

Week 4 of the new normal and at last the duck had been broken as Downe recorded their first win of the season just as the calendar slipped into August.

The first three weeks of the season had been a little odd and not quite cricket and didn't quite deserve putting pen to paper. No showers, no beer in the fridge, no teas, no spectators and no pub. Whilst the game continued it wasn't cricket as we know it. The games were reasonably close but the spark was just missing.

This week things finally changed.

Team selection was as always competitive with seasons debuts being given to the Beckwith brothers to bolster the middle order and no doubt add some athleticism to the fielding.

Skipper back in the helm elected to bat first as frankly the team were creaking enough as it was without fielding in the hot sun. Sweet and Zack opened with the later being cleaned up early doors by one that swung in. The Bear in feisty mood was swinging from the start but sadly departed caught behind trying to dispatch a short ball. Sweet was joined at 16-2 by Marcus who had been in fine early season form. He started well and soon picked up the rate especially with the arrival of two spinners. Play soon began to drag as almost every over search parties would be dispatched hunting for balls.

He eventually departed for 46, though frankly it seemed like much more, when he fell to a shooter. Nick was next up and after one fine drive through the covers was cleaned up by a straight one. Sadly brother Dean departed in identical fashion bringing the reluctant Spindles to join fellow Spice Boy.

Despite missing the previous week through injury, and moaning all week, he crawled from his death bed to come at the our of need. Some odd shots early up were soon put away as he decided to 'open up'. The score was progressing nicely when Sweet departed caught expertly by a fielder running round the midwicket boundary. Josh was next in line and managed two nice boundaries before trying to cut a straight one and chopping on. Liam and Spindles then provided an unbeaten partnership of close to 100 taking the total to 233-7 in the allotted 40 overs.

Downe opened up with the new 'young speedsters' of Josh and Zack. Josh was sporting a new look which it appears was for charitable reasons, which frankly is a relief as I am not sure any other excuse would cut looking like that.

The partnership had plenty of pace with some excessive bounce being extracted from the pitch. Both delivered good spells but with a lightening outfield runs would always come. Each picked up a wicket before being replaced by the spin twins Bear and Part who both found turn and bounce to beat the batsmen at regular intervals. Bear picked up two excellent wickets whilst Part took the one. More could have come had catches been held though the simplest was probably a caught and bowled.

With Denzil absent starting his three game ban Skippers quandary was who could he

utilise as the fifth bowler. In the end he opted for Sweet for his first bowl in a year. Whilst things started in dubious manner the over was relatively short, in part thanks to a kind umpire, and miraculously a wicket as Zack took a catch.

It appears that he claims never to have dropped a catch at Downe, which if true makes him a rare breed.

With pace and bounce being the order of the day it was ironic that the opposite was to prove the downfall of many a ducksman as Sweet took a further three all bowled leaving the aged spectators to ponder what they were seeing, whilst the other bowlers wondered what was going on !!!

The fielding was by Downe standards not too bad. Skipper again provided a masterclass in the art of slip fielding even managing to kick one up onto his hooter. The Chelsea boys were clearly displaying all their footballing talent as Nick, sporting a rather nice Alice band, then managed to pass one almost to the boundary which from his position was no mean feat.

The final wickets were proving illusive as the batsmen swung finding gaps rather than fielders. Zack's second spell down the hill was particularly quick though it was his father who took the last wicket with his second ball to end the match.

A visit by some to the pub proved to be a fitting end to the proceedings as things became just a little more normal for now