



ON THE SPOT



THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF PARA VISTA LUTHERAN CRICKET CLUB

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LONG KNIGHT ENDS AT LAST!

COMPLETE TEAM PERFORMANCE BREAKS HOODOO AT MANOORA STREET

Para Vista's A-Grade side has finished their 2016-17 Season on a high note, breaking a tortuous hoodoo by defeating the North Eastern Knights away from home at Greenacres Reserve at the weekend.

Batting first on an unseasonably cool and breezy Saturday afternoon, a strong start was vital for a Goat Herder victory. Thankfully, starting well has been a Para Vista forte this summer and captain **Marc Cossens** and **Tim Hodson** were only too happy to continue in the same vein. The partnership had been billed as Para Vista's race for the batting trophy, but it was clear that the pair were more interested forcing the NEK bowlers to toil hard for a breakthrough. That breakthrough came with the score on 56, when Hodson holed out for 25. Joined at the crease by **Jonathan Smith**, who had been scratched in at number three in the captain's second draft of the batting order (forcing a perturbed **Aaron Burgess** to turn to another page in the scorebook), Cossens was able to add another handful of runs before he was dismissed for 35.

The fall of Cossens united Smith with **Jarrad McLeod** and the new pair at the crease began to build one of the best partnerships of the summer. Jon's steadying influence on Jarrad was clear, Bungey defending good balls, whilst punishing the bad ones down the ground and over mid-wicket. In turn, Jarrad's belligerent hitting allowed Jon time to find his finest form, elegantly stroking boundaries along the ground for the best part of the afternoon. Both batsmen, clad in wide-brim hats, built themselves for fine innings and they brought up their half-centuries within a couple of balls of each other.

With the score nearing the two hundred mark heading into the 50th over, and the partnership between Smith and McLeod nudging 120, a message to move on was rushed to the middle. The effect was immediate, Smith clearing his front leg to race to 66, before holing out at long off. Jarrad McLeod departed a few balls later, bowled for 67 while swinging at big runs. Both had provided a beautiful platform for their team-mates and were dismissed chasing quick runs at the death – a team-first mindset until the bitter end.

From this point, there was a cavalcade of wickets in the dying overs as all the Para Vista batsmen set about finding the rope. **Luke McLeod** was bowled, and then **Gopi Bhujbal** was run-out, searching for a second run for a rampaging **Phil Atkins** at the other end. Gumnut had hit a marvellous array of boundaries to put on a quick-fire cameo of 21, before he too was bowled, one of the dislodged bails threading the grill on his helmet to hit him in the eye. In more distressing scenes, a late call from Aaron Burgess had his partner **David Gardner** ran out, and Burgess took it upon himself to hit a few lusty blows through the covers. He was clean bowled for thirteen within balls of **Tim Wilson** doing the same for duck, but the Goat Herders had peeled off 50 runs in 12 overs to finish all out 244 from 63 – a competitive total on any outfield.

Ahead of the return leg, captain Cossens urged all the players to simply enjoy the company of each other in the field. With finals out of the equation, all Para Vista played for was each other and a long-awaited win over the Knights. Drying up the scoring to force early wickets was the plan for the bowlers and Luke McLeod and Aaron Burgess capped their brilliant seasons together by keeping to the script in their last outing for the summer.

Burgess returned the tidy figures of 1/18 from seven overs, including two maidens and a big wicket late in his spell – clean bowling a batsman who seemed to become frustrated with his consistent line and length. At the other end, McLeod was breaking stumps of his own, reducing NEK to 2/19 in the early stages.

When the openers tired, Cossens turned to Luke's brother Jarrad and Tim Hodson to send down a few overs. With one dangerous NEK batsman still at the crease, Cossens opted to push the field back defensively, drying up boundaries and providing opportunities to bowl at the new batsmen at the other end. Jarrad would be the first to strike, drawing an edge from the number three batsman gleefully taken by his captain. Hodson (1/10) took the next pole shortly before the tea break, when a diving and tumbling Gopi Bhujbal completed one of the catches of the season at mid-on. Only balls later, Jarrad McLeod (2/20) found another edge, and the Knights were reduced to 5/45.

Upon the resumption, the going got a little tougher as the ball began to age. The plan remained the same: gift the dangerous batsman a single and attack from the other end. Luke McLeod was brought back into the attack to replace Hodson and with a further five overs, toiled away manfully from the southern end. He struck in his last over, removing the NEK captain LBW, finishing with figures of 2/33 from 12 overs, including two maidens.

At the other end, given it was the last session of the summer, Cossens was keen to share the ball amongst the rest of the team, but fearful for the damage that might be done to the part-time bowlers. Alas, Cossens took the gamble, and paid off delightfully. Luke's brother had been replaced in the attack by **Ashley Martin**, whose passion for his team carried him through a tidy spell of bowling, claiming his first A-Grade wicket by sneaking a ball through the batsman's defences to reduce NEK to 7/109. The very next over, Martin snared the wicket for which Para Vista was desperate, removing the dangerous, and last recognised batsman. The Goat Herders were in raptures.

From that point, the game drifted a little, but only because Para Vista was happy to support Tim Wilson, Jon Smith and Phil Atkins as they were all given the opportunity to roll their arms over. Jon Smith's experiment in off-spin gifted Tim Wilson a catch at mid-wicket, and Gumnut Atkins almost snared a wicket of his own, but the catch at cow-corner was a little too hot to handle. It was Wilson, however, that would show the most promise with the ball, tweaking eight tidy overs and taking first A-Grade wicket and the last of the innings, when Aaron Burgess ran around the deep mid-wicket boundary on the outer side to hang onto a nice catch, dismissing NEK for 178 inside 48 overs.

With the fourteen overs left to play, Para Vista went out for another hit. Cossens holed out almost straight away, whilst Hodson smashed four boundaries and a six before he was undone by a phenomenal piece of fielding at third man. The wickets united Gopi Bhujbal and Tim Wilson at the crease, and the pair put on a fantastic cameo in the twilight of season 2016-17, Gopi finishing with six boundaries in his 28, and Tim Wilson notching a confidence-boosting 10, Para Vista 2/62 at stumps, and heading to their Quiz Night with smiles on their faces.



LIONS TAMED IN STEAMY CONDITIONS AT HOME

Para Vista's A-Grade side has recorded a morale-boosting win in their Round Nine clash against Fitzroy at home.

Arriving at Edward Smith Reserve on Day One boasting one of their strongest line-ups for the season, any sense of excitement for the match was quickly tempered as the heavens opened and drenched the outfield on the stroke of midday. When the sun came out half an hour later, conditions became oppressively hot and humid, but the break in the weather allowed for a toss of the coin shortly after the scheduled 1pm commencement. Sadly for Para Vista, the coin came down in Fitzroy's favour, and captain **Marc Cossens** and his team were asked to bowl in what would soon become torrid conditions in the middle of the Goat Paddock.

Cossens threw the ball to the opening combination he has trusted for much of the summer, with **Luke McLeod** zipping in from the Northern End, desperate to make good use of the skidding conditions, whilst **Aaron Burgess** set about bowling a dry line with the damp ball from his favoured southern side. Both bowlers appeared to be on the cusp of breakthroughs early as the Fitzroy batsmen seemed to play-and-miss or edge through the slips at will. As light drizzle wandered across the ground again and didn't look like easing, a chance or two went down in the slips.

Burgess straightened his line a little and it paid immediate dividends, beating a Fitzroy opener, sending the bails flying and the first wicket back to the pavilion. Only balls later, the Fitzroy number three smashed a full and straight delivery straight to **Ashley Martin** at mid-off, Fez doing well to cling onto the catch and the Lions were two for not many... but the drizzle had turned to light rain and the usual beautiful playing surface at Edward Smith Reserve turned to slime. To add insult to injury, Burgess had two close LBW appeals in the space of three balls turned down, a happenstance that seemed to derail Para Vista's afternoon.

From this point, the Lions strung together a number of handy partnerships. **Zac Edwards** managed to break the first of these partnerships, replacing Luke from the northern end to extract the much-needed LBW decision from the umpire. The five overs sent down by Edwards were top-class, yielding only a single extra and conceding only eighteen runs, before the slippery conditions seemed to get the better of the lofty seamer. **Phil Atkins** was brought on to bowl his loopy, bouncy, giggle balls and as the ball held up in the field, the change of pace made scoring runs difficult for Fitzroy. Gumnut's bowling was superb and together with **Jonathan Smith** from the other end, the pair combined to bring about plenty of chances, but most were grassed as the Goat Herders struggled to hang onto the ball. A whole litany of errors began to cost Para Vista dearly in the field, as some of the safest pairs of hands in the team shelled chance after chance.

It was only a brilliant stumping by Marc Cossens, followed by two extraordinary one-handed catches pulled off by Luke McLeod and Jonathan Smith, all off the bowling of Atkins (3/46), that would break the shackles and bring the Goat Herders back into the game. A short break in the drizzle allowed **Jarrad McLeod** to roll the arm over (an early spell had him sliding dangerously at the bowling crease), and an edge to gully was caught by the nether regions of **Ian Martin**. Soon after, however, the drizzle began again, not enough to see the players from the field, but just enough to make the afternoon incredibly difficult for Para Vista. Despite Jonny Smith's vigorous drying of the ball with an old tea-towel, it soaked, swelled and slimed more and more as the afternoon wore on. The bowlers were struggling to grip and pitch up, and the Fitzroy tail-enders were able to pick off some vital runs.

Ashley Martin was brought into the attack, and the gritty circumstances seemed to distract the rookie from any lingering nerves, bowling tidily from both ends of the pitch and unlucky not to snare his maiden A-Grade wicket for Para Vista. Burgess was brought back on for a second spell, champing at the bit and chafing at the groin (thanks to his severely drenched trousers) and found himself on a hat-trick in the first over of that second spell, finding an edge to Cossens and then casting the Fitzroy number ten the very next ball. The hat-trick delivery was a ripping yorker, but successfully negotiated and Burgess (4/37) will need to wait for another opportunity, the Lions closing their innings as 9/209 from their allotted 65 overs.

Ahead of the return leg, captain Marc Cossens flagged his intentions to juggle the batting order and as a result, a very different line-up padded themselves up on Day Two to chase down Fitzroy's total. Jarrad McLeod opened the batting with **Tim Hodson**, and the pair set about playing themselves in and then pouncing on any loose deliveries. The first ten overs were negotiated without loss – something that the Goat Herders have done superbly all season – and Jarrad's blade provided the majority of the scoring impetus. Sadly for Jarrad, he was bowled for 20, with the team total 33, and the wicket left Para Vista wobbling a little after so much good work had been done.



The side was desperate for that good work to continue, as Northfield served up one of the hottest and most humid afternoons seen in many seasons. Para Vista needed to grind out a large chunk of overs and tire Fitzroy in the field for a late charge, and Jarrad's brother Luke strode in at number three only too happy to stick to the plan. As Hodson found his rhythm from one end, Luke held up nicely at the other, the pair continuing to lay a firm foundation for the chase. When Hodson holed out only balls after notching a brilliant half-century, and **Tim Wilson** followed soon after, the Goat Herders needed someone to steady the ship once again.

That man was Jonathan Smith, who combined with Luke McLeod for a near 40-run partnership for the fourth wicket, taking Para Vista to 135, before Luke was caught for 27, and Jon played onto his stumps for 31. At 5/141, the Goat Herders were still far from home and needing to follow in much the same vein as the first half of the innings, the new batsmen at the crease looked to build a partnership. Those batsmen were **David Gardner**, pushed down the order and desperate for runs, and Aaron Burgess, pushed up the order and just happy to have a hit. The pairing seemed to be edifying for both, but particularly for Gardner, who began to recapture the form and style for which he has been known. Soon, boundaries were flying from the face of the bat his brother **Ben** arranged to repair for him, including a late cut that shot like a tracer bullet down to the third man boundary.

At the last drinks break, with the required run-rate nearing four an over, Burgess resolved to shelve his usual plan of holding up an end and swing the bat, but with a skied slog-sweep, he was undone, and captain Cossens, unusually batting in the lower order, strode to the crease to put the icing on the cake. Soon, he was trading boundaries with Gardner, the pair bludgeoning 75 runs from the last ten overs of the match, Gardner finishing with an elegant 42 runs to his name, and Cossens a belligerent 41, which included a six that threatened to make its way into the jail during the 62nd over. When Cossens was bowled with some four balls left in the final over, Para Vista were 7/239. Both captains shook hands and called time on what had been a satisfying victory for the Goat Herders.

A-GRADE RESULTS

Round Nine: Para Vista A 7/239 declared (Hodson 53, D.Gardner 42*, Cossens 41, Smith 31, L.McLeod 27) defeated Fitzroy A 9/209 (Burgess 4/37, Atkins 3/46).

Round Ten: Para Vista A 244 (J.McLeod 67, Smith 66, Cossens 35, Hodson 25) & 2/62 (Bhujbal 28*, Hodson 24) defeated NEK A 178 (J.McLeod 2/20, A.Martin 2/31, L.McLeod 2/33).

PRESENTATION

MARCH 25TH

6PM

CASA DE O.B.
DETAILS ON FACEBOOK





9/26!

MASSIVE HAUL FOR BRENTON STARKE, BUT THE B'S CAN'T GET PAST ATHELSTONE AT FOXFIELD

Some drizzle, the threat of more rain, a small ground, and a 4th placed Athelstone side were waiting for the Para Vista B-graders in their round 11 match at Foxfield.

Needing a win to have any hope of playing finals and not fancying bowling with a wet ball, **Brenton Starke** elected to bat first when the fall of the coin fell in his favour. Missing regular opener **Ian Martin** who was on duty in the A's, **Gopi Bhujbal** volunteered to pad up and joined **Michael Gale** in walking out to the middle to start the innings.

Against some inconsistent bowling, both batsmen started positively and playing assuredly. Michael Gale pulled a ball for four and soon found another short ball to hammer to the boundary. Connecting with the middle of the bat, the ball sailed towards square leg where it unfortunately found the middle of the square leg fielders hands and he was caught for 5. Eggs **Ben Gardner** joined Gopi but his stay was all too short, hitting another short ball straight to point, Para Vista in trouble early at 2/18. When Gopi himself was run out soon after for 11 when his bat got stuck in the wet turf, it was left to **Scott Brown** and **Pete Gardner** to try and steady the ship. The president started to counter attack, his first scoring shot was a straight six, but just as things had settled down, disaster struck. Pete was yorked and lost his stumps, Brown (18) edged one that kept low, Starke came and went in the space of an over, and **Noor Ali** skied a catch. All of a sudden the innings was in tatters at 7/47 and the situation looked very bleak.

For the second time in two games it was left to **Kiran Kumar** and **Peter O'Brien** to salvage what they could from the innings. Defending resolutely and waiting for anything loose, the two batsmen started the long rebuild bit-by-bit. Neither batsman looked in trouble against the opposition bowlers, and they both showed their teammates what a little bit of application could achieve. Kiran was brutal when he found a ball in his areas, dispatching two boundaries and three maximums during his innings, and OB played a solid support role while also picking up four boundaries via his favourite drive through a vacant 4th slip region. Their partnership produced a face saving 42 runs before Kiran was bowled by a full toss while trying to chalk up yet another boundary for 29 vital runs. Trying to farm the strike as best he could, OB was caught for 20 a few overs later, and when **Roger Wilkins** was bowled, Para Vista's innings closed after 38.2 overs, the score 110.

With 24 overs left in the day, the Goat Herders needed quick wickets. His knee being well rested and missing the feeling of a new rock in his hands, President Brown volunteered to open up downhill and down breeze and his request was granted. Pushing off the proverbial sight screen, his pace built up through his spell and he even got the ball to kick up a couple of times off the dead pitch. OB finding his knee needed resting after his first over, Kiran proceeded with the task of pushing uphill and probing away at the Athelstone openers. Despite their best efforts, neither bowler could snare the vital wicket but both beat the bat and induced edges that would either fall agonisingly short or fly over the slips. With light rain starting to fall again, Brenton Starke introduced himself into the attack from Brown's end and soon had the first wicket, a frustrated opener edging the ball back onto his stumps. One wicket quickly became two when the Athelstone number three was beaten all ends up next ball, and a third very nearly followed on the hat-trick ball when the batsman just managed to get his bat down in time.

Tim Cox relieved Kumar uphill and initially was unable to find his rhythm, conceding a few boundaries early, but this ultimately proved to be advantageous when a short and wide ball was skied to mid-on where Gopi held a good catch. Next over Starke had another wicket and Athelstone found themselves 4/55. Try as they might, neither bowler could get another wicket with both batsmen knuckling down. Cox (1/24 off 4) started to struggle in the conditions and was replaced once again by Kumar (0/23 off 7), but persistent drizzle made it hard to force the issue. Brown (0/15 off 6 with 3 maidens) had one last crack at it but the batsmen survived, Athelstone 4/85 at the close of day one and seemingly in control.

In complete contrast to the previous week, hot and humid conditions was the order of the day for the second week.

Starke had already decided that the Goat Herders would have a last crack at an unlikely victory before sharing the ball around and having a fun day. Resuming down the hill, the captain started with a maiden but quickly found a wicket when the stubborn number four was bowled, and this wicket was quickly followed up in his next over with the new batsman edging behind to stand in keeper Ben Gardner. OB (0/20 off 6), his body having recovered, probed away up the hill and kept runs tight, and when Starke bowled yet another batsman, the score was now 7/98 and the Goat Herders could sense that the Athelstone batsmen were now starting to panic.

The momentum shift could be felt across the whole ground, Setting an attacking field and challenging both batsmen, runs had dried up and the fielders were up and about. A couple of close run out chances went begging, and a couple of airy shots almost caught, but then Starke struck again when a good catch was caught at third slip by Kumar. Two balls later and the number ten was trapped on the crease lbw, and the match had swung Para Vista's way, the score 9/102. All this time the opposition number six had held out during the collapse around him, and it was now that he tried to take command and hit out. A boundary was followed by another shot for two, and when Starke had the ball in his hands again, it was 9/109. The number six stroked a single into the gap tying the scores, leaving the number eleven on strike. Having already closed his eyes and striking a boundary, everyone knew that it would be over in the next couple of balls, and so it proved. After smashing a ball straight to mid-off, the batsman managed to get the next one a bit straighter and two runs was the result, passing the Para Vista total in the process. To rub salt into the wounds for the Goat Herders, the number eleven was bowled next ball, Athelstone scraping past to make 112. All the Goat Herders were disappointed to not steal the victory, none more so than the captain himself, who finished with 9/26 off 11.4 overs, the second best figures (behind legend **Matt Wiles** 9/18) in club history.

With 51 overs still to play in the match, it was a perfect chance for players to get some valuable match batting practice, with Gopi and 2nd-weeker **Frosty Sweetman** looking to find runs. With the pressure off, Gopi stroked the ball away beautifully, but Frosty was out lbw early to an excellent ball. Eggs Ben proceeded to the crease and played without any fear and plenty of freedom, crashing anything short to the boundary on his way to a fluent 21 before chasing a wide one and being caught. Michael Gale joined Gopi at the crease and the two continued to score freely before Gopi was caught behind for 32. Seeing a chance for people to have a go, Roger Wilkins entered the field batting at an unfamiliar number five, and he managed to strike a boundary and last five overs before being bowled for five runs, having a thoroughly good time in the process. Also playing the second week was young **Lachie O'Brien** who padded up and went into bat at six to join Gale. Having already spoken to the Athelstone captain, part time spinners were bowled to the younger OB who handled them excellently, knocking himself a few singles in the process. At the other end, Michael Gale pinched a couple of cheeky sixes against the same bowler (despite being heckled by his own team!!) before he was bowled for 48, and Noor Ali (5no) joined OB Jnr at the crease. One last over for the youngster (4no) and play was called off early for the day, giving both teams an early hour and time to see their club mates respective games finish, Para Vista 5/122 in their second dig.

With the loss it became impossible for the Para Vista B's to make the finals, and with one more winnable game against the second Enfield team remaining to finish the season, and it was hoped that the season could finish on a high.

B-GRADE RESULTS

Round Eleven: Para Vista B 110 (Kumar 29) & 5/122 (Gale 48, Bhujbal 32) were defeated by Athelstone B 112 (Starke 9/26)

Round Ten: Para Vista B 148 defeated Enfield E (forfeit).