

C.C.N.S.W. MASTERS MATCH REPORTS 2017-2018

Sydney Masters Cricket Association - Sydney Masters Over 40's

RANK	TEAM	P	W 1	D	L 1	WKTS LOST	RUNS FOR	WKTS TAKE N	RUNS AGST	POINTS
1	Auburn	11	10	1	0	70	2344	95	1464	436.20
2	Mosman	11	8	1	2	71	1891	93	1570	375.55
3	Georges River	11	7	1	3	75	1755	96	1542	359.75
4	Lindfield	11	8	1	2	72	1904	72	1636	352.20
5	Roseville Navy	11	7	1	3	84	1950	82	1694	339.50
6	Collaroy Plateau Cricket Club	11	6	1	4	79	1652	86	1506	316.60
7	Warringah	11	6	1	4	75	1571	89	1829	312.55
8	Pennant Hills	11	5	2	4	67	1378	69	1332	286.90
9	Lane Cove	11	5	1	5	80	1446	84	1572	285.30
10	Macquarie University	11	4	1	6	78	1606	84	1614	269.30
11	Cricketers' Club of New South Wales	11	4	1	6	82	1814	76	1836	266.70
12	Old Ignatians	11	3	2	6	69	1505	68	1643	243.25
13	Hunters Hill Pirates	11	2	1	8	83	1439	60	1737	193.95
14	Roseville White	11	2	1	8	95	1375	64	1513	192.75
15	Burwood Briars	11	1	1	9	85	1431	65	2040	176.55
16	St Clair United Sports Club	11	1	1	9	99	1070	81	1603	174.50

Last re-calculated: Mar 9, 2018 3:35AM (local time)

MASTERS ROUND 1 v OLD IGNATIANS AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN, ON SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER, 2017: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

Blues come out all guns blazing in home season opener

In a sizzling spring season opener, the Cricketers Club of New South Wales' Masters outfit swept all before it in a comprehensive domination of Old Ignatians Cricket Club at Camperdown Oval.

Records tumbled for the Blues - reversing a feeble losing result against the same side in last season's fixture - as five batsmen retired and a C.C.N.S.W. Masters-best ever 261 runs were blazed.

Mike Pinter, John Munden, Mick McCormick, Brett Favell as well as new chum Frank 'The Tank' Chawhan all enjoyed the batter-friendly pitch conditions to plunder an under-strength Ignatians attack to all parts after John Munden plumped for the plank from his toss win.

The Camperdown deck was flat and dry and after learning of Friday's Hume Highway closure, bowlers were on the lookout for diverted traffic.

It didn't take long for the Blues to assert themselves with Mick Weaver (19) flat-batting an audacious six over mid-wicket in the fifth over from Rowles. At the other end Mike Pinter (41*) busied himself by building an impressive innings that featured fleet footwork and crisp stroke play.

'Weaves' was looking strong and settled but a rush of blood saw the stumps skittled as he played on to Rowles, who exacted sweet revenge. It was to be Old Ignatians' last taste of success for another 194 runs as the Blues top order took total charge.

Skipper John Munden's (51) trip to the middle saw him instantly pick up the cudgel, putting a lean 2016-17 season behind him in one fell swoop. He rattled the pickets with frequency on his way to retirement, striking six boundaries and a massive major in an authoritative display. Mick McCormick (40*), was the recipient of some tantalisingly slow change bowling that saw the Blues' next-at-bats salivating over the veritable smorgasbord of fruit tingles on offer.

The evergreen right-hander expertly played what was in front of him in a typically professional turn where bad balls were dispatched and the good ones denied entry through his guard.

Mike 'Punts' Pinter chalked up his first Blues Masters league retirement in fine style with five luscious fours punctuating a momentum-building dig that helped set his side on course to victory.

It was a run-festivus for the rest of us as the Blues bats were watched-on to drinks having already brought up three figures, 1-123 at the cool clip of six an over. The Blues players revelled in the carnival atmosphere, enjoying the newly-minted dressing room and kitchenette facilities, once Bletchley Park's finest cryptanalysts had been summonsed by 'El Presidente' himself – Greg Brooks, to crack Council's time-lock code to get them open.

It was a rare treat to have some C.C.N.S.W. club-mates in attendance as they arrived after the net-session at Sydney University. Brooks regaled the group with campfire stories fit for any occasion and Crooks appeared to have found an impossible gear of laid-back as he necked a cold stubby.

By this time an unassuming newbie, Frank Chawhan (40*) was pouncing on anything short or tasty in firm fashion. The pugnacious and powerful Chawhan also struck the fence five times in what was now a procession of boundaries for the Blues as the Old Ignatians bowlers could not take a trick on the lifeless straw-like Camperdown tarmac.

Brett Favell (45*) became the fifth Blue to turn on the style and he did that with trademark aplomb – brutish bashes interspersed by a less-often-seen pragmatic shot selection. Favell panelled five fours and plundered a lusty six when on 39 to go into retirement.

'Favs' turned up an hour late, his body clock already attuned to daylight savings time a fortnight early yet there are signs that he is a 'new and improved' model this season, powered along by a watermelon-flavoured vaping apparatus he used to send smoke signals to his partner in another suburb.

At 2-218 after 34 overs, it was a case of how many for C.C.N.S.W. Dave Benson (1), Terry Pontikos (2), Mark Delaney (0) all gave the scorers arthritic respite in missing out on the bonanza.

And it was left to the skipper Munden to close out the innings with debutant Craig Fletcher (3*). The retiree returned to reach a fabulous 50 with a deuce of frenetic twos before being well caught at midwicket on the last ball of the innings in the search for one last picket. 5-261- was the kind of total the Blues seldom reach and they weren't about to allow anything to sour the cavalcade of carnage they visited upon Old Ignatians.

The visitors' innings started in similar fashion with a steady flow of boundaries. It became apparent quite quickly that the warm conditions in concert with a listless deck were playing the most pivotal role in the match. But such was the ocean-liner luxury of scoreboard pressure the Blues could apply, this game was already as good as over.

Thomas had dashed a pair of early boundaries for Ignatians but dragged on a wide ball from Craig Fletcher (9-1-36-2) who was bowling nice early hoopers in to the right handers. The stocky left-arm Queenslander put aside the hurt of the Broncos' finals performance and showed the type of grit his footy team couldn't do and went close several times before enticing Tyson to nibble one that was pouched behind by everybody's favourite Trombonist, Brett Favell.

Lee Witherden (9-2-41-1) was wheeled around to the juicier end and bowled tight lines. Ignatians veteran opener, McKay, was chipping them around in the heat and frustrating any thoughts the Blues had for an early finish/beverage. He was joined by Frawley who started sluggishly but got going soon after and the pair climbed into a big partnership for the third wicket. By drinks, Ignatians were at full speed but already off the cracking pace they required, at 86-1.

It was now the Blues' turn to chase leather as Frawley smashed six boundaries in consecutive scoring shots on his way to a quick-fire red inker. Munden rolled out the changes to no avail as Dave Benson (7-0-33-1) – in his first spell, Mark Delaney (4-0-18-1), Mick McCormick (2-0-9-1), and Terry Pontikos (5-0-27-0) all toiled manfully but failed to deliver a breakthrough.

Capping one of the great fill-in cameos seen in recent years, Frank Chawhan (4-0-17-1) was the partnership breaker, sneaking one through the gate to remove McKay, whose neck hanky held more moisture than the last three months of average Sydney rainfall.

Easy came in, got going and made life the exact opposite for the Blues as he reached retirement. And Garling was well on the way when he popped a sprocket with some comically over-zealous swinging to retire hurt on 26*. His premature demise signalled the end of the Old Ignatians' resistance and they would fall well short of the hefty target set them by the rampant Blues bats.

An enormous amount of rust-abatement and cobweb cleansing was on show from both teams but while C.C.N.S.W. phoned it in at times in the field, Benson and Witherden chipped in with late wickets and behind left-armed Fletcher, who shone on debut, were the pick of the Blues' bowlers.

A pleasing first home encounter with the points banked gets the Blues off to an ideal start in what will undoubtedly prove to be a challenging campaign in the top division of the competition. Another advantage is the knowledge that 200+ will be a par score on Camperdown this season, unless the wicket gets a little TLC from the heavens above.

The Team was: - Mick Weaver 19, Mike Pinter 41*. (ret. not out), Mick McCormick 40* (ret. not out), John Munden (c) 51, Frank Chawhan 40* (ret. not out), Brett Favell (w) 45* (ret not out), David Benson 1, Terry Pontikos 2, Mark Delaney 0, Lee Witherden 2, Craig Fletcher 3*.

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - **6-259** (J. Munden 51; B. Favell 45*; M. Pinter 41*. M. McCormick 40*.; F. Chawhan 40*) (40 overs)

Defeated

Old Ignatians C.C.: - **5-183** (C. Fletcher 2-36) (40 overs)

By 80 runs.

FoW: - 1-24 (M. Weaver); 2-218 (D. Benson); 3-229 (T. Pontikos); 4-230 (M. Delaney); 5-237 (L. Witherden); 6-259 (J. Munden).

The Bowling was: - L. Witherden 9-2-41-1; C. Fletcher 9-1-36-2; D. Benson 7-0-33-1; M. Delaney 4-0-18-0; M. McCormick 2-0-9-0; T. Pontikos 5-0-27-0 and F. Chawhan 4-0-17-1

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: Nil
Catches: - One to B. Favell (w)
Run-outs: - Nil

Player points: - 3 points to J. Munden; 2 points to B. Favell; 1 point to M. McCormick

MASTERS ROUND 2 v WARRINGAH AT WELDON OVAL, DEE WHY ON SUNDAY 15 OCTOBER 2017: REPORT BY MIKE WEAVER

MASTERS DELIVER 'SWEET AND SOUR' PERFORMANCE AT CURL CURL.

Warringah won the toss and sent C.C.N.S.W. in to bat.

Player comments plus VC assessment follow.

C.C.N.S.W. Batting First all out 205 (37.3 overs)

Batting list-

1 Mike Pinter: (wk) 40 initially (retired when score was 2-136, then resumed innings at 37.1 overs). Managed 4 boundaries. It was a typically determined and patient knock from 'Pints', who now has a season batting average.

2. Mike Weaver: 34. (c, FOW 1-54) Caught just inside midwicket boundary rope, off a full toss off Warringah leg spinner Toby Adams. Took a confident approach to weather the opposition opening bowling attack for a good start, in tandem with Pinter. 3 boundaries

3. John Munden: (cpt) 19, (b, FOW 2-81) Looked authoritative , smashing two fours and a nice six. Deceived by faster ball from spinner Adams

4. Brett Favell: 29* Retired hurt, from shock calf muscle 'twang'. 29 runs. Some effortless hitting for three 4s, two sixes. (retired at 2-117)

5. Tom Robertson: 16 (c, FOW 3-136) Went 4,4,4,4, caught. All shots were bullied through point and cover region. Blocked 2 balls. 16 off seven. Kept innings run-rate momentum going after Fav's injury.

6. David Benson: lbw 0, to a good first nut from their pacy opening bowler who had switched ends (FOW 4-140 with two retired, one into the shed, the other into the ice)

7. Mick Tarrant: 0. (c, FOW 5-156) New chum showed us all he can hit the ball, caught on fence attempting to set club record for most runs scored for club, off initial scoring shot. Catch by opposition fielder taken suspiciously close to boundary line.

8. Richard Bryant: 20 (c, FOW 6-164) Splendid cameo for 20 runs off a handful of balls. One 4, two booming sixes

9. Jonathon ("Jonno") Shaw: 4. (lbw, FOW 7-164) New boy came in for a difficult position, with the onus on scoring quickly from outset. One well struck boundary. Unselfish dismissal.

10. Lee Witherden: 11* Handy hitting in final overs, with two 4's

11. Craig Fletcher: 30 (b, FOW 8-205) Fletch showed all watching that he is no 'Number 11'. 30 runs with seven exquisite boundaries

12. Mike Pinter: (c, FOW 9-205) Resumed to block one ball and skied the next, caught in close off leg spinner, Adams, who took 4 crucial C.C.N.S.W. wickets, three of them from sucker balls

(Editor's note: Brett Favell unable to come back and thus C.C.N.S.W. innings terminated)

Bowling and fielding Warringah 7 -206 (33.overs)

Bowling list-

- 1. Lee Witherden:** 7 overs 1-43 - caned early and came back well for second spell to take 7th wicket, to renew hope of miracle win.
- 2. Craig Fletcher:** 5 overs, 1 maiden, 2-21. Took two early wickets in successive deliveries, removing Warringah Opener and no. 3. Unfortunately suffered an injury at beginning of his second spell, could not resume.
- 3. Richard Bryant:** 4 overs 0-22. Showed flashes of good rhythm in his first season game, has stripped fitter. Encouraging signs, some good pace developed for several deliveries and was probably under bowled
- 4. Jonathon Shaw:** 3 overs 1-13. Good tight spell showing ability to swing ball. Bowled only 2 bad balls which were each hit for four.
- 5. Mick Tarrant:** 4 overs 1-25. Bowled intelligently without luck. Well deserved wicket . 1-25 off 4 overs
- 6. Tom Robertson:** 3 overs 1-13. A mixed bag of pace bowling, still kept runs down and got a handy wicket. Left field with cramp, to not continue spell and we were effectively a fielder short for 2-3 overs
- 7. John Munden (c).** 2.1 overs 0-20. Came on to complete over from Fletcher and looked ok before belted in his 2nd full over. It was not a spinner's track.
- 8. Dave Benson.** 5 overs Tried very hard for 0-40, dropping a little short at times. Gave it everything, as usual, plus gave a very good fielding display, as usual. An excellent team player.
- 9. Mick Beergah.** 0.3 overs, 0-6. Pal of Tommy's, a local, who very kindly went home and got his kit to be available to take field as a 12th player after Brett Favell's was injured. Mick is a former Rugby league player with Wests Magpies and is very welcome to play for C.C.N.S.W.. Showed ability with the ball when the game was all but gone and did some good work covering the leg side boundary rope.
- 10. Mike Pinter (w)** one catch. Missed two difficult opportunities for caught at wicket and gave an admirable display, in place of the injured Favell. Footwork and glovework, especially for leg side work, got better as game went on. Promising.
- 11. Mike Weaver.** Disappointing fielding display by Weaves, failing to stop three drives in covers. His 34 runs scored with the bat can effectively be considered just 22. Was frustrated in field by the misfortune experienced with team injuries and other incidents (see below). Has vowed to correct these failings for next game.

Vice C's post match assessment :

It was a 'sweet and sour' performance.

Positives:

- Two lads debuted for the club, showing promise with bat and ball. Welcome to C.C.N.S.W, Jonathon Shaw and Michael Tarrant
- We got to the ground on time(!)
- We fared far better than last season against the second placed team
- We showed great ability with the bat and ball. We attacked them with the bat, great stuff !

- We have a glut of good medium pace bowlers at our disposal

Hard luck stories:-

- Brett Faell's injury while batting, put him out of the game
- Craig Fletcher was injured in his second spell, effectively put him out of game
- Tom Robertson cramped up and went off field, could not resume bowling
- Craig Fletcher's shout for lbw on hat trick ball, would have made it 3-16. The batter went onto retire. Was a very close decision, to be diplomatic
- The Warringah opener played on to his stumps quite early and the bails did not dislodge. Think that was the opener that retired
- There were several mistimed shots amongst the good ones, with plays and misses, by the opposition, although that's cricket I suppose

Negatives:

- Higher than expected ground fee charges
- Pretty ordinary tea.
- No convenient dressing room
- Was I the '*Lone Ranger*' at the after match drink with opposition? Where did everyone nick off to?
- We are down four quality players, from this game, for the next game because of Injuries

Reality checks:

- Well played Warringah, a deserved win for them
- We had our injuries...and...we must address our general fitness, to a man, and make sure we stretch properly before a session, after a break in play and after the game. David Benson does this.
- Looking back, everybody would feel that this was a game that we could have easily won. We are not so far behind these previously higher ranked teams than one might think
- We are back at home next week, will have a good tea and facilities

How do we react?:

- We apply the reality check to correct the negatives , as individuals and as a team.
- We don't let anything affect team spirit
- We rejoice that we have uncovered new talent and have good players coming back
- We continue to play attacking cricket, throwing in a little more 'nous'
- We continue to play the C.C.N.S.W. way, which is not to throw in the towel and to socialise with opposition after match, regardless of match result

I am honoured to be captain for the next game big game against Burwood Briars at Camperdown and I vow to lead by example and correct my wrongdoings... I promise to have some game and bowling plans.

Plus a specific role for everyone, who is included, either playing or watching, for Sunday 29th October.

SEE YA'S THEN !

The Team was (playing 12): - Mike Pinter: (w) 40, Mike Weaver: 34, John Munden: (c) 19, Brett Favell: 29* retired not out hurt, Tom Robertson 16 , David Benson 0, Mick Tarrant 0, Richard Bryant 20, Jonathon Shaw 4, Lee Witherden 11*, Craig Fletcher 30, Mike Beergah dnb

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: all out 205- (37 overs) (M Pinter 40)

Lost to

Warringah: 7 - 206 (33.4 overs)

By 3 wickets

FoW: - 1- 54 (M. Weaver); 2-81 (J. Munden); 3-140 (T. Robertson); 4-140 (D. Benson); 5 -146 (M. Tarrant); 6-164 (J. Shaw); 7-164 (R. Bryant); 8- 205 (C. Fletcher); 9-205 (M. Pinter).

The Bowling was: - L. Witherden 7-0-43-1, C. Fletcher 5-1-21-2, R. Bryant 4-0-22-0, J. Shaw 3-0-13-1, M. Tarrant 4-0-25-1, T. Robertson 3-0-13-1, J. Munden 2.1-0-20-0, D. Benson 5-0-20-0, M. Beergah 0.3-0-6-0

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - nil

Catches: - One to Mike Pinter (w)

Run outs: - nil

Player points: - 3 points to M. Pinter; 2 points to M. Weaver ; 1 point to C. Fletcher

MASTERS ROUND 3 v BURWOOD C.C. AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 29 OCTOBER, 2017: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

Blues knock over Briars after hoisting second consecutive 250 run score at Camperdown.

In a match played on a sparkling Sunday afternoon, C.C.N.S.W. put together a stirring day's cricket to ignite what some feel could be an overdue and serious tilt at the Masters title. Having fallen narrowly to Warringah away in the previous round, the Blues set about banking home points against a fighting Burwood side that pushed hard all the way.

That the Briars would still fall 60 runs short of the energetic total posted by C.C.N.S.W. in their 40 overs – flattering to deceive as a comfortable win on paper – was testament to how well C.C.N.S.W. played in all facets. Indeed the Masters squad looks to have a formidable balance in its ranks this season, with missing mainstays and injured players set to return to add depth.

In fact Burwood left no stone unturned during a pulsating chase and batted their entire innings on the edge of victory and collapse, remaining on or gunning ahead of the 6-per-over asking rate and applying pressure back onto Blues fielders, forcing a number of dropped catches.

In the end, perhaps the most telling component of the Blues' win was at the toss which Briars won. Duly informing a surprised stand-in captain Mick Weaver that his charges would be sent in to apply their preferred, pre-nominated skill. C.C.N.S.W. players relished the lost toss' outcome considering the hot conditions.

The Camperdown Oval tabletop looked a picture and all the better for what scattered rain had been about in the four weeks since the Blues' successful season opener at the venue.

The wicket's colour may have fooled the visiting team as to hint to an appearance of life, with a nice light covering of grass. But stalwart C.C.N.S.W. players knew better – the deck would play true to character. Bowlers would need to toil long and hard.

Burwood's decision immediately looked the wrong one as Mick Weaver (31) and Mike Pinter (1) started methodically building the same platform they've so beautifully constructed in the first two fixtures.

But Briars were rewarded for their captain's bold call when 'Punter' missed turning a ball that looked to be going down leg side and struck him above the knee-roll. The Blues were 1-8. In fairness, above the knee-roll for the diminutive Pinter can still be accurately described as low-altitude in the ant kingdom.

His dismissal brought Mark Delaney (41*) to the crease, fresh from an all-night shift on the wharves. Still in the zone, Mark put his nose to the grindstone from the word go, mixing up a stout defence with punishing cricket shots to anything short or full.

At the other end 'Weaves' was flying, peeling off six fours through square off his legs, straight over the infield in the vee and through the covers. He pushed his luck once too often however, holing out to mid-on, a retirement gone begging with the score 2-53.

Richie Bryant (40*) strode to the wicket. Your correspondent is not alone in revelling at the sight of this hard-nosed dude lining up in this team. Part of a 'new breed' of Masters Blues with Delaney, Beck and Witherden, Rich gives teammates a certain level of competitive confidence. Confidence that he's going to put his best performance forward and/or become impossibly red-faced in trying.

With the lowering of C.C.N.S.W.'s median age, these recent recruits increase the aerobic capacity of the team and some might say the side's overall sex appeal – if the steady growth of single female spectators can be used as a gauge.

With the departure of the redoubtable yet slovenly-dressed Craig Somers, the 'Solo man' himself, and Garry James, to Classics plus Jim Hadley yet to feature this season, the team has quietly gone about transforming the image of a group that was sagging in all the wrong areas. Average kilos are down. There's a common sense of purpose in club attire. Bryant even purchased two Blue baggies from the club merchant bucket! This is a brave new world for C.C.N.S.W. Masters cricket.

Clearly, this is a different outfit to previous seasons. In the swagger stakes, it's fairly even between old and new. Given a chance to bat up the order at number 4 – where 'real' batsmen do their thing – 'Rich' blasted his first two scoring shots for four and six, much in the style of Hadley, and then knuckled down to ensure his innings carried the most possible weight it could on the day. It was a quality knock. Perhaps Bryant's batting style could be likened most to that of Mick McCormick.

With two majors and four boundaries in his innings he brandishes a potency to serve the team well in the top half. Briars had no answer to him as he swatted and swathed toward retirement.

The Blues had been going at a good clip, 2-115 at drinks and well placed to rattle up a better-than-par score, with Delaney and now Bryant in the recycling can. Another new chum entered the fray, Mick Tarrant (40*). Quiet and unassuming, Tarrant played a marvellous hand, grinding early and gathering momentum at the right time to accelerate through his 20s and 30s. He was another to go over the fence, disrupt pleasure picnickers and enable the umpire to cool his pits in the light breeze.

But the Blues were far from resting on their laurels; intent on making Briars pay for their toss folly, steaming towards 200 with many more overs to play with. Dave Benson (15) chimed in with a neat cameo before being bowled by Tom, that's right – just 'Tom', a leftie who was by far the pick of Burwood's batch.

Benson was merely warming the crease for yet another new recruit, Jonathon ("Jonno") Shaw (40*) who played a late-order gem, mixing power and precision in a retirement that came from barely more than two dozen deliveries. He partnered Lee Witherden (30) and together they battered the Briars bowlers with a distempered blend of boundary busting.

By the time 'Lee-Roy' holed out to Lind, C.C.N.S.W. had raced to 4-242. No retirees were required to reappear and with the needle settling on 250 after the allotted 40 overs, the Blues knew they were in the driver's seat with Briars in rear-view. Windows down. Fuel tank full.

'Punter's' desire to see beefed up home lunch spreads saw him throw a lunchbox full of tandoori chicken wraps together to snare the 'gourmand of the week' award – an effort which has raised the bar to unprecedented heights.

Stuart Ridge (4-0-37-0) took the new ball and bowled tight lines to begin with as Terry Pontikos (5-1-16-4), coming back after a two-and-a-half-year lay-off from new ball bowling started at the Mallett Street end with a maiden. In the third over Pontikos, flying the flag for the team's 'flabbies' in the absence of 'Favs' Favell, got one to straighten down the line to trap Cramsie in front. 1-8.

The wicket almost served to shock Burwood into action. Deguara crashed the next two balls through extra cover for four and number 3, Shahmatov panelled four fours and two sixes from his first seven scoring shots. Burwood were off to a flyer, 1-29 from 5 overs. Deguara bit off more than he could chew however when a shorter ball hit high on his bat, ballooning in between mid-on and mid wicket.

Richie Bryant made a beeline for the floater, sprinting the best part of 25-30 metres from mid-on, diving full stretch to meet the ball with his fingertips inches from the grass – a screamer of a catch. To say this pumped up the Blues is a fair understatement. Rich's grab was one that won't fade any time soon. Deguara perhaps a tad unlucky but he left the ground with tinnitus after crossing the bowler's path around the time the leather hit skin. He hit the road at 2-29.

Shahmatov was blazing away at everything that moved. An accomplished bat with an expansive off side game, his scalp wouldn't come cheaply and though the Blues had struck twice early, Burwood had already reached 50 runs after just 7 overs.

Another double blow served to tilt the balance inexorably in the Blues' favour. Akolkar dragged on and Parikh had his north pole cleaned up first ball by Pontikos, placing him on a hat trick and the score at 4-54. Macky comfortably negotiated the hat-trick ball, then set about establishing a telling partnership with Shahmatov which saw the Briars move to triple figures in the 16th over. The latter retired after a splendid dig that the Blues could not stop.

Burwood sent in useful middle order bats who all started cautiously then picking up steady runs all on or above the required run rate. But wickets also fell at regular-enough intervals as the Blues stuck to the task with a solid focus.

Lee Witherden (6-0-41-1) and Richie Bryant (3-0-28-0) both toiled manfully with a rapidly aging ball and at the pick of the Briar's batting core, keeping them honest with good fast bowling. But Camperdown's landing strip is one that punishes bowlers for even being slightly full or wide and boundaries continued to flow freely.

It was an absorbing contest of counter-punching with the Blues refusing to relinquish and Burwood showing more than enough fight for a side that could have been excused for dropping their heads at the magnitude of the task. For a while it looked like Briars would mount a late charge with a 50-odd-run partnership by Henry and Virensy for the 8th wicket that was punctuated with pickets, with Shahmatov sitting in reserve.

Jay Patel (7-1-32-1) and Mick Tarrant (7-0-19-1) bowled beautifully in tandem through the middle overs, first to slow the scoring and then to exert pressure by creating opportunities. Between them, Jay and Mick saw four gilt-edged chances grassed which could have ultimately stung the Blues.

The duo continued to toil valiantly and were each rewarded with scalps, dragging down the scoring rate as Burwood's innings unfolded. Backed by some fighting ground fielding and with 'Punter' deputising more than capably behind the stumps, Cricketers' Club saw off the challenge when late bowling changes closed the book on the Briars' charge.

Lee chipped in when Lind was caught by Weaves from a blast to short cover. David Benson (3-0-8-2) bowled stump-to-stump with guile and nous to crash through Virensky's guard, before having the returned Shahmatov caught spectacularly by 'Johnno' Shaw with a forward lunging speccy on the deep mid-wicket boundary.

This was a high quality game yielding an exciting win for C.C.N.S.W. No doubt there will be stiffer challenges ahead for the Blues but the most pleasing aspect of the victory was the show of resilience from the lads with blade and pill. The consistency of the side's effort throughout the day, especially in building a tall total and the team's ability to win the key moments under pressure.

The Team was: - Mike Weaver (c) 31, Mike Pinter (w) 1, Mark Delaney ret.41*, Richard Bryant ret.40*, Michael Tarrant ret. 40*, David Benson 15, Jon Shaw ret.40*, Lee Witherden 30, Jay Patel 0*, Stuart Ridge dnb, Terry Pontikos dnb

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 4 - 250 (M. Delaney 41*; R. Bryant 40*; M. Tarrant 40*; J. Shaw 40*) (40 overs)

Defeated

Burwood: - 10-190 (34.3 overs)

By 60 runs

FoW: - 1-5 (M. Pinter) 2-53 (M. Weaver) 3-184 (D. Benson) 4-248 (L. Witherden)

The Bowling was: - T. Pontikos 5-1-16-4 ; S. Ridge 4-0-37-0 ; R. Bryant 3-0-20-1; L. Witherden 6-0-41-1 ; M. Tarrant 7-0-32-1 ; J. Patel 7-0-32-1 ; D. Benson 2.3-0-8-2

The Fielding was: -

Stumping: Nil

Catches: One to each of R. Bryant, J. Shaw, M. Weaver and L. Witherden

Run outs: Nil

Player points: - 3 points to M. Tarrant; 2 points to T. Pontikos; 1 point to M. Delaney

MASTERS ROUND 4 v COLLAROY PLATEAU C.C. AT BALMORAL OVAL, BALMORAL BEACH ON SUNDAY 12 NOVEMBER, 2017: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

Golden day for C.C.N.S.W. as epic Favell 40* plus 'complete' bowling performance humbles Collaroy Plateau at Balmoral Oval.

It was described by vice captain Mick 'Weaves' Weaver as the most '*complete*' group bowling effort during his time at the club. He gave his three votes to the bowling collective.

Mind you, this is the same Mick Weaver whose prescription glasses are affixed to his melon with a combination of sticky tape and garter elastic. The type footballers used to keep their socks proud before the invention of electrical tape.

Such is the man's distrust of his own sporting accessories, the plan was to switch his prescription lenses over to the newly acquired frames he'd scored by chance whilst loitering near the park's water station. They had a coke bottle view to make a koala blink but held elegantly within designer brand-name frames they were a gift from the Gods.

So sweeping statements like these from Weaves are usually best taken with a pinch of salt. At least now he can return the white nylon elastic to Norm Proven or donate it to his local pre school for hobby craft. But you know, damn it, Weaves was spot on. The Blues' trundlers worked in unison on a fairly unresponsive strip to restrict and strangle a well-credentialed Collaroy Plateau batting line-up on their own dung heap.

That the dung heap in question was the perfect picturesque city beachside hideaway of Balmoral Oval only served to add a special footnote to one of C.C.N.S.W.'s most memorable away outings.

Both Collaroy Plateau and Cricketer's Club started their 2017-18 campaigns strongly on 2-and-1 win loss records with the former claiming higher ladder status, to the tune of several rungs, care of bonus points won.

With the Blues inwardly acknowledging a hard edge this season and with team spirit buoyant,

their positive start was tempered by the fact recent wins came against opponents in the lower half of the comp and at the stronghold of 'Fortress' Camperdown.

The round two loss at Warringah to some gave credence to the theory that C.C.N.S.W. can be suspect to quality teams, especially on the road. Well, here was such a team. Strong across the park, no obvious weak links, disciplined with the ball and studded with former first grade batsmen of renown. In the end, the Blues never looked like losing.

That wasn't the case from the outset however and apart from a third toss win from four coin flips and the advantage of setting the pace with the bat, C.C.N.S.W struggled to assert themselves early doors.

Lady Luck deserted the Blues quicker than a Weinstein Company publicist as Collaroy Plateau gained the ascendancy from controlled pace bowling. The woeful run out of Mick Weaver (1) when he and fellow opener, new chum Andrew Spedding (11), found themselves at the same end played right into Collaroy's hands. Weaves was gone. Spedding, as well as accumulating had threatened an expansive shot or two before falling to Moss when a top edge failed to clear the infield.

The Blues put up a horror start to be 2-16 after 10 overs. One mitigating factor was the spongy outfield was making scoring quite difficult. Would-be boundary strokes on other grounds were not getting the roll they deserved here, instead going for singles. It was pretty obvious risks would need to be taken via aerial routes for batsmen to consistently find the rope.

Skipper John Munden (20) counter-attacked immediately and furiously, cutting, flicking and slapping four quick boundaries. Munden appeared to be in great nick and of an audacious mindset until a freakish dismissal had C.C.N.S.W. players wondering if this would be their day.

As Mick McCormick (25) offered Maclean an easy caught-and-bowled, the paceman fluffed the simple chance but accidentally parried the ball onto the non-striker's pegs and Munden was undone having failed to re-ground his bat Lightning like that never strikes twice, particularly on such a clear crisp spring day. Just ask Mitchell Starc. But strike twice it did and more on that later.

For the moment C.C.N.S.W. were hobbling along but had improved the scoring rate to a modest three an over after 15 sets. 3-45. Mick Tarrant (15) entered the fray and an important stabilising partnership between the Micks yielded 23 runs. One got the sense another quick wicket after Munden's ill fortune could have really turned things pear-shaped for the Blues.

McCormick struck out on a few occasions but in general, both Micks took the cautious, sensible route, it has to be said against very tight bowling, in order to revive the innings and build a platform for later players to cash in on. McCormick had a couple of lives but played smartly, hitting four boundaries before he skying one to mid-wicket. It was the most telling scalp of all because it brought everybody's favourite trombonist to the crease, Brett 'Favs' Favell (40* ret.).

Fresh back from a torn calf muscle which defied modern sports science convention to miss only one match, Favs was happy to outline his rehab secrets to the lads in the pavilion. *'I've found if I drink several quick beers as soon as possible after the injury before going on with the job, as well as nailing a packet of darts, my body's healing powers will do the rest'*, he mused.

His fitness would be put to the test under the pressure of igniting the Blues innings. C.C.N.S.W. were 5-112 when Favell ambled to the wicket. The four or single nature of the outfield fed perfectly into his game plan! And he wasn't mucking around. 4-4-6-4 went his first four swings of the bat in anger.

He swung three massive sixes in all with 30 runs from boundaries in an imperious innings of pure ball-pounding preposterousness from just 24 balls. Tarrant, his clever foil at the other end was building a picket fence of singles and enjoying the show from the non-striker's, before his industrious dig died with a caught-and-bowled to Story.

The potential of fireworks increased spectacularly when Lee *'Banger'* Witherden strode to the centre. But *Favs* was to retire too quickly for there to be double trouble, instead, Mike *'Punter'* Pinter (16*) played a wheezy gem of a late hand to ensure a defendable target was acquired.

Remember the lightning? Punter crashed one back to Story who was cashing in with late wickets but the medium-pacer, in coughing up a sitter, deflected the ball onto the stumps at the non-striker's end. Lee couldn't react quickly enough to ground his bat and was toast. The odds of three run-outs in an innings are improbable enough but for two to be deflections by bowlers from two dropped returned catches – well, what are the odds, really?

Cricketer's Club had readjusted their expectations to set sights on a score of 150 but were still a ways off at 7-131 with just four overs left.

David Benson (9) joined in with a run-a-ball cameo before Story cleaned up his castle. Jonathon Shaw (5) found the rope before meeting the same fate. 8-137. It was left to Stuart Ridge (3) and Punter to scramble the last 19 runs in the final few overs with an important last-gasp partnership that rendered the blues effort of 9-156 a defendable target.

Collaroy Plateau got the run chase off to a steady start until Terry Pontikos (8-0-28-1) snuck one through Woolf's guard to rattle middle stump. The Blues were away, Collaroy Plateau were 1-16 after five overs.

In the next over, Stuart Ridge (6-1-30-2) struck a dirty double hammer blow to Collaroy Plateau's middle order, knocking over their three and four, Rota and the dangerous Minnett, without scoring. Collaroy Plateau was reeling at 3/17 after six.

The white-hot *'Ridgey'* was ploughing into the wind and hooping his inswinger back late to unplayable effect. It was great to see him play a defining role in setting up the win with good intelligent seam bowling after being unlucky to miss out in the previous match against Burwood Briars.

With some damaging blows landed, both Blues bowlers set out to restrict and contain after the fire went out of the ball. Cameron wasn't making his favoured drive work due to the tight lines and good pressure from the field. McLean had hit three fours and looked dangerous off the legs while on the back foot but more bereft of options to the fuller corridor ball.

Munden brought on Mick Tarrant (5-1-23-1) with instant success in the first of a couple of canny wicket-bringing changes. He had McLean beaten neck and crop on 27. It was the killer blow the Blues were looking for. 4-55 after 14.

Collaroy Plateau limped along for another dozen runs until Lee Witherden (7.2-0-14-4) effectively ended the contest in his second over with consecutive wickets putting him on a hat trick. First he removed Moss who was on 20 and giving some cheek but popped a simple grab up to Pinter at mid-on.

The next ball was a Jaffa of a yorker which snorted the stumps before the batsmen had his blade straight. Lee's hat-trick ball was nearly as good but was dug out at the last minute by Bennetts. It was a fantastic over of fevered fire from *'Lee-Roy'*, and overall a deserving haul from an inspired spell.

At drinks Collaroy Plateau were 6-68 and down and out.

Dave Benson's (3-0-16-2) bowling at the death took on *'Starc-like'* status as he again made short work of it, first snavelling Cameron to a rip-snorting left-handed catch from Andy

Spedding in at short gully. Cameron had made 26 and almost carried his bat; such was the dominance of the Blues pacers once on top.

With Munden pulling the strings, the Blues quicks hunted as a pack and got the job done with very little fuss, in the end bowling Collaroy Plateau out for 115 with almost ten overs to spare. It was pleasing to see all the bowlers in top form and certainly they ensured C.C.N.S.W.'s modest target of 156 was defended in good style, if not entirely stress-free.

But it was the match-winning hand of 40 by Brett Favell that rescued the Blues and paved the way to a confidence-boosting win. His 'eye' is one of the best in the business. When 'Favs' is seeing them as clearly as he did on this crystal afternoon he is an unstoppable force.

The win sees the Blues jump to fifth on the ladder with the upcoming match-up against third-placed Georges River at Camperdown sure to be another test of their bona fides.

The Team was (playing 12): - Mike Weaver 1, Andrew Spedding 11, John Munden (c) 20, Mick McCormick 25, Mike Tarrant 15, Brett Favell (w) 40*, Lee Witherden 5, David Benson 9, Jonathon Shaw 5, Mike Pinter 16*, Stuart Ridge 3 and Terry Pontikos (dnb)

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 9-156 (B Favell 40*) (40 overs)

Defeated

Collaroy Plateau C.C.: 10-115 (30.2overs)

By 41 runs.

FoW: - 1- 10 (M. Weaver); 2-14 (A. Spedding); 3-45 (J. Munden); 4-68 (M. McCormick); 5-112 (M. Tarrant); 6-119 (L. Witherden); 7-130 (D. Benson); 8-137 (J. Shaw); 9-156 (S. Ridge)

The Bowling was: - T. Pontikos 5-0-28-1; S. Ridge 6-1-30-2; M. Tarrant 5-1-23-1; L. Witherden 7.2-0-14-4; J. Munden 1-0-1-0, D. Benson 3-0-16-2

The Fielding was: - Stumpings: Nil

Catches: B. Favell 1; M Pinter 1 and A. Spedding 1

Run-outs: - Nil

Player Points: - 3 points to Brett Favell; 2 points to Lee Witherden; 1 point to Mick McCormick

MASTERS ROUND 5 v GEORGES RIVER C.C. AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 26 NOVEMBER, 2017: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

Undermanned Blues Capitulate To Rampant Georges River

It was a harsh lesson for the C.C.N.S.W. Masters side but one that exposed the gulf in class between the two halves of the competition draw. After bullying the likes of Burwood, Collaroy Plateau and Old Ignatians, a stern challenge awaited the Blues at Camperdown on a hot afternoon from a Georges River team with pretensions on the flag. Cricketers' Club in the end weren't in the same postcode as a rampant River put them to the sword.

The day was an unmitigated disaster from start to finish for a 10-man Blues team as they were handed a lesson in preparation, discipline and attitude from the seasoned and Strong Georges

River outfit. John Munden won the toss and rightly decided to bat, reasoning the extra time essential for late arrivals and a doomed desperate ring-around to complete the team.

Mike Pinter (40* ret) and Frank Chauwan (9) started solidly, Chauwan using the pace of River's opening quick, Wilson, to find the fence twice behind the wicket. He was soon triggered leg before while trying to turn a ball down leg side. It appeared a harsh decision. John Munden (0) was back in the pavilion the very next ball, falling victim to the same mode of dismissal. Munden was so far down the wicket he would have had to Uber back to the crease but kept walking instead. The Blues were in shock early at 2-11.

Brett Favell (4) smoked a square drive to the pickets on his second delivery before shouldering arms to the next one which jagged back to claim his off pole. At 3-18, Cricketers' Club were in utter disarray.

George's River appeared too sharp, too committed and too well-attired for the Blues to wrest the advantage. The River quicks bowled with energy and purpose and Cricketers' Club had no answer. However Mark Delaney (29) and Mike Pinter showed massive grit and guile in a gutsy 67-run partnership to spare the home team's blushes. The pair had to work for every run with a determined River attack giving very little away in the shape of loose fruit. Delaney was forced to shelve his favoured cross bat shots and play in the vee to straight, quick pole-to-pole bowling.

Even the spinners gave up nothing as the Blues laboured to be 3-62 at the halfway mark. Delaney's innings picked up momentum after the drinks break as he looked certain to retire before being well caught at square leg trying to push the run rate. In all Mark struck five boundaries in a defiant innings. His partnership with Pinter saved C.C.N.S.W. from a paltry total and ensured there would be something to aim at for the bowlers.

'Punter' added another retirement to his stellar season and is in rare form. Although he was given lives by the River keeper late in his dig, Pinter showed great character to hold the Blues innings together with sound technique, an array of classy shots and the kind of mental toughness he's made his personal brand this season.

Scott Wells (37) picked up the cudgel and went 4, 6, 4 to race away early, taking full toll of the River's slower respite bowlers. Craig Fletcher became the third L.B.W. victim of the innings, just as portents looked good for a score well beyond 150. The Blues were 5-127 with 8 overs remaining.

George's River reintroduced the excellent opener Wilson, who had tamed the Cricketers' Club batsmen throughout the day. His pace and accuracy made it difficult to milk meaningful runs and before and after Wells' departure to a return catch to Marshall, the Blues could not maintain a healthy scoring rate. David Benson (1), Terry Pontikos (6*) and Jonathon Shaw (3*) all failed to find the fence in the face of great tough bowling as C.C.N.S.W. added just 17 runs in their last 7 overs.

In their previous two wins at Camperdown, Cricketers' Club had posted scores of 265 and 280 batting first. In the end 7-145 after 40 overs was about 100 runs short of a total that would pressure the Georges River batsmen. And they batted with the type of confidence a team has when blood can be smelled in the water.

The final ignominy for Cricketers' Club was for opening bowler Craig Fletcher to break down after four balls of the Georges River innings, re-tearing his dodgy calf muscle. You could almost hear the swoosh of whatever air remained in the Blues' tyres exiting, along with any chance of a wilful arm-wrestle.

Cricket is a hard enough game to play against well-drilled teams on hot days, let alone surrendering a two man advantage to have only nine players in pursuit of the leather. Georges River made very light work of the total as they rattled up a convincing win inside 20 overs to claim bonus points.

The Blues bowlers were stoic in the heat, trying everything they could to stem the bleeding. But as is often the case when fielding teams become ragged as hope departs, dropped catches

outweighed wickets taken on a day to forget for C.C.N.S.W. Frank Chauhan (3-0-14-1); Dave Benson (3-0-38-1) and Jonno Shaw (6-0-40-1) all bowled well to claim a scalp each.

This result is a big comeuppance to the Cricketers' Club Masters brigade and should serve to motivate the team for the rest of the season. The 10 players who took to Camperdown all had a crack but it was very disappointing to field an incomplete team against a formidable opponent with so much at stake.

Depending on other results, Georges River might become outright competition leader and the Blues must now regroup and refocus. This was an opportunity to prove that C.C.N.S.W. belonged in the top half of the Masters competition. Ultimately it was an opportunity spurned and a result that will set the team back unless they fix their tendency to float into big games with a defeatist attitude.

The Team was: - Frank Chahwan 9, Mike Pinter 40, John Munden (c) 0, Brett Favell (w) 5, Mark Delaney 29, Scott Wells 37, Craig Fletcher 7, David Benson 1, Terry Pontikos 6* and Jonathon Shaw 3* . (No 11 absent)

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - **7-145** (M. Pinter 40*; S. Wells 37) (40 overs)

Lost to

Georges River C.C.: - **3-147** (19.5 overs)

By 7 wickets

FoW: - 1- 11 (F. Chawhan); 2- 11 (J. Munden); 3-18 (B. Favell); 4-85 (M. Delaney); 5-127 (C. Fletcher); 6-132 (D. Benson); 7-139 (S. Wells)

The Bowling was: - C. Fletcher 0.2-0-4-0, J. Munden 0.2-0-6-0, T. Pontikos 6-0-27-0, J. Shaw 6-0-40-1, D. Benson 3-0-38-1, F. Chahwan 3-0-14-1, M. Delaney 0.5-0-17-0

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: Nil

Catches: One catch to each of B. Favell (w), T. Pontikos and S. Wells

Run-outs: - Nil

Player Points: - 3 points to M. Pinter; 2 points to S. Wells; 1 point to M. Delaney

MASTERS ROUND 6 v MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY AT ROSS GWILLIAM FIELD, MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY SPORTS GROUND ON SUNDAY 10 DECEMBER, 2016: REPORT BY MIKE WEAVER

(MATURE) STUDENTS DELIVER THE LESSON AS C.C.N.S.W. FAIL TO SEIZE THE DAY

The C.C.N.S.W. Masters team suffered their second successive loss to a well organised Macquarie University, at Ross McGwillam Field.

On a clear warm afternoon, the opposing Captain won the toss and with superior knowledge of the pitch conditions, and as his team seemed to prefer, duly sent 'The Blues' into the field.

A promising start saw Jonno Shaw and Lee Witherden bowl superbly tight lines to a predominately off side field.

After almost 10 overs, Macquarie were 2-16, both well credentialed openers, Rose and Sutton, having their stumps rattled when tightened for room on the low-bouncing track. The Macquarie numbers three, four, and five batsmen then took the initiative away from the bowling team, scoring in total 140 runs in what proved match winning partnerships. Particularly impressive was Pasupati, who stroked the ball around with ease, scoring at a very high rate.

During this period, the Cricketers' Club missed numerous opportunities for run outs. And Pasupati went very close to being caught on the boundary, with a slog sweep for 4 that saw his retirement. The opposing batsmen also received the benefit of some inconsistent change bowling, which belied the good work done by the new ball duo.

While splendid efforts in ground fielding by all was apparent, several moments of opportunity were not taken. A reason could have been the bumpy outfield. At times though, united concentration may have lacking. The Blues, in true style stuck to the task and with some excellent second change bowling by Andrew Spedding and David Benson, tightened up considerably.

Dave, with his *'dibbly doblers'* was able to frustrate the Macquarie batters with some indifferent bounce, change of pace and wily swing. He picked up two important wickets at very low cost. Andrew bowled full and the stumps, his left arm mediums producing a welcome and effective variety of angle, which produced a handy wicket. The late arriving Mick Tarrant then combined with Lee Witherden to produce some excellent death bowling. Dave Benson inflicted a run out from out near the long on rope, as only he can, and the Macquarie hitters were well stifled. So after at one stage being 3-152, with three retirees, Macquarie were held to 7-208 of the mandatory 40 overs.

To sum up their ensuing, run chase, highly anticipated as successful by their Skipper John Munden, the C.C.N.S.W. batsmen simply did not 'seize the day'. The notable exceptions were Tom Robertson and Brett Favell who both batted with mature, selective assertiveness. As well, Mark Delaney persevered gallantly with the assistance of a runner, due a strained hamstring muscle suffered while fielding.

The rest were undone by some canny slow bowling to defensive fields. Many wickets, from the Blues point of view, were a result of indifferent application, lack of thought and tentativeness. No meaningful partnerships could be built as a result, leading to excessive scoreboard pressure near the end. When retiree Robertson joined the C.C.N.S.W. last bat Tarrant, 44 runs were required off just over 5 overs. Tarrant succumbed to an excellent diving catch to his left by Sutton, dashing the Blues' eternal hopes, 37 runs short of requirement.

With the capability with the blade across the team, known to all C.C.N.S.W. team members, it was a disappointing outcome for the visitors. Full credit to Macquarie, who deserved their win. They exhibited clearly superior batting in the conditions that were the same for both sides. In true club sporting style, the Blues enjoyed a beer with their opponents, who it must be mentioned had provided a splendid tea.

The Blues will pick themselves up and dust off, resuming their campaign on Jan 7. It will be a new year, with new beginnings. And C.C.N.S.W. will remain keen, in 2018!

The Team was (playing 12): - Andrew Spedding 0, Mike Pinter 6, Tom Robertson 45*, Mike Weaver 10, John Munden (c)12, Brett Favell (w) 35, Mick McCormick 12, Mark Delaney 25, David Benson 3, Lee Witherden 4, Mike Tarrant 6 and Jonathon Shaw (dnb)

The Result was: -

Macquarie University C.C.: 7-208 () (40 overs)

Defeated

C.C.N.S.W.: 10-172 (T. Robertson 45*; B. Favell 35) (35.3)

By 36 runs.

FoW: - 1- 4 (A. Spedding); 2- 27 (M. Pinter); 3-53 (M. Weaver); 4-93 (J. Munden); 5107 (M. McCormick); 6-148 (B. Favell); 7-150 (D. Benson); 8-160 (M. Delaney); 9-164 (L. Witherden); 10-172 (M Tarrant)

The Bowling was: - L, Witherden 9-0-38-1, J. Shaw 6-0-26-1, T. Robertson 5-0-27-0, J. Munden 5-0-31-0, M. McCormick 3-0-31-0, D. Benson 6-1-14-2, A. Spedding 3-0-20-1, M. Tarrant 3-0-15-1

The Fielding was: - Stumpings: Nil

Catches: one to M. Weaver

Run-outs: - one to D. Benson

Player Points: - 3 points to T. Robertson; 2 points to B. Favell; 1 point to D. Benson

**MASTERS ROUND 7 v LANE COVE CAVALIERS AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL,
CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 7 JANUARY, 2017:**

Match cancelled because Round called off on Sunday morning because of excessive predicted temperatures over 38^o

**MASTERS ROUND 8 v LANE COVE WHITE C.C. AT CAMPERDOWN
OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 21 JANUARY, 2018: REPORT BY
TERRY PONTIKOS**

Fire and Fury: Favell's blistering bat blitzes Lane Cove, secures winning start to year for C.C.N.S.W. Masters.

In searing 30 degree heat at the Camperdown Cauldron, Brett Favell continued his dream season with a blazing 43* and it was a knock for the ages. He limped onto the square with sore tootsies from a new pair of cheap shoes as the Blues had fallen into disarray to be 4-16 after seven overs. A shocking start with the willow saw the top order wilting at 2-5 from three and 3-11 from five overs. This was in response to Lane Cove White's modest total of 8-181. 'Favs' single-handedly dragged C.C.N.S.W. back from the abyss, the stout trombonist butchering Cove's attack with just 10 lashes of his blade.

His first three scoring shots went 4, 4, 6 in successive deliveries. This caught the opposition's attention. Moments earlier, McLeod's furious opening spell had decimated the Blues' top order. Mick Weaver (0), Mike Pinter (1), John Munden (4) and Scott Wells (5) were road kill as Lane Cove's main man left a trail of devastation. McLeod was playing skittles with figures of 4-7 from his first four overs. Wells perished to a sharp catch behind square leg as he sought to attack but McLeod's first three victims were all direct dismissals at the wicket – a leg before, a bowled and a catch behind as respective modes of dismissal.

Richie Bryant (23) and Favell managed to stem the bleeding and hold off the lanky quick until he was changed at the Mallet Street end after seven overs of cascading carnage. Bryant was a trusty ally and he rode his luck with a couple of near misses in the deep before 'Favs' proceeded to panel the bowling in a picket-busting display of power. The bulk of the damage was wrought through his sweet area between mid-on and mid-wicket.

Such was the ferocity of his whirlwind innings, team-mates watched on in awe at how big that sweet-spot has become. Coupled with his crazy hand-speed, 'Favs' picks up atomic power from his 'bionic gut' by the time he swings around it to hit to the leg side. It was pretty to watch. A single and a two briefly spoke to his mortality ... until he unleashed a further two boundaries and three more booming sixes to retire after ten scoring shots, twenty one balls faced overall. He left the park as nonchalantly as he had entered but to a raucous ovation from exhilarated teammates.

Suddenly within about half an hour a golden recovery was taking place. C.C.N.S.W. had collected their bundle, regenerating to 4-48 after eleven overs. Favell's brilliance not only took the wind from Lane Cove's billowing sails, it instilled an air of confidence through the Blue's remaining middle order bats. Bryant skied one to cover but not until the Blues were breathing again after a 39-run combo with Favell. 5-55. His innings got the rescue underway and was punctuated by three boundaries at better than run-a-ball. The big unit had a disappointing return with the pill earlier in the day but more than atoned with the plank, proving himself to be a reliable run resource for the Blues. He just bats well all the time, whether early or late, with team in trouble or not.

Andrew Spedding (32) was next to the wicket, playing a crucial anchoring role. He was the perfect foil at first for Favell, and the two lefties combined brilliantly, then for Mark Delaney (14) and Jonathan Shaw (16). Delaney gamely batted with 'Punter' as runner after doing more hamstring and knee damage in the field but still managed to find the fence twice and play his part. He fell mowing over the top of a ball from Kingston that caught his off peg. Shaw played a brutish cameo, swatting three big fours before returning a catch to Kingston. At drinks it was 'game on' and the Blues, at 6-116, had life.

'Spedds' innings was like Tarzan's Grip for the late order to build around – he is sound defensively yet deliberate and ruthless when on the attack, playing the perfect hand at exactly the right time – which propelled the Blues towards the tricky target. Three consecutive fours rubbed the ask to under 40 to win with two wickets still in hand and more than ten overs remaining. It was a tense, exciting affair.

High-scoring overs became more frequent as the innings rolled on with the Whites flagging fast. It was left to Mick Tarrant (18*) and Witherden (22*) to steer the Blues home in nerveless fashion. Heroes earlier with the ball, the pair repeated the dose to bat with steel and smarts – erasing the last 30-odd runs without taking risks – rather, sweating on and punishing the loosies in style. A Blue tidal wave of momentum engulfed Lane Cove and the required target with seven overs left unbowed in the end.

Earlier a magnificent collective bowling and fielding effort had stunted Lane Cove's charge, forcing them to post a cheapish score of 181 after winning the toss. Mick Tarrant (6-2-20-3) and Lee Witherden (9-0-28-1) both struck early to get the Blues off to a flyer. Elsau shouldered arms to a straight one from Lee and was triggered for his effort, or lack thereof. Tarrant sent Maclane packing with some real heat, dismantling the opener's castle. Lane Cove were 2-19 after the first seven overs. Gill and John steadied the Cove innings, prodding around early before piling on 55 for the third wicket in slick time. Tarrant in particular was superb with the seed early and unlucky not to feature in the playing points as the bar seemingly is raised each match.

The Blues were hanging tough in the heat and continued to apply pressure, making Lane Cove's batsmen work hard for everything as they sweltered. Jonathon Shaw (5-0-39-1) claimed a vital breakthrough, enticing Gill to tinkle to skipper Munden at slip. 3-67 after the fourteenth over. The left-arm variation of Andrew Spedding (9-1-35-1) also had immediate impact, catching Cove's aptly-named number 5, Plumber right in front for a globe. This brought Neil McLeod to the crease.

McLeod started mildly but began to cane the ball around willy nilly in partnership with a fatiguing John. The Big-hitting allr ounder played a fabulous hand, striking 6 boundaries and a 6 in a dig that threatened to take the game from the Blues. The pair saw Lane Cove to a healthy position at drinks, 4-91. But he lost his partner in crime on 38 soon after the interval,

caught and bowled by Mark Delaney (6-0-25-1). Delaney, Spedding and John Munden (4-1-16-0) then applied the brakes to Lane Cove and strangled them in the second session.

A great fielding effort where the focus never waned backed up the Blues' bowling battery in shutting out Cove, who added only 69 runs for the loss of 4 wickets in the final 20 overs.

Spedding bowled with beautiful control, beating the bat frequently to keep the Whites tied down. Munden's tweakers continued in the same vein, forcing their conventional middle order batsmen to make the pace on the ball and play improvised shots. They weren't up to the task.

The Mercury was still climbing as pressure tolled on Lane Cove. A grandstand finish was to be out of reach for the visitors with their retiree failing to have another bite at the cherry.

Though Favell was undeniably the star performer, a great team effort adds to a fine collection of wins in a tidy season-to-date for the Blues. Next up is the onerous task of breaking the club's Masters duck against Mosman, away from home. With the team firing and in a confident mood it will be the best-ever chance to come away from Rawson Oval with points. If Sunday's thrilling victory is anything to go by, perhaps the manager and vice-captain's new 'united-in-pride' kit policy has made true 'beweavers' of us all

The Team was (playing 12): - Mike Weaver 0, Mike Pinter 1, John Munden (c) 4, Scott Wells 5, Richard Bryant 23, Brett Favell (w) 43*, Andrew Spedding 32, Jonathon Shaw 16, Mark Delaney 14, Mike Tarrant 18*, Lee Witherden 22*, Terry Pontikos dnb

The Result was: -

Lane Cove White: - **9-181** (40 overs)

Lost to

C.C.N.S.W.: -**8-182** (B. Favell 43*; A. Spedding 32) (33 overs)

By 2 wickets.

FoW: - 1- 0 (M. Weaver); 2-4 (J. Munden); 3-9 (M. Pinter); 4-16 (S. Wells); 5-55 (R. Bryant) 6-107 (J. Shaw); 7-129 (M. Delaney); 8-142 (A. Spedding)

The Bowling was: - L. Witherden 9-2-28-1, M. Tarrant 6-2-20-3, R. Bryant 1-0-13-1, J. Shaw 5-0-39-1 A. Spedding 9-1-35-1, M. Delaney 6-0-25-1, J. Munden 4-1-16-0

The Fielding was: - Stumpings:- Nil

Catches: - One to each of M. Delaney and J. Munden

Run-outs: - One to M. Pinter; and one to M. Delaney

Player points: - 3 points to B. Favell; 2 points to A. Spedding; 1 point to L. Witherden

MASTERS ROUND 9 v MOSMAN C.C. AT RAWSON OVAL, MOSMAN ON SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY, 2018: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

Blues miss opportunity to challenge by buying into Mosman hype

At the rescheduled venue of Rawson Oval, Mosman easily outplayed the C.C.N.S.W. Masters unit. However there were chinks apparent in the home side's armour from the word go - the Blues failing to exploit these - while guilty of making several cardinal errors that played right into Mosman's hands.

C.C.N.S.W. bowled well enough to see a vastly lesser chase than the 230 target Mosman posted after being sent in by John Munden. An inability to cash in on gilt-edged chances hurt the Blues, with the first two of Mosman's three retirees spoilt with three lives between them.

C.C.N.S.W, Masters have never beaten Mosman and one wonders if it will ever happen, as long as Blues teams keeps paying them undue reverence by treating the side as a 'Champion Team' all blessed with the attributes of Adlam and Guthrie. That is not the case and many of their batsmen struggled to counter a hard-working Blues bowling unit.

With perhaps the exception of Guthrie at four, Mosman's top six were all dominated in moments and largely kept subdued. Lee Witherden (9-0-45-1) bowled a magnificent opening spell that generated edges behind from Adlam and the Mosman captain, Varasdi, only to see his hard graft go to the grass. Adlam was spared again at mid-wicket but to be fair, this was an unexpected and tough chance from a miscue.

The obvious takeaway is even the best are susceptible to quality line and length bowling. Stuart Ridge (9-0-60-1) took some stick early from Adlam but soon after finding his length, troubled him. He beat the bat several times whilst drawing regular mishits, a few of which still managed to find the fence. Steve Beck (6-1-36-1) in his comeback match from a broken finger; Andrew Spedding (7-1-34-1); and Mick Weaver (6-0-30-2) all toiled manfully - applying the brakes to stunt Mosman's total and give the Blues a fighting chance. There was nothing wrong with the bowling efforts but the general ground-fielding failed to match the intensity.

In response with the plank, Mark Delaney (16) and Mick Weaver (4) made a methodical start with Mark keeping Adlam at bay through the early overs. The pair found scoring difficult, with double figures coming up in the 6th over. When 'Weaves' departed in the 8th over with the team score on just 12, the early shine-scraping of Delaney was negated. Adlam bowled five overs in his opening spell - all maidens.

Yet it was Aldred at the other end who cashed in with "Weaves" LBW, before dealing a devastating double-blow to the visitors. He removed Steve Beck (0) leg before and bowled Rich Bryant (0) for a golden to put himself on a hat-trick. The Blues had slumped to 4-26 after 11 overs.

Yates and Stepto joined the party as Mosman's attack appeared unplayable from the sidelines but in truth, this was a collective batting fail right up there with any of the Blues' poorer efforts. In fairly quick succession C.C.N.S.W. lost skipper John Munden (4), Mike Pinter (0) and Andrew Spedding (4) and the contest was finito, The Blues were 6-52 after the 17th over.

Brett Favell (30) wasn't about to surrender and he played a trademark innings mixed with aggression and solid defence, slugging three boundaries on the big Rawson Oval. Just before drinks he holed out unluckily as Adlam jagged a great one-handed catch. At drinks, C.C.N.S.W. were an embarrassing 7-65.

It was left to Lee Witherden (42) and Terry Pontikos (21*) to claw back some respectability, putting on 58 runs for the 9th wicket while batting under no real pressure. After drinks Mosman decided to treat the game as an aside to the post-match. One player was following the fortunes of Mosman's first grade side on his phone in the inner ring and several comments were made that served to fire up the low order batsmen. But the jocular turned to frustration as the fielding team became irate with straight bats and Lee's flashing blade. 'Banger' plugged five boundaries and brought his retirement up at better than a run-a-ball in a whirlwind

Witherden's knock was a timely reminder of what can be achieved when concentration matches intent but in reality, C.C.N.S.W.'s hopes began to fade far earlier than the change of innings when Mosman's star batsmen were gifted simple reprieves.

The Team was: - Mark Delaney 16, Mike Weaver (w for 20 overs) 4, Steve Beck 0, Richard Bryant 0, John Munden (c) 4, Mike Pinter 0, Andrew Spedding 4, Brett Favell (w for 20 overs) 30, Lee Witherden 42, Terry Pontikos 21*, Stuart Ridge

The Result was: -

Mosman C.C.: 7-233 (40 overs)

Defeated

C.C.N.S.W.: 10-132 (L. Witherden 42; B. Favell 30) (36 overs)

By 101 runs.

FoW: - 1-12 (M. Weaver); 2-12 (S. Beck); 3-12 (R. Bryant); 4-25 (M. Delaney); 5-34 (J. Munden); 6-51 (M. Pinter); 7-61 (A. Spedding); 8-65 (B. Favell) 9-132 (S. Ridge); 10-132 (L. Witherden)

The Bowling was: - L. Witherden 9-0-45-1, S. Ridge 9-0-60-1, S. Beck 6-1-36-1, A. Spedding 7-1-34-1; R. Bryant 3-0-23-0; M. Weaver 6-0-30-2

The fielding was: -

Stumpings: - Nil

Catches: - One to M. Delaney

Run-outs: - One to A. Spedding

Player points: - 3 points to L. Witherden; 2 points to Brett Favell; 1 point to S. Ridge.

MASTERS ROUND 10 v PENNANT HILLS C.C. AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY, 2018: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

Cricketers' Club Crumble at Camperdown to Pennant Hills in Masters Meltdown.

On another hot and humid afternoon, the C.C.N.S.W Masters team failed to get back up off the canvas to regroup from a towelling at Mosman a fortnight ago. A morale-boosting bonding session last week was not enough to turn around the fortunes of the Blues who, although battered and bruised with injury, have been guilty of a drop in intensity over the second half of the season.

Good starts have not been the problem for Cricketers' Club as again Lee Witherden (9-0-59-1) got the early breakthrough after Pennant Hills came out all guns blazing.

Stuart Ridge (9-3-22-4), bowling with the assistance of a nice breeze pulled out the spell of the season from the Mallet Street end in a masterful performance. His late hooping in-swing was virtually unplayable. In his second over, Ridge cut a swathe through Pennant Hills, knocking over the dangerous James cheaply before scalping John Mesar for nought two balls later with an absolute peach of a seed. In virtually the perfect start for C.C.N.S.W., the visitors were in all sorts at 3-21 after four overs.

Austin and Sturt were in survival mode. After a series of inside edges and near misses they finally saw off Ridge, who claimed 2-10 from his first six over aerodynamic assault that included two maidens. Andrew Spedding (6-0-24-2) was introduced in the eleventh over with immediate success, trapping McKenzie in front. It was 4-48 and Pennant Hills who gunned it early doors had slowed to a crawl. The Blues well on top, everything going to plan.

Then, near disaster! A calamitous clash of knees between David Benson (*'Benno'*) and Mike Pinter (*'Punter'*) as they both slid in for a skied ball that perfectly bisected them was a harbinger for further injury worries for the Home team and the first signs of luck deserting

Cricketers' Club. The hapless duo managed to run their bruises off but soon after Mick Weaver took a nasty blow on the knee from a rocketing on drive that rubbed him out of the game after only 15 overs.

When Austin, who had righted Pennant's Hills' ship returned a firmly-driven catch to Spedding in the 17th over, the score was 5-69 and it looked like the Blues were still on course for a bounce-back win. At drinks Pennant Hills were 5-86 with the home side enjoying the upper hand as 'Weaves' iced his knee'.

But the Blues could not remove Sturt in the middle order who was building a patient innings. He was joined by the big-hitting Gittens and by the time Munden pounced on him at mid on from the bowling of Dave Benson (3-0-9-1), Pennant Hills had 106 runs on the board after 23 overs and were perched for a late order assault that Cricketers' Club never saw coming.

While the attack toiled hard it was fair to say the Blues ran out of bowlers before collectively losing their way to concede 106 runs in the final 17 overs, albeit with the difficulty of being a fielder down. 'Weaves' had bowled a tidy wicket-taking spell against Mosman and was due to close out this one with five or six overs. But his knee looked like a sack of Easter eggs and he couldn't tie his own shoelace at the end of the day, such was the swelling that had taken hold.

Rich Bryant (9-0-58-1) and Mark Delaney (4-0-33-1) both bowled bravely, an injured Delaney worked from a shortened run but despite the re-injection of the openers Ridge and Witherden, the Blues could not stop the visitors' momentum.

Credit must be paid to Pennant Hills who batted extremely well and capitalised on the gaps made available to them. Sturt was too good, remaining 58*. After re-entering late in the innings from his retirement.

Mahoney provided sound support in a damaging late cameo of power hitting before being removed by Ridge leg before. Stuart's two late wickets capped a splendid outing for him with the ball on a day where a five-for would have been a fairer return.

The Blues chased a bit of leather in the last ten expensive overs which served in turn to drain the boys of energy for the run chase. Pennant Hills had set the GPS at 9-211 from their 40 overs.

Probably the less said about the batting card of the Blues the better, although a disappointing effort was punctuated by a magnificent fighting rear-guard partnership of 55 runs from Lee Witherden (54*) and Stewart Ridge (23) for the 9th wicket. The vanguard of C.C.N.S.W.'s bowling attack toiled through 9 overs apiece earlier in hot conditions before embodying the notion of leaving nothing in the tank late in the day as they gamely brought their side to within touching distance of an unlikely win.

And it was Witherden who again led the fight back with the plank, carrying on brilliantly from his retirement at Mosman with an unbeaten half-ton. He plundered seven boundaries with a series of pulls and cuts, sensibly balancing ferocious stroke play between urgency and agency.

In the last two matches Witherden has scored 95 runs for one unlucky run out dismissal. It represents a reliable and rich vein of form as good as any Blues batsman has posted this season.

Earlier, the innings had got underway solidly with John Munden (12) and Mark Delaney digging in the platform while dispatching the fruit after Mike Pinter's (1) early loss. However, yet again the Blues found a way to engineer a batting collapse through a series of unfortunate events. Munden must have been feeling all '*Lemony Snickett*' when run out just as he looked to be gaining the upper hand, in what was a touch and go decision.

Mark Delaney thumped a good shot straight to a fielder, as did Brett Favell (6) who couldn't repeat the heroics of recent games. Richie Bryant (8) tried to hoick Pennant Hill's tantalising leggie but instead the tweaker hooked Rich and knocked his middle peg over.

Terry Pontikos (0) was out of sorts and out of balance to be stumped. Andrew Spedding tried to improve the situation and scoring rate, hitting a couple of nice shots and a four before spooning a simple catch off Mesar.

A partnership of 35 between Lee Witherden and Dave Benson (12) for the 8th wicket brought some respectability when three figures were raised.

But the performances of note came at the death. It was a Herculean display from two gallant players who always give their all and as they began to tire, Ridge took the lead to play several zinging shots that were straight out of the manual, and ones for the scrapbook.

Too much was asked of the late order when Ridge finally succumbing to fatigue, had his timberwork refurbished (with Mike Weaver unable to bat) to end a sorry day for the Cricketers' Club.

The Masters team would like to send a shout out to Mick 'Weaves' Weaver, currently in RPA hospital undergoing scans and draining of fluid on his 'bung' knee. Our high hopes are for a speedy recovery so we can see the 'gazelle' gracing cricket fields again very soon.

The Team was: - Mike Pinter 1, Mark Delaney14 , John Munden (c) 12, Richard Bryant 8, Brett Favell (w) 6, Terry Pontikos 0, Andrew Spedding 12, Lee Witherden 56*, David Benson 12, Stuart Ridge 24 and Mike Weaver injured dnb

The Result was: -

Pennant Hills C.C.: 9-211 (S. Ridge 4-22) (40 overs)

Defeated

C.C.N.S.W.: all out 158 (L. Witherden 58*) (35.1 overs)

By 53 runs.

FoW: - 1- 7 (M. Pinter); 2-31 (J. Munden); 3-32 (M. Delaney); 4-40 (B. Favell); 5-47 (R. Bryant); 6-51 (T. Pontikos); 7-68 (A. Spedding); 8-103 (D. Benson); 9-158 (S. Ridge).

The Bowling was: - L. Witherden 9-0-59-1; S. Ridge 9-4-22-4; A, Spedding 6-0-24-2; R. Bryant 9-0-58-0; D. Benson 3-0-9-1, M. Delaney 4-0-33-1

The fielding was: - Stumpings: Nil
Catches: - One to each of J. Munden and A. Spedding
Run-outs: - Nil

Player points: - 3 - S. Ridge; 2 - L. Witherden; 1 - A. Spedding

MASTERS ROUND 11 v AUBURN AT DAVID TRIBOLET OVAL, MONA PARK, AUBURN, ON SUNDAY 4 MARCH, 2018: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

The Premiers' toughest opponent all season.

It could have been, and perhaps should have been the boilover of the season. As a matchup, on paper, it was a game that refused to go to script on a slow deck that provided some 'popping' bounce at one end. The undefeated league leaders this season and

likely premiers, Auburn 'Hawks', née Sri Lanka Lions, at home to an unfancied C.C.N.S.W. outfit down on its luck. Not expected to come close.

It was a 'final' of sorts for the Blues. A chance to measure themselves against a peerless team that has swept all before it this summer. There were outs in both sides but no 'beg pardons' in a ding dong affair that had more twists and turns than a Mardi Gras float lost in traffic.

Auburn elected to bat first and blazed boundaries from the opening over. Senorath and Marlon were on a mission to replicate the Hawks regular 220 plus scorelines on the ground. Senorath was hitting across the line and topped a skier that went straight up. In keeping with the new democratic style of the Blues' Masters, the caught and bowled chance was spilt by Lee Witherden (9-0-23-1) after a plebiscite was conducted on whose catch it was.

A firmly struck six over mid on the next ball pointed to a day of pain for Cricketers' Club. But Lee was too good and disturbed the lanky leftie's castle the very next ball as he tried another expansive swipe. David Benson's (6-0-28-2) first delivery was planted over the fence by Marlon. But 'Beno' was giggling two balls later when the batsman slapped it down the throat of 'island' fielder Mick Weaver, playing on one knee and a whole lot of ticker at mid on.

That same over Benson dispatched left-hander Wilkinson with a Jaffa that swung away and clobbered his off peg. It was the double-wicket blow that announced the Blues hadn't turned up just to become another notch in the Hawks' title belt.

After taking some early stick Stuart Ridge (6-0-38-0) settled into a fine rhythm to carry on the form of recent matches, bowling some beautiful lines. Auburn had stopped playing risky shots and the runs were drying up. The score was 3-42 in the 7th over.

Garry James (9-3-33-3) was brought into the attack to further curb Auburn's enthusiasm, but it transpired, at the wrong end. An expensive first three overs with the strong wind at his back saw 24 runs flow freely but after a switch of ends, 'Jamesy' responded with three moody maidens as the wily veteran began to make the ball talk.

The cut-and-thrust continued up to drinks where the Eagles sat on 71 runs for the loss of three and it was the Blues who took the honours in a high-quality session.

Craig Fletcher (4-0-15-1) enjoyed immediate success with a third ball wicket when he had the dangerous Randell caught by 'Ridgey' not long after the interval. Andrew Spedding (6-0-28-0) produced another super effort of controlled seam up bowling and was unlucky not to snare the prized wicket of Daminda, who went achingly close to being caught at point. Cricketers' Club had their tails up, looked sharp in the field and were starting to sniff a faint waft of upset.

The intensity in the field was palpable in maybe the finest team display of the season. The Blues continued to be miserly while bodies were put on the line to save every run. Mick McCormick wound the clock back to days of 'Brylcream and Old Spice' as he flung his gnomish frame at everything red that flew his way. Auburn bowed and swayed in the wind under the barrage of pressure as an inspired McCormick threw down Rajan's stumps to make it 5 for 116 at the pointy end of the innings. In his first game of Masters for the season, James closed out the innings superbly and was the pick of a fantastic bowling unit. Every Blues fielder contributed to an excellent performance, exemplified by two direct hit run outs – the second a great piece of work from Lee Witherden late in the innings. Auburn, the undefeated Eagles had their wings clipped to score 9-162 from 40 overs.

By a conservative estimate the Blues had saved some 40 runs in the field by working hard to exert genuine pressure on the batsmen. The target would still take a lot of getting against the classiest attack in the league that featured several classy slow bowlers and a couple of very good quicks. The Blues started solid. Randell sent them down briskly in the corridor to have both openers, Mike Pinter (3) and Terry Pontikos (4), enticed to edges behind by the 7th over with just 17 runs on the board. Mick Weaver (24) limped in at number three on a 'limb and a

prayer'. Having had his fractured kneecap drained of fluid in RPA hospital the week prior, 'Weaves' showed guts and determination in an inspiring display. But the Blues were also finding it difficult to score on a slow wicket under the pressure of the Premiers' good tight bowling. Andrew Spedding (30) showed his skill by lifting three boundaries over mid wicket and striking a big six to get the Blues off and running. At drinks C.C.N.S.W. were 2-51 in reply. When 'Spedds' holed out to Labrooy, the Blues were 3-63 and Dave Benson (10) was sent out to pinch hit. It was a tidy run-a-ball cameo until he was stumped off Daminda. 4-76. Weaver's dismissal brought Mick McCormick (25) and stand-in skipper Brett Favell (14) together in the middle and hopes were high that the voluminous duo would hit the Blues home. Upping the run rate was the order of the day and the Blues Brothers both bashed a pair of sixes to really set the cat among the pigeons. Within two overs Mick and 'Favs' dragged the Blues to within sight of the finishing post. With 10 overs remaining Cricketer's Club still had five wickets in hand and needed 60 runs to win. But in the 30th over disaster struck and Favell was run out attempting a single that no two men in the same age and weight divisions should have ever attempted. 6-104.

McCormick (25) and Lee Witherden (18) took up the cudgel but as the boundaries dried up and the ask climbed over six runs per over, a famous result for the Blues was set to be thwarted by this season's competition winners. Garry James (7 *) and Craig Fletcher (5*) tried valiantly to see the Blues over the line – which at one stage with 21 runs to get from the last three overs was still in full, agonising view. But in the end the Eagles were too good and held on to edge out C.C.N.S.W. by the slender margin of 8 runs. Nice words were spoken by the two skippers after the match as players mingled and shared beverages. It was a cracking game played in great spirit. C.C.N.S.W. were after more than just praise on the day but had to settle for being told by Auburn's players that they'd been the Premiers' toughest opponent all season.

The player points are unknown at this point. It was a bit chaotic at the end and due to the disruption of our leadership. I was busy at the time but asked the umpire to record them in our scorebook. He agreed but failed to do so. Weaver has contacted the umpire by email to request our player points and will send them on asap if he gets a reply.

The Team was: - Mike Pinter 3, Terry Pontikos 4, Mick Weaver 24, Andrew Spedding 30, David Benson 10, Mick McCormick 25, Brett Favell (w) and (c) 14, Lee Witherden 18 Garry James 7 * and Craig Fletcher 5*; Stuart Ridge dnb

The Result was: -

Auburn C.C.: - 9-162 (40 overs)

Defeated

C.C.N.S.W.: - 8-155 (40 overs)

By 7 runs.

The Bowling was: - L. Witherden 9-0-23-1; S. Ridge 6-0-38-0; D. Benson; 6-0-28-2; A. Spedding 6-0-28-0; G. James 9-3-33-3; C. Fletcher 4-0-15-1;

FoW: - 1-7 (M Pinter); 2-17 (T. Pontikos); 3- 63 (A. Spedding); 4- 76 (D. Benson); 5-82 (M. Weaver); 6-104 (B. Favell); 7-138 (M. McCormick); 8-147 (L, Witherden)

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - One stumping to Brett Favell

Catches: - One each to S. Ridge and M. Weaver

Run outs: - 2 Run outs, direct hits to M. McCormick and L. Witherden

Player points: - 3 to G. James; 2 to L. Witherden; 1 to A. Spedding.