, including a clean strike from Vinay behind point and a punch back over the bowler's head from Guy, gave DCSCC some early momentum.

After four overs, the score sat at a steady 20-0. But Vinay, chasing another big shot, was caught on 21, lofting one on the leg-side. Ben H joined Guy (c) but didn't stay long, deceived by a slow ball disguised as a slightly slower ball.

Pat came in at four, looking inspired by the sea air or perhaps the news that the RVI's clinical ethics board had once again failed to locate him. For a short while the two captains built a tidy partnership. They pushed hard for twos and Pat rode his luck early on after being dropped

on the leg side. Eventually though, his innings was brought to an end by a smart catch at deep midwicket - caught by a fielder who had either just taken a worldie or simply caught it normally and been praised excessively.

Ash joined Guy (c) and wasted no time, his first scoring shot was a four, and before long the scoreboard was really ticking. Guy, who had played with patience and control throughout, was unfortunately run out for 23, sacrificing himself for a tight single after some excellent fielding and a direct hit.

Raj joined Ash and supported well as Ash took control. With six boundaries, including a huge six over the long leg-side rope, and just two singles, Ash retired unbeaten on 30*, having transformed the innings just when it was needed.

Poppy came in for the final few overs, running well with Raj, and Theo added a final blow with a strong swipe through midwicket. DCSCC closed on 96-6 - a defendable total, especially given the conditions and the bowling at their disposal.

Once Guy had talked everyone through his desert island discs: 7 tracks from JLS and Snooker Loopy by Chas n Dave, his luxury - the DCSCC kit bag and book - 1990 Beano annual, DCSCC took to the field.

Ben and Ian opened the bowling with a good mix of pace and accuracy. The slope, however, proved difficult to judge, and anything short was quickly punished by a competent KSOB opening pair. Pat kept sharply behind the stumps, preventing extras and keeping things tight. But after six overs, KSOB were 43-0 and looking strong.

Then came the change. Ash and Joanne bowled in tandem and immediately slowed things down. Both found a rhythm, Ash with a steady line, and

Joanne with good length. Joanne was particularly unlucky not to get a stumping after a bold charge from the batter. Over their five overs, only 17 runs were scored and a real pressure point had been created.

The breakthrough came in the 13th over, with the opener retired and a new batter on strike. Theo bowled full and straight, and a sharp off-stump removal got DCSCC on the board. One over later, Vinay found a fine edge with a teasing line outside off and Pat flung himself like a startled goat to take a magnificent one-handed catch.

With the momentum now shifting, Theo took a second wicket, this time helped by the batter deflecting the ball from pad to stumps. At 68-3, the game had swung again.

Vinay wasn't finished. He bowled the KSOB number 6 with a perfectly disguised slower ball. Vinay and Theo got another each, Vinay another cleaned bowled and plum LBW for Theo. Vinay and Theo finished with combined figures of 6 wickets for 23 runs.

KSOB, needing 12 off the final over, faced Ash once again, who delivered a calm, composed final set. Just 5 runs were conceded thanks to tidy bowling and classy fielding, and DCSCC sealed a memorable win by 7 runs.

In a game that ebbed and flowed, DCSCC held their nerve with the ball and in the field. There were no byes conceded, a testament to Pat's consistent glove work, and the bowlers adapted well to tricky conditions and an awkward slope.

Ash's innings set up the match; and hard graft from all the fielders and bowlers swung it back in Staff's favour. All in all, a thoroughly enjoyable evening on the coast - scenic, hard-fought, and a scoreboard reflecting the effort.