

This week the latest opposition to the theatre of dreams were local rivals Cudham. This year there was added interest following Josh's defection, however the thought of bowling to the Spice dads was clearly too much as sadly he was absent.

In a break to tradition this week's fixture was a time game at the suggestion of the opposition who were light on bowling options, which was highlighted after the opening bowler completed a 15 over spell!

The Spice dads improved on last week's outing and actually managed to score some runs, though on a two paced pitch it was not easy going and the pull shot had to be put firmly in the locker.

Spindles departed first playing too early a providing a catch off a leading edge, whilst Sweet managed to drag a long hop picking out the sole close fielder on the leg side.

Their departure was probably not a bad thing as it meant Marcus's entry coincided with the introduction of spin. And so it was as four of his first six scoring shots were maximums. At the other end was Doughnut playing his first game in possibly two years. First ball was stroked out to the covers and where Marcus provided brute force at one end Doughnut provided finesse at the other and the absence has certainly not affected his timing or shot selection.

The score was now rapidly moving forward and a further six meant another 50 for Marcus. Doughnut was also making him run, which is nice to see, and a succession of balls were being lost. As a time game replacements were sent out to prevent lost batting time.

Doughnut was the next to go when shouldering arms to the off spinner and watching one jag back to clean bowl him. Jonny joined Marcus but was c&b to his fellow spinner, whilst Marcus soon reached his hundred.

In a shocking episode he then proceeded to retire with 15 minutes remaining to the surprise of all as apparently he was 'unable to run'. This 'startling news' was something we have known for quite some time and was why we assumed he liked hitting boundaries so much. The ability to run is also not on the list of qualities required for Downe batsmen otherwise it would be a rather short batting line up. But to everyone's dismay we were robbed of 15 minutes of carnage.

His father now joined Tom and looked less than impressed at having to leave his deck chair. Tom played nicely hitting three fours even demanding one was a six, though more weights clearly required in the gym. Whilst Parf had a little prod at the other end before finally connecting with one.

The oppositions lack of bowling options were replicated to a degree for the home side and the two youngsters were told to settle in for long spells. Both Tom and Jonny bowled nicely taking 3 and 1 wickets respectively in a joint 17 over spell.

Tom took the first clean bowled with Jonny taking one caught expertly by 'specialist gully' Nev. The opposition number 3 was clearly a class act and had previously scored big against Downe. A straight 6 over the stables looked ominous before Tom had him caught behind. Jonny then plucked a superb catch in the covers above his head and the oppo were clearly going to struggle chasing down 200+.

Skipper having seen enough 'chanced his arm' and gambled and went for some 'slow floaters' from Spindles which frankly seemed reckless in the extreme.

Fortunately the opposition skipper, apparently called 'the wall', had decided that even with this buffet on offer he was going to decline and block out. Parf had also entered the fray with his version of 'off spin' bamboozling the batsmen.

The 'spindles experiment' was short lived thankfully though he did pick up one wicket, the circumstances of which escapes me, and was replaced by Jonny who time and again beat the edge. One chance did go down with his father no less spilling it. He apparently 'had it' and only spilled it when he fell to the ground.

At the other end the 'seasons find' was young Nev who produced some devilish turn and flight to pick up one wicket caught by Tom, which is a first as he normally drops pretty much everything normally with a long list of excuses to follow!

The game ended as a 'winning draw' and was possibly the most enjoyable fielding experience in a long time, as I didn't have to chase after the ball once.