

## **MASTERS ROUND 1 v LANE COVE BLUE AT CAMPERDOWN PARK, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 27, 2015:**

Cancelled by rain

## **MASTERS ROUND 2 v WYONG AT BARKER PARK, WYONG ON SUNDAY OCTOBER 18, 2015: REPORT BY MICK WEAVER**

It's an away fixture fast becoming the proverbial hoodoo for a well-traveled C.C.N.S.W. Masters side. The first call to action each season usually brings a spring match-up against our agrarian antagonists, a bogey team and venue, a 22-yard strip of quicksand less responsive than Joff Johnson's bouffant – a road trip to nowhere for the Blues.

With C.C.N.S.W.'s chief tormentor and 'Winchester' from M\*A\*S\*H look-a-like Warren O'Rourke unavailable for the home side, the Blues were hopeful of ending a three-year wait for victory in Wyong. But we were foiled again by a no-nonsense outfit playing to local conditions that have turned Baker Park into a tougher assignment for us than an Ed Smith scorebook master class.

The toss saw first blood to the visitors and after some early cautious overs, Blues opening pair Mick Weaver (12), and Mike Pinter (6) began working on an innings robust enough to withstand a slow-motion Wyong chase.

'Punter' was gone first, edging to the keeper after being drawn to one that left him. Pinter's first false shot brought Englander John Munden (40) to the crease. He was a revelation in his maiden hit-out for the club. A 42-run partnership with Weaver steadied the Blues' ship before 'Weaves' fell to a straight one which flicked the pad. 2-48. Munden was joined by Craig Somers (21), who played some nice strokes to duplicate his score at Baker Park last season. The pair put together an unblemished 48 run third wicket stand which left the Blues well catered for at lunch. 2-78.

But as is sometimes the case with a Blues' batting order which has shown its vulnerable middle before, a second session collapse would stifle the card to render another frustratingly light total of 141 all out.

Munden had been a colossus, effortlessly flicking boundaries behind square, heaving one big six in the same direction and lofting drives down the ground repeatedly. He found the fence often in a showpiece knock full of enterprise, punishing Wyong's toiling trundlers.

After Somers topped one to mid-on and Munden retired, Dave Benson (2) strode to the wicket to join Mick McCormick (418). Maybe 'Benno' had his dates and venues mixed up because his lusty charge-swipe-and-miss belonged in the Wyong Fair wood-chopping finals, held at the Show grounds a week earlier. Woodwork reassembly was called upon for the first time that afternoon.

Big bad Brett Favell (12) threatened to help Mick take the game away from the Central Coast team. He clubbed the ball long and high but perished trying to up the rate, tonking one down mid-off's throat from new-ball taker Daley's bowling.

Wyong's primed quick then managed to catch the Watto flavored front pad of Terry Pontikos (0) for a second baller only to repeat the dose just minutes later to Peter Gordon (2) – preventing any potential late Blues revival. His LBW decision had a touch of the Craig Jouberts about it and just like those plucky Scots, Pete was happy to harp on about it.

Meanwhile Mick McCormick continued to wield his axe in cavalier fashion, turning in a customary commanding performance. The veteran swatted, swung and swirled his way to a

furious 40 as retirement beckoned. He wouldn't be allowed the luxury of cooling down though, returning to carry his bat as Graham Buck (0) was caught and bowled, while Munden failed to add before popping up to mid-off, and finally Andrew Dunn (1) had his pegs skittled, all at the hands of Wyong's quiet achiever, the big Slominsky. His neat spell really tied their bowling together.

There was always that nagging feeling that a bungled total after such a positive start meant we had left at least another 20-odd crucial runs on the field rather than add them to the book. The docile Baker Park deck, more placid than Ban Ki Moon on Zoloft, would remain hard to score on but an extra hour of breeze and sun tends to give the chasing team a bit more roll for the red. Wyong's batters found the fence more frequently than their C.C.N.S.W counterparts and used the conditions as they always do, to their advantage.

The Blues couldn't aim up early with Wyong's openers escaping to post 39 for the first wicket, despite a series of false strokes and lucky escapes. But C.C.N.S.W kept things tight and the pressure would tell, with opener Mackeson involved in two run-outs. When Mick McCormick (9-1-24-3) chimed in with the first of his three big scalps, removing the big-hitting Westwood, Wyong were 3-51 and in some bother.

Then Mackeson himself became the Blues third run-out victim and Wyong had slumped to be 4-52. But Brennan had his eye in at the other end and his classy retirement knock steadied the Central Coasties, propelling them towards the Blues' modest 141 run target.

Andrew Dunn (9-0-27-0), Graham Buck (8-2-28-0), and John Munden (6-0-32-0) all toiled stoically in the heat, giving a good account of themselves and forcing the Wyong bats to chance their arm or manufacture quick singles. But it was a late brace of wickets from Dave Benson (6-0-23-2) which provided a glimmer of hope for a late steal by the visitors. In the end, tail enders Kavanagh and Bennett saw Wyong home but not before some nerve-jangling moments against a fast-finishing Blues side.

An inept catching performance by C.C.N.S.W to match the batting collapse saw eight chances grassed which interrupted any momentum created by the good, tight bowling on offer. As disappointing as that was, it has to be said most were less than straight-forward chances. But the Blues will have to do far better next time before the drought can end.

**The Team was:** - Mick Weaver (12); Mike Pinter (6); John Munden (40); Craig Somers (21); Mick McCormick (41\*); Dave Benson (2); Brett Favell (12); Terry Pontikos (0); Peter Gordon (2); Graham Buck (0); Andrew Dunn (1)

**The Result was:** -

**C.C.N.S.W.:** - 10- 141 (38.0 overs) (M. McCormick 41\*; J. Munden 40)

**Lost to**

**Wyong CC:** - 8- 142 (38.0 overs) (M. McCormick 3-24)

**By 2 wickets.**

**FOW:** 6 (M. Pinter) 48 (M. Weaver) 96 (C. Somers) 98 (D. Benson) 125 (B. Favell) 126 (T. Pontikos) 134 (P. Gordon) 135 (G. Buck) 136 (J. Munden) 141 (A. Dunn)

**The Bowling was:** - G. Buck 8-2-28-0; A. Dunn 9-0-27-0; M. McCormick 9-1-24-3; J. Munden 6-0-32-0; C. Somers 1-0-4-0; D. Benson 6-0-23-2.

**The Fielding was:** - 1 catch to each of B. Favell (w), M. Pinter and M. Weaver

**Player points:** - M. McCormick 3; J. Munden 2; C. Somers 1

## **MASTERS ROUND 3 v GEORGES RIVER AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY NOVEMBER 1, 2015: REPORT BY MICK McCORMICK**

The early morning of Sunday the 1st of November had been characterised by many of the Masters players having trick or treated or watched the ocular dysfunction of the officials in the world cup rugby final. A slight haziness pervaded the dressing room.

We lost the toss and were surprisingly sent in on a "John Lee special", the surface hard and even. Opener Mick Weaver was in a tizz about the ban on ground parking so in protest decided to reschedule the start of the game. When he finally emerged from hibernation it was clear that the council officialdom was clouding his mind. Unfortunately facing his first ball he got a rap on the pads playing well forward. The wicketkeeper appealed and jumped around like a lice infested chimpanzee resulting in the umpire belatedly raising the elongated digit to send him on his way.

Craig Somers opened his score with two well timed pulls to the leg side for four, but then in an act of cricketing zealotry, he called for a quick single, tight in any form of cricket. A bewildered John Munden watched the carnage from the safety of his crease as the Hari Kari unfolded. Mick McCormick, still putting his pads on, was summoned to the centre. He may as well have left the pads off, first ball a thick snick to the bucket hands of the first slip fieldsman who swallowed the sharp chance.

John Munden watched from the other end with bemused concern as Mick Pinter got an in - swinging dipper that crashed into his stumps. It was not a day for the Michaels. The three Masters' Micks had reminded the scorers of the Emergency telephone number to dial. Triple zero did need to be called, as the score line was definitely an emergency at 4 for 14.

It was then that John Munden, showing the consistency of Richie McCaw's barber, buckled down to the task, patiently building his innings. He was joined by Brett Favell looking to possess the number six spot. This was to be a treat as Brett unleashed his power to all sections of the ground including smashing sixes into the grandstand and beyond. He quickly reached his forty retired.

John Munden who had played the perfect rescue role increased his tempo and also retired after a finely constructed innings. Jim Hadley relished the trueness of the pitch smacked some pure off drives speedily to the boundary before unluckily getting caught at point, to the relief of the opposition off spinner whose figures had stratified.

Peter Gordon and Dave Benson continued to pile on the runs, Dave Benson in good touch, timing many shots to the boundary. When Pete Gordon went lbw, captain Gary James joined Benson and continued the pace of run accumulation attempting to burn off some of the extra buffet meals of his recent cruise.

A bizarre run out was narrowly avoided when both players were running to the same end.....TWICE. Firstly in tandem to the wicketkeeper's end, then simultaneously turning, racing each other side by side back to the bowler's end. At the bowler's end the chaos was farcical, as an agglomeration of pads, bats, bowler's arms and two batsmen fought over possession of the crease, flaying about in some form of cricket twister. The ball pin-balled off various limbs, the fielding side flummoxing in all the confusion. Faced with sharing the same crease as his captain, Dave Benson wisely and quickly retreated to the other end like a scolded dog, successfully outrunning the bowler's limp throw to the keeper. The crowd and fielding side joined in appreciating the comedic skills of this modern day Laurel and Hardy.

Dave Benson then retired, importantly placing three in the bank. Gary James continued an invaluable innings of 31, not showing any hint that it was his first hit of the season. Two late run-outs chasing runs, provided the opportunity for Brett Favell to return to the crease. Brett continued to plunder, finishing on 73\*, which would be close to a record score for a

C.C.N.S.W. Masters player in a Masters game. John Munden deserved a not out against his name but got stumped in the final balls chasing quick runs.

Final score 231 a tremendous recovery from the despairing 4 for 14.

After what was a more bountiful afternoon tea than usual, the clouds gathered ominously in the distance. Graham Buck chose the wind assisting end as Jim Hadley plied his leggies into the breeze. Missy Higgins would describe Graham Buck's third ball as "peachy" as the opener was comprehensively bowled. Perfect start. Jim Hadley with the ball on a string tempted and teased the batsman until the number three inexplicably padded up with no shot. The umpire had no hesitation in punishing the batsman's idiocy.

The Georges River team was undefeated in the previous season only to lose in the final game to Mosman. The batting depth became evident as some of the former Grade players showed their class and composure and punished even good balls to the boundary. Unlike the previous game, shots in the air were minimal. Andrew Dunn did a calf gasket in his second over to no longer take part in proceedings. Gary James relieved Jim and got a wicket first ball as the batsman rashly rushed down the wicket, missed the ball, with Brett Favell efficiently completing the stumping. Mick McCormick could not penetrate on the even pitch as the fast outfield was utilised by the cutting and dabbing of the Georges River's batsmen.

With a couple of their class batsmen in the bank and only four wickets down it was still an interesting game with twelve overs to go. The run rate arithmetic was close between the teams as the thunderstorm threatened, though still some distance away. C.C.N.S.W. needed a couple of miserly overs to get back in front on the run rate equation. Unfortunately nothing scrooge like eventuated.....before a strike of lightning, closer to Georges River than Camperdown, prompted the umpire to chaperone the players from the ground.

Georges River was ahead on run rate. Losing half an hour meant eight overs were lost and under the "Masters mathematical mantra" Georges River only needed 12 runs from four overs should the game recommence, a peccadillo of the Masters wet weather rules which heavily favours the team batting second. However the rain set in and the adjustment didn't matter; the game was won on run rate by Georges River.

In the end it was an encouraging result against a quality side after the disastrous start. The ground fielding was way short of the capability of the team and some committed efforts from Peter Gorton in the field hopefully has set the tone for the next few games. A tough one next game against the new team Campbelltown who rolled Mosman for 81, a shock for the ages.

**The Team was:** - Mike Weaver 0; Craig Somers 8; John Munden 45; Mick McCormick 0; Mike Pinter 0; Brett Favell (w) 73\*; Dave Benson 43; Jim Hadley 12; Peter Gordon 4; Gary James (c) 31; Graham Buck 6; and Andrew Dunn dnb (injured)

**The Result was:** -

**C.C.N.S.W.:** - 9-231 (B Favell 73\*; J. Munden 45; D. Benson 43) (40 overs)

**Lost to**

**Georges River C.C.:** - 4-174 (27.4 Overs)

**On run rate** (rain)

**FOW:** - 8 (M. Weaver) 8 (C. Somers) 10 (M. McCormick) 14 (M. Pinter) 110 (J. Hadley) 120 (P. Gordon) 181 (G. Buck) 206 (G. James) 228 (J. Munden)

**The Bowling was:** - G. Buck 6-0-27-1; J. Hadley 7-0-43-1; G. James 8.4-1-55-2; A. Dunn 1.4-0-15-0; M. Weaver 0.2-0-5-0; M. McCormick 4-0-29-0

**The Fielding was:** - B. Favell (w) 1 catch; 1 stumping; G. James 1 catch

**Player Points:** - 3 points to B. Favell; 2 points to G. James: 1 point to J. Munden

**MASTERS ROUND 4 v CAMPBELLTOWN-CAMDEN AT RABY OVAL No. 3, CAMPBELLTOWN ON SUNDAY NOVEMBER 15, 2015**

Game cancelled by rain.

**MASTERS ROUND 5 v MOSMAN C.C. AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY NOVEMBER 29, 2015: REPORT BY DAVID BENSON**

The weather this particular Sunday morning looked threatening, so we were all pleased that on arrival at Camperdown, the sun poked its head through the clouds and we were able to get all 65 overs in? Whilst the outfield at Camperdown resembled a wombat with mange, of perhaps Tommy Robertson's chest hair, we all agreed that Camperdown was a 250 plus deck and having won the toss Tom Robertson and Mick Weaver strode to the middle with this target in mind.

Robertson took to the task and started dispatching the opening pair of Harvey-Pack and Bradshaw to the boundaries, a good start. Weaver however at the other end resembled a large chook scratching around and picking up the occasional single. Robertson's fire brand of an innings came to an end in the 9<sup>th</sup> over, bowled off his pads, C.C.N.S.W. 1-47. John Munden in good form came in next but along with Weaver, faced accurate, good length bowling with John being caught at second slip in the 13<sup>th</sup> over trying to increase the run rate, C.C.N.S.W. 2-59.

Sam Millar came in next but again found scoring difficult as Mosman continued to bowl tight overs. Shortly thereafter Mick Weaver's stoic innings of 12 from 36 deliveries came to an end, bowled by Adlam in the 14<sup>th</sup> over.

After a good start the run rate had slowed and we were in a little trouble at 3-65 in the 14<sup>th</sup>. We did however bat deep and we had some big hitters in the side, including Brett Favell, the next man in. Fav's was coming off the back of a 73\* the previous week and was looking good early on at the crease. Just as the boys were starting to build a good partnership however, Favell got a peach from Hutchinson, caught behind in the 19<sup>th</sup> over, 4-89. Drinks were taken.

Unfortunately shortly after the drinks break, Sam was adjudged LBW, 5-102 after 22 overs and C.C.N.S.W. now requiring a middle order revival.

Mick McCormack already at the wicket was then joined by Mike Pinter and the Mick and Mike show got underway. McCormick after a watchful start, began playing some wonderful cricket strokes getting full value for shots on the lightning fast Camperdown outfield. His playing partner Pinter started to show what everyone had been lead to believe: - the guy is actually a good bat.

At this stage my records of the remaining innings are somewhat sketchy as Ed Smith had obviously been tasked with something else other than scoring, thanks Ed for up till now.

Suffice to say McCormick carried on to construct a retiring 40\*, Benson came and went without troubling anyone, bowled by Harvey-Pack, whilst Pinter continued with classic stroke play building a late order much needed run feast with Ed Smith until finally falling on 23, caught off the bowling of Frost in the deep.

Ed was then joined by skipper Garry James and with mature heads and a willingness to work the ball around to collect valuable runs, took the total to 8-182 in the 37<sup>th</sup> over, when the quick singles caught up with Ed and he was unfortunately run out.

Graham Buck joined James and continued to push hitting a couple of quick boundaries until James fell caught of the bowling of Bradshaw for 16 in the 39<sup>th</sup> over. This wicket brought the retired McCormick back to the crease but Mick was bowled of the second last ball of the innings. C.C.N.S.W. all out for 192 in the 39<sup>th</sup>.

A huddle at lunch, again a great spread provided by the team, we knew that disciplined bowling supported by a strong fielding performance was absolutely required if we were to have a chance against a strong Mosman batting line up.

On writing this report it's obvious that Mosman don't possess a scribe of Ed Smith's calibre, which in some ways is probably a blessing as I'm sure none of the boys would like to live through a ball by ball account of the next 24.4 overs.

Ed Smith opened up the bowling, started and finishing a fine spell with figures of 0-26 off 5.4 overs, the pick of the bowlers.

Not a lot can be said for the rest of the bowlers. With both Mosman openers, Taylor and Guthrie retiring and their number three Hutchinson looking very comfortable, it took the second over of James to provide the breakthrough.

Having bowled a tight first over 1-0-1-0, James was looking to repeat in his second. A bloke by the name of Adlam at the crease however had other ideas. Adlam dispatching the first delivery for four had James reorganizing; unfortunately James was restricted to placing his field within the boundaries.

The next three deliveries went over the fence. James would have his man however on the fifth delivery when Adlam skied a high ball too deep mid-wicket. To James's dismay however the fielder in the deep was Benson, whom he had witness put a bag of catches down at the luncheon break. He need not worry as the boundary riding Benson took the catch, James 2-0-27-1, Mosman 1-114 in the 15<sup>th</sup> over.

Mosman had obviously decided that they wanted the runs chased down in the least amount of overs as possible and in the next 9.4 overs they achieved this. Along the way however James picked up a further three wickets, with one being a fine outfield catch by Robertson. Mosman's innings however finished as it had started with a boundary.

On a positive note we won the toss.

Thank you to Ed Smith and Tom Robertson for their involvement in the day, I don't think they were left in any doubt as to the quality of the upper tier Masters competition.

**The Team was:** - Mike Weaver 12; Tom Robertson 30, John Munden 4; Sam Millar 15, Brett Favell (w) 18; Mick McCormick 40; Mike Pinter 23; David Benson 0; Edward Smith 10; Garry James (c) 16 : Graham. Buck 5\*

**The Result was:** -

**C.C.N.S.W.:** - 10-192 (39.3 overs) (M. McCormick 40)

**Lost to**

**Mosman CC:** - 5-194 (23.3 overs)

**By 5 wickets**

**FOW:** - 1-47 (T. Robertson) 2-59 (M. Weaver) 3-59 (J. Munden) 4-88 (B. Favell) 5-102 (S. Millar) 6-159 (D. Benson) 7-160 (M. Pinter) 8-184 (G. James) 9-192 (M. McCormick) 10-192 (E. Smith)

**The Bowling was:** - E. Smith 6-0-26-0; G. Buck 3-0-30-0; M. McCormick 3-0-24-0; M. Weaver 2-0-19-0; G. James 6-0-58-4; D.. Benson 5-0-33-1

**The Fielding was:** - 1 catch to each of D. Benson and T. Robertson

**Player Points:** - 3 points to M. McCormick; 2 points to T. Robertson; 1 point to M. Pinter

## **MASTERS ROUND 6 v COLLAROY PLATEAU C.C. AT GRAHAM RESERVE, MANLY ON SUNDAY DECEMBER 13, 2015: REPORT BY MICK McCORMICK**

It was a perfect day for cricket. A slight breeze wafting in from the Pacific. LM Graham Reserve was a different sight to behold than previous outings, with massive cyclone fencing encasing the Oval, reminiscent of the perimeter of the domain for a Mumford and Son outdoor concert. The new Aquatic centre now dominated the eastern side of the Ground with its imposing elongated, white shoebox design unlikely to take out any architectural awards.

We lost the toss and Collaroy sensibly decided to bat on a hard track with the fast outfield denuded of its covering for an imminent re-turf. We opened with Graham Buck and newcomer Lee Witherden. The opening batsmen were aggressive, hitting through the ball whenever slightly loose. Lee bowled a good line and length with a couple of edges failing to find hands. Dale Richards bowled an accurate and tight spell but couldn't get a breakthrough. Mick McCormick strayed on to the leg stump too often and leg side 'hoiks' went to the square leg boundary. Jim Hadley pulled up lame in his first over with a "string" injury, depleting the bowling stocks at an inopportune stage of the game. Garry James got a breakthrough on his first ball utilising a perfect breeze for flight and drift. He initially kept it tight but in the latter overs the batsman, with the comfort of men in the bank, took more risks and amplified the run rate.

Jonathon Seifman's first game of the season saw him slot into the bowling role like a debit card into an ATM as though he had been playing every game. He bowled accurately and was unlucky not to be rewarded with a number of wickets. John Munden also bowled accurately without luck as the latter batsman took more risks with the ball in the air continually evading the fieldsman. The runs accumulated for a good total of 250.

We needed our batsman to fire to chase down this total. There were no excuses with the fast outfield and good wicket. The bowling was accurate but not menacing. Craig Somers started off well, hitting some sweet boundaries and in fine touch. A cover drive misfield led to Craig calling Mick Weaver for a single, whereupon the 16 year old (allowed to play) with an elastic arm, picked up the ball and surgically swathed it over the stumps catching a hesitating Weaver short. No Masters fieldsman would have orchestrated that run out.

John Munden unfortunately middled his first ball, low and hard to square leg, who plucked a nice catch....."Trouble at Mill!" Craig Somers with a new stance on off stump, left his leg stump exposed like a petrol bowser in a bushfire, to see it pronated by a sharp ball on his pads. New recruit Lee Witherden took to the task and put away a number of loose balls aggressively to the boundary unfortunately he got a snick behind to depart for a well compiled 36 just short of bankability. Shortly after, Mick McCormick on 25 flicked loose fragments of the pitch in unison with the ball closely passing the outside edge. Only hot spot would have saved him from the umpire's eager digit.

The lack of banked batsman did not help Brett Favell relax. He mistimed a drive to be caught at mid-off. 'Jonno' Seifman played some aggressive shots with a memorable crack over long on for six for a quick 21. Dale Richards copped the worst lbw decision of the season so far, getting hit almost on the hip and being adjudged out. Garry James put a few away before

missing one. Graham Buck was disappointed not to take advantage of plenty of remaining overs. Jim Hadley, restricted with a hamstring strain, did not bat and we finished with a disappointing 118 for 9. A couple of bats in the bank would have made a difference as with any Masters game, but we squandered the opportunity on a lifeless pitch and fast outfield. "Men in Bank" is the key area for an improved showing in the New Year.

**The Team was:-** Craig Somers 19; Mick Weaver 8; John Munden 0; Lee Witherden 36; Mick McCormick 25; Brett Favell (w) 3; Jonathon Seifman 21; Garry James(c) 5; Dale Richards 5; Graham Buck 0\*; Jim Hadley (injured), d.n.b.

**The Result was: -**

**Collaroy Plateau: - 4-255 (40 overs)**

**Defeated**

**C.C.N.S.W.: - 10-118 (23.1 overs)** (L. Witherden 36)

**By 137 runs.**

**F.O.W. :** - 1-24, 2-24, 3-28,4-85,5-85,6-91,7-112,8-118,9-118; 10-118

**The Bowling was:** - G. Buck 5-0-25-0; L. Witherden 9-0-50-1 ; D. Richards 5-0-22-0; G. James 9-0-57-2 M. McCormick 3-0-28-0; J. Hadley 0.5-0-5-0 0-5; J. Seifman 6-0-32-1 J. Munden 3-0-25-0.

**The Fielding was:** - 1 catch to M. Weaver

**The Player points were:** - 3 points to L. Witherden; 2 points to J. Seifman; 1 point to G. James

### **MASTERS ROUND 7 v SRI LANKA LIONS AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY JANUARY 10, 2016: REPORT BY MICK WEAVER**

A champion team never loses its resolve. This quality has been clearly evident with the Masters team this season.

As I begin to write this match report, I reflect on not so much the result of this match against the Sri Lankan Lions, but on the character that this team continues to display, through what continues to be a testing season. When the Masters lads were assembling last Sunday at the home of cricket in Sydney's Inner West, Camperdown Oval, the many regular and keen onlookers would have been able to sense an air of new hope for the team's fortunes for the coming year. And having got to know some of the lads, I am sure that personal New Year's resolutions and goals have been set by each. For this, I thank everyone, in advance, for the individual goals and targets set, that will be achieved - in the next four games. Cheers!

Skipper Gary James won the toss and elected to take first use of the excellent batting conditions.

The responsibility to open was shared between myself and the great English import, John Munden. In the absence of the vastly experienced Craig Somers (please come back Craig, I will shout you your match fee), we were able to get off to a solid start against some persistent opening bowling from the Sri Lankans, who made us work very hard in the first ten. I was able to negotiate the left arm slinger, while John used all his experience to safely see off the new ball at the other end. I would like to pay credit to John for his thoughtful, but minimal words, to me between overs.



Also many thanks to Skipper James for his persistent ball by ball verbal coaching, directed to me from the strategically taken position of 'first up' square leg umpire. Garry left me in no doubt that I could not afford to be dismissed early. A seasoned campaigner for 37 years of (predominately higher) Grade cricket, Garry demonstrated his abilities as a very effective mentor and coach, driven to get results out of players under his authority. It is clear why he was head hunted by the Hawkesbury Cricket Club around turn of the millennium to 'arrest' (suitable word) the performance of their third grade team and the first to fifth group in general, at a time of greatest need. As this club was almost expelled from the Sydney Grade competition, he was, with two other men, considered the best that the Hawks were very fortunate to recruit. They have since survived and it's no wonder. So sincere thanks again Skip.

John Munden batted solidly through the first crucial overs and was surprisingly dismissed lbw, attempting a sweep off a straight full ball, during the first over from the Lankan spin attack. Fifteen innings runs accredited to his name doesn't reflect its true worth - one or two superbly spanked drives were unfortunately hit straight to the Sri Lankan fieldsman, who always maintained a high standard, yielding no runs.

1-46. Enter the rising star of Masters cricket, Zimbabwean born Regan Smith. I said hello to Regan as he reached the crease, as it was the first time I had seen him that day and I had not even been aware he was in the team. Sheer weight of runs for the club in City and Suburban cricket had obviously given the selectors no option but to continue to seek his services. Regan went about his business in such an expert manner that I didn't think much mid wicket chat between overs was required, so I didn't speak to him much. While we were both successfully negotiating the probing spin attack, I was fortunate enough to reach retirement mark of 41 runs. It wasn't my best innings, as it included some fortunate moments. On the positive side, one earlier cover drive for four, off the opening bowler, left me totally satisfied that my new \$650 bat, purchased from Kingsgrove Sports (past and hopefully future club sponsor - Harry Solomon please read this), was worth every cent.

My exit gave way to another relative new comer, all-rounder Lee Witherden. Lee struggled a little bit, in this particular innings, against the spin and never really got going before he was bowled by a crafty quicker delivery from the left arm orthodox. He remains a promising option for the remaining fixtures.

At 2-89 Mick McCormick entered the fray and sensibly played second fiddle to the industrious Smith, now in full flight. A chanceless innings, Regan countered all of the bowlers with ease. With men stationed at different points around the boundary, Regan was still able to strike 4 superb fours, one a very strong flick off the pads that clattered, once bounce, into the backward square fence on the 'Newtown' side of the ground, which brought up his retirement mark. Although I believe the highlight of his innings was an intelligent 'lap' sweep to fine leg, off the spinner, which brought three runs. This shot has never before been seen, by myself at least, in Masters Cricket.

Brett Favell then came to the wicket after Regan's imminent retirement (also at 41 runs) and with Mick carried on to build a very nice partnership. Mick again playing a support role, perhaps not by design, but with simply no choice as Favell tore into the attack. Six brutal fours and two massive sixes, were each brilliantly timed in the man's unique nonchalant style. It was exactly what skipper James would have wished at this point of the innings, as further acceleration had been required. Having chosen the aerial route as a way to counter the boundary riders, Favell came and went in just a handful of overs. At a huge strike rate, he was also forced to stop batting at 44 runs, after his last delivery faced was effortlessly deposited over midwicket, high up and deep into the grandstand on the 'childrens playground' or 'cement tank' side.

3-170 with three retired. All rounder Dave Benson was next in, under strict instructions to go after the bowling a.s.a.p. Not wanting to let the Skipper down, or let the team wait for any explosive action, Benno charged his second or third delivery and unfortunately skied a catch.

This after pushing a single straight up, to ensure there was no 'duck' on the score sheet. Dave's intent for the good of the team, in all facets, is very pleasing.

Now deep into the last ten overs, Mike Pinter joined Mick and again put on a nice partnership. With quick runs required, 'Punter' played a very handy knock of 15 off as many or less balls, smartly pushing twos when hitting to the outfield, although thoroughly testing the fitness of his partner McCormick in the process. His short but neat innings included a nicely struck slog sweep to the far boundary.

4-194 with Pinter gone and this proved to be the last wicket to fall, with McCormick (28\*) and new bat Peter Gordon (14\*) seeing out the remaining three or four overs. Gordon managed two 4 fours to greatly help the cause, with both men unable to clear the fence while Sri Lanka now maximized the number of fence patrollers. Mick batted really solidly, as he has consistently all season, hitting a number of excellent on drives. His tactic of waiting for the ball to clout for a maximum, rather than continue running twos, was thwarted by several very good yorker length balls, delivered by the Lankan bowlers at the death.

So 4- 216 after 40 overs was a good score, against a persistent attack, backed up by some reliable fielding, from the opposition.

Skipper James seemed buoyant at the break. Whether it was because of runs on the board, or due to the bountiful amount of chicken sandwiches on offer at tea (*"This is the best spread this season"*) is a matter of some conjecture. I suspected it was a combination of both.

Garry's joy was short lived however as Sri Lanka were able to dominate 'The Cricketers' opening attack very early after resumption. The Lions' opener scored a very quick fire 40, countering Graham Buck's efforts to get the ball to swing, with several well timed drives. Unfortunately an early straight forward chance from our other opening bowler Lee Witherden's full delivery was not able to be accepted, and this proved crucial. Rather than being one or two down for not many, The Lions moved to 1-80 with one in the shed and only after just ten or so overs. To our credit, we continued to fight and Skipper James led the way using all his guile, inspiring vocally as well. With a little more fortune, more wickets could have eventuated and several other chances were grassed at important times, after pressure had been built up.

As stated, opening pair, Graham Buck and Lee Witherden, were subjected to some very aggressive, somewhat risky batting from the start and were never allowed to settle into a rhythm. Both tried very hard in conditions suited to the batters. Graham was struggling with injury. Mick McCormick was hit out of the attack when replacing Buck, so the skipper then turned to the mediums of Regan Smith, continuing from the Northern 'Statue' end to partner the persevering Witherden. Lee returned figures of 2-49 off seven overs, with Garry replacing him from the Southern 'Cafe' end. Lee never gave up and will be a handy bowler in other games when the wicket is not so flat.

Garry used the assisting breeze nicely and extracted a fair bit of drift and turn. The Sri Lankan batsmen went into their shell a little bit as a result. They mixed watchful, sometimes timid defence with daring and improvised attacking strokes to relieve the pressure built up. Garry and Regan each grabbed a wicket, while the runs continued to flow, despite several other near chances. In a desperate attempt to stop the onslaught and pick up wickets, and with his own spell completed, Captain James summoned the wily Munden (2-24). In tandem with the very useful Benson, pressure was brought onto the Lions with some very intelligent bowling by both men. Unfortunately another couple of chances were missed and although under pressure at the closing stages, Sri Lanka were able to see off the win with some overs to spare.

There were periods during the Lankan innings where The Cricketers' Club was getting on top, despite the early rush of runs. Gents please keep this in the memory bank for next game. This match was there to be taken at some stage.

Brett Favell did a great job keeping wicket and never gave up trying to lift the team at difficult points.

Mike Pinter and Dave Benson excelled in the outfield with swift direct running to cut off the ball, combined with strong accurate returns to the stumps or keeper. One throw from the outfield by Benson hit the stumps directly, resulting in a strong appeal for run out. This was turned down by the Sri Lankan team's square leg stand-in official.

In summary it was an encouraging performance with the bat and if the catches are able to stick, I see success for the Masters in the coming games. Especially when you consider we are missing club stalwarts Craig Somers and Jim Hadley. Their experience and talent is greatly missed.

A champion team never loses its resolve. This quality has been clearly evident with the Masters team this season.

See you next match, injury free !

**The Team was:** - John Munden 15, Mick Weaver 41\* ret; Regan Smith 41\* ret; Lee Witherden 6, Mick McCormick 26\*; Brett Favell 44\* ret; Dave Benson 1; Mick Pinter 15, Peter Gordon 14\*; Garry James dnb and Graham Buck dnb

**The Result was:** -

**C.C.N.S.W.:** 4-217 (40 overs) (B. Favell 44\*; R. Smith 41\*; M. Weaver 41\*)

**Lost to**

**Sri Lanka Lions 6-219** (37.4 overs)

**By 4 wickets**

**FOW:-** 1- 46 (J. Munden); 2-89 (L. Witherden); 3-170 (D. Benson); and 4-194 (M. Pinter)

**The Bowling was:** - G. Buck 4-0-20-0; L. Witherden 7-0-49-2; M. McCormick 2-0-23-0; G. James 9-0-43-1; R. Smith 5-0-26-1; D. Benson 5-0-27-1 and J. Munden 5-0-24-0

**The Fielding was:** - B. Favell 1 stumping and 1 catch; R. Smith 1 catch

**Player Points:** - B. Favell 3; R. Smith 2; M. Weaver 1

### **MASTERS ROUND 8 v MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY JANUARY 24, 2016: REPORT BY MICK McCORMICK**

The clouds and humidity enveloped Camperdown park as the players inspected the well grassed strip closest to the shortly to be demolished concrete bunker.

Mick McCormick won the toss in the absence of injured Garry James and took a gamble that the pitch would have settled down after a game the day before and batted. Mick Weaver was due to get to the ground at 10.30 to assist in cleaning the sheds allowing him to set a first for the season arriving "early" for the game. He did arrive finally at 12 noon and achieved the early arrival status for the game but late status for the clean-up. He opened the batting with Dave Benson who successfully lobbied for promotion up the order.

The pitch had settled with a little ball movement in the humid conditions. Weaver went for 7 driving in the air to mid-off. Dave Benson shortly followed for 11. Enter the dragon slayer, Regan Smith, keen to add some runs on the holiday weekend. He started solidly playing

some fine drives and punishing anything slightly short. John Munden got an unlucky LBW decision early with doubts about kindling being involved. Mick McCormick went early catching a wayward full toss on the splice to lamely lob to midwicket for 5.

In form pounder Brett Favell came to the crease and proceeded to play his aggressive style. He had a bit of luck with two early skiers being turfed by the Macquarie fielders. He made them pay getting into stride and forming a valuable partnership with Regan Smith. Both retired into the bank.

Mick Pinter joined newcomer Steve Beck who didn't get too much time to show his class getting a frustratingly high LBW decision from the overly officious finger raiser. Punter and other newcomer Rich Bryant savoured the conditions both timing the ball well and setting a sizzling pace as they peppered the boundaries. Rich went for 20 followed by Mick Pinter on 30. Both valuable contributions. Lee Witherden was gracious accepting number 10 as a spot in spite of his skills and scores this season. It was a luxury for the captain to have such a depth of batting in this game. Graham Buck hit a cut shot in the air straight to point.

Lee and returning Regan Smith then went about utilising the last 10 overs in a match winning partnership, both punished the bowling with one over going for 20 from Regan a highlight of the match. The youngish legs also saw some excellent running between wickets. Lee went to a spectacular diving catch at backward point for 15. Brett Favell returned with three overs to go. It was a perfectly timed ending as both productively used the remaining overs (including an all run 4) to push the score to a recent record of 9-246.

Regan Smith finished on a C.C.N.S.W. Masters record of 88\* surpassing Brett Favell's 78 earlier in the year. Brett also remained undefeated on 50\*.

The "architecturally challenged" red brick canteen hosted its last afternoon tea for the Masters before it ends up in landfill. No more difficulties trying to negotiate cups of tea under the metal bars of the caged window.

Lee Witherden opened up the bowling getting onto a good length and seeing two balls rise sharply unsettling the batsman who was then caught plum as a ball skidded low into his pads. Graham Buck bowled with a breeze pushing the ball across the batsman. Early on he got a solid nick that just flicked John Munden's valiant dive at first slip. He then picked up the opener LBW.

The solid Macquarie opener at the other end took a toll on anything pitched up. Rich Bryant bowled with a light breeze across the right hand batsman and was getting some youthful zip off the pitch. He bowled the Macquarie number 4 with a fine ball. In his third over having just put in a second slip a thick edge stuck in the grateful paw of Mick McCormick as he flung himself to the right. Another nice edge later unfortunately went to ground. Rich's first up pace and accuracy was highly encouraging, though some more slips practice may be needed to reap all the benefits. Rich picked up a third wicket caught at Short Square and ended with great figures of 3-15 from 5 overs.

Mick McCormick kept the ball on the off side to reduce the run rate as good fielding kept the batsman frustrated. He picked up a caught behind in his 4<sup>th</sup> over and almost lost his specs and head as he slipped on his follow through into the path of a low catchable drive smashed aggressively back at him. In 'self-preservation' mode he just managed to get his hands to the ball before it made a nasty cranial indent.

Steve Beck came on for his first bowl of the season with his off spin. He settled into rhythm and was rewarded with a wicket. John Munden then bowled well in his spell. Regan Smith had a couple of good overs followed by Dave Benson who struggled to get his length. Lee Witherden completed his second spell picking up two more wickets while Graham Buck closed out the innings.

Some excellent fielding by the boundary riders particularly Dave Benson, Steve Beck, Mick Pinter and Regan Smith. Mick Weaver's soccer skills were reminiscent of the legendary George Best (after he had been in the pub for twelve hours).

A special thanks to Brett Favell for his help in cleaning out the gear and kits under the grandstand in the early morning and for throwing out all the 1980s gear that had been inexplicably hoarded. Also thanks to Mick Pinter and Lee Witherden for staying back after the game and dragging the covers up the hill to the rotunda.

Off to the green fields of Kenthurst next game with a view to putting back to back wins together. A fine victory and a solid team effort with a noticeable improvement in the fielding.

**The Team was:** - Dave Benson 11; Mike Weaver 7; Regan Smith 88\*; John Munden 0; Mick McCormick (c) 5; Brett Favell (w) 50\*; Mike Pinter 30; Steve Beck 1; Richard Bryant 20; Lee Witherden 15; Graham Buck 2

**The Result was:** -

**C.C.N.S.W.:** - 9-246 (40 overs) (R. Smith 88\*; B Favell 50\*)

**Defeated**

**Macquarie University:** - 10-198 (35.5 overs)

**By 48 runs**

**FOW:** 1-19 (D. Benson) 2-31 (M. Weaver) 3-31 (J. Munden) 4-55 (M. McCormick) 5-125 (S. Beck) 6-156 (R. Bryant) 7-164 (M. Pinter) 8-167 (G. Buck) 9-210 (L. Witherden)

**The Bowling was:** - L. Witherden 9-0-45-3 ; G. Buck 7-0-43-2; R. Bryant 5-0-13-3 ; M. McCormick 6-0-25-1 ; S. Beck 3-0-18-1 ; R. Smith 2-0-10-0 ; D. Benson 1-0-15-0 and J. Munden 3-0-19-0

**The Fielding was:** - 1 catch to each of B. Favell (w) ; M. McCormick and R. Smith

**Player points:** - 3 Regan Smith; 2 Brett Favell; 1 Lee Witherden

**MASTERS ROUND 9 v KENTHURST C.C. AT KENTHURST OVAL,  
KENTHURST ON SUNDAY FEBRUARY 7, 2016: REPORT BY MIKE  
WEAVER**

**HEADLINE: MICK McCORMICK'S MEN MESMERISE WITH MASTERS' MAGIC TO MURDER KENTHURST!**

**Toss won by Cricketers' Club**

The Cricketers' Club Masters team has extended its winning streak to two with an emphatic victory over a Kenthurst side, who were playing in their own backyard, although admittedly decimated with injury.

Nevertheless, it was an important win for this team, who are determined to save face from a disappointing season. The result rockets Cricketers' Club to 11th on the table and hope remains that the team will stay in the 'top tier' at season's end.

**The story:**

Mick McCormick won the toss, having arrived at the ground to find all his troops in good order, warming up in earnest on the bark covered practice nets. There has never been any lack of attitude with this group, and that remains a possible comparative advantage compared to other clubs for the final fixtures of the season.

Mike Weaver (45) opened the batting with all-rounder Lee Witherden (18), this tactic designed to ensure a solid start with a fast run rate. Despite the ultra-slow outfield, Lee contributed most of the 25 run opening partnership, in good time. His brief cameo innings included a well struck maximum, well into the trees over long on off the opening bowler. It ended with a mistimed shot for a catch, the batsman blaming the indifferent sweet spot of his bat, rather than the actual shot. So another member of this Club is expected to bring business to former club sponsor Kingsgrove Sports (Again, Harry Solomons, please read this)

The very popular Englishman, John Munden (1) was at first drop, intent on consolidation. However while attempting a second run on his first scoring shot, he was comprehensively run out. It was very disappointing for 'Big John' to miss out on a score with a soft dismissal second game running, but it served as a warning for the rest of the team, not to underestimate the slowness of the outfield, which had greatly assisted the fielder in his pursuit and return of the ball. 2-26.

Mike Pinter (5) joined Weaver and 16 runs were added with both players watchful, before 'Punter' received arguably the best delivery of the match with a ball that seamed back off the deck, to bowl him between bat and pad. 3- 43.

Mick McCormick (5) then put on 17 runs with Weaver, his runs being scored in a similar fashion to his predecessor, before he was also bowled between bat and pad. The nature of his dismissal was not similar, however. Impatient with the slow *'dibbly dobbler'*, Mick attempted to smash the ball into orbit, which resulted in his lifting his head on the shot just before intended impact. 4 - 63.

Brett Favell (41) then combined with 'Weaves' in what proved to be a match winning partnership. Favell quickly overtook Weaver's score, moving into the twenties after only 3 to 4 overs at the crease. He countered the slow outfield by smashing anything even just short, powerfully over the infield. Fav's innings included three well placed fours and three booming sixes. He also provided extra value in keeping Weaver on track to reach retirement score 40, emphasising in mid-wicket conferences the need to *'just bat to drinks'* and to *'just bat to add another 20 runs to the score'*. i.e. segmenting the task at hand. Brett Favell is the consummate Masters Professional. This is proven.

While both Weaver and Favell were forced to retire when passing 40 runs score, Richard Bryant (15) and Peter Gordon (8) both played handy innings. Bryant cracked two fours and Gordon one. It must be emphasised that there was great difficulty scoring runs with ground strokes. As such, both players were dismissed attempting to hit over the top. Rich was first, caught. 5 for 121. Some time later, Peter was bowled.

In between, Garry James (4) and Graham Buck (2) came and went cheaply. 6-133, 7-141. Peter Gordon's dismissal left the Cricketers at 8-141.

Suddenly there was only the injured Jim Hadley (5\*) left to bat with retirees Weaver and Favell, with several overs remaining. To his great credit, Jim hung around to support, and cracked a superb lofted straight drive to the boundary in the process. Both Weaver and Favell failed to add significantly to the cause, on resuming their innings, Weaver bowled by a curve ball from one of three youngsters Kenthurst deployed in the match, Favell caught on the fence. I believe the inclusion of the young Kenthurst cricketers was to keep the average age of their team closer to 40, rather than 50!

So 151 all out off 35.1 overs was a good score, considering the very slow outfield. The only negative being that the full 40 overs were not played out.

The second stanza of the match saw the best bowling and fielding effort of the season from the Cricketers' Club. The bowlers had confidence due to some slight assistance in the wicket, together with the natural protection provided by the slow outfield. They were able to bowl tightly to plans and fields set accordingly, with the exception, in part, of opening bowler Richard Bryant (0-13, 3 overs). Rich bowled a very fiery opening spell to a plan which served to 'soften up' the opening batsman, but also involved delivering three wides. He was replaced by the reliable Mick McCormick (1-14 off 7). Lee Witherden (2-14 off 6) bowled superbly with the new ball. He was well backed up with the variable pace of Graham Buck (1-12 off 5).

The innings was finished off by the two most experienced cricketers in the Masters' line-up, Garry James (3-14 off 3.4) and Jim Hadley (0-17 off 3). Garry used all his familiar guile to grab three quick final wickets. Jim bowled very well without picking up a wicket, but effected a very smart run out. Kenthurst were forced to close their innings at 8-86, with two players unable to keep batting due to injury.

However it was a very dominant performance by the Cricketers' Club. Of the five catching opportunities that eventuated, all were accepted, with each chance taken exceptional. Special mention to Brett Favell (wicket keeping catch diving back the other way to take inside edge), Mike Weaver (took a 'skier' at long off); John Munden (sharp catch to his right at second slip); Lee Witherden (running catch to accept flat drive to mid off), and Peter Gordon (back pedaling catch over his head at point).

All bowlers did their job, supported in the field. It was a great team performance.

Next match is against Roseville Navy. Lookout, Sailor!

See you next game.

**The Team was:** - Mike Weaver 45; Lee Witherden 18, John Munden 1, Mike Pinter 5. Mick McCormick 5, Brett Favell (w) 41, Richard Bryant 15, Peter Gordon 8, Garry James (c) 4, Graham Buck 2, Jim Hadley 6\*

**The Result was:** -

**C.C.N.S.W.:** - 10-151 (35.1 overs) (M. Weaver 45; B. Favell 41)

**Defeated**

**Kenthurst C.C.:** 10-86 (27.4 overs) (G. James 3-18)

**By 65 runs**

**FOW:** 1-25 (L. Witherden); 2- 26 (J. Munden); 3-43 (M. Pinter); 4-63 (M. McCormick); 5-121 (R. Bryant); 6-133 (G. James); 7-141 (G. Buck); 8-141 (P. Gordon); 9-146 (M. Weaver); 10-151 (B. Favell)

**The Bowling was:** - L. Witherden 6-1-14-2; R. Bryant 3-0-13-1; M. McCormick 7-2-14-1; G Buck 5-1-12-1; G. James 3.4-0-14-3; J. Hadley 3-0-17-0

**The Fielding was:** - 1 catch to each of M. Weaver; B. Favell (w); J. Hadley, J. Munden and P. Gordon

**Player Points:** - 3 points to M. Weaver; 2 points to B. Favell; one point to L. Witherden

**MASTERS ROUND 10 v ROSEVILLE NAVY AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL,  
CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY FEBRUARY 21, 2016: REPORT BY MIKE  
WEAVER**

## **NAVY NAVIGATE, CRICKETERS CAPITULATE, IN CHOPPY SEAS...**

The Masters of NSW Cricket(ers) Club's winning momentum has been temporarily put on hold by a very well organised Roseville Navy last Sunday, at the spiritual home of (local, at least) cricket, Camperdown.

Due to a wet pitch, the start time was put back and overs reduced to 32 a side. Batting was to be a 'little tricky on the sticky' - a drying surface.

A loss is never the most fun and yet always there is an opportunity to learn, which one never ceases to do playing this fine game.

And, all credit to 'The Navy', who demonstrated that encountering indifferent conditions still requires an organised and planned approach, even when initial plans have to be tinkered with. As a stark contrast the Cricketers' Club resembled just a collective mob. Two players not able to commit to a full game. One starting and leaving later, the other arriving mid innings, to be almost thrown straight into bowling. I stress, this is not criticism of any individuals involved, as I admire their commitment to balance other priorities, for the good of the team. It was simply a contributing factor as to why Roseville prevailed comfortably, when on reflection the contest could have been very closely fought.

On arriving to the ground and seeing the wet pitch, there was a mixed reaction by the home players. Some wanted to agree with the umpire's first thoughts and call the match off. One suggested a move to synthetic turf wicket venue. Another suggested a 'warm up' at the nearby Camperdown Hotel, until conditions improved. Two others, respectively, would have had thoughts about getting to a wedding function in ample time, and of celebrating his son's birthday, as a justifiable alternative. And the majority, myself included, preferred to negatively focus on the non covering of the pitch by the C&S boys the evening previous, as a reason for the pitch predicament.

Yet, when it came down to it, the most keen to play were the opposition and the belatedly arriving skipper James, who expertly predicted the pitch would be playable after an hour or so's continued sunny, breezy weather. This turned out to be exactly correct.

Roseville won the toss and wisely elected to bat, as any score posted above 100 would prove difficult to chase. Graham Buck (7-0-39-3) and Mick McCormick (7-0-31-2) took the new ball, under the great expectations of the Skipper for early breakthroughs. Unfortunately both Graham and Mick struggled to get their line and length quickly, and this is where, ultimately, the match was won and lost, as Roseville were able to compile 30 or so runs before they could realise that batting was difficult against certain well pitched deliveries.

Growing impatient after just three overs from the northern end, Garry James (7-0-21-3) replaced 'Bucky' (who later redeemed his captain's faith with an excellent second spell, more on that later). The seasoned policeman immediately dropped into a line and length, overpitching only once from my memory and extracting considerable loop and turn. With McCormick not subject as much to his opening bowling partner's fate, due to a pre-arranged plan to bowl until Lee Witherden was due to arrive to take part, the tide changed.

After the Roseville opener Russell had retired for a relatively brisk 42\*, Mick picked up the number 3 caught at midwicket by the safe Steve Beck. This triggered a mini collapse with James having the number 4, 5 and 6 Roseville bats guessing. Three very well flighted deliveries induced a bowled, stumped (Favell) and caught at mid on (Weaver) to reduce Roseville to 4 for 60 odd. With McCormick spelled after his 7 overs and Witherden still not available to take part, Mike Weaver (4-1-10-1) was summoned to continue in the same vein until Lee arrived. Able to meet his first challenge of not being taken off after one over, 'Weaves' gained confidence with the helpful track and was able to keep the runs down for a further two sets of six from the southern end, going close, but not picking up a wicket in this short spell.



Roseville continued to fight back against the ensuing bowling of Witherden (3-0-22-0), who took over from Weaver. They also nullified the threat, in the conditions, of Steve Beck (2-0-18-0) and John Munden (2-1-10-0) both of whom, in turn, had replaced Garry at the end of his 7 over allowance. A chance was dropped during these spells, and another life was given as Buck was brought back into the fray, for a role in which he has now become familiar. Undeterred and using a controlled mix of full balls and clever slower deliveries, Graham collected three very good scalps, having the persevering Roseville opener caught by Michael Pinter for 15 and the returning retiree caught smartly by the same man, for little addition to the score. This in addition to the dangerous number 8, who mistimed a shot for an opportunity accepted by 'keeper Favell, restricting this batter's score to 23 runs when more looked likely. Unfortunately the Cricketers had been unable to prevent some lusty hitting by Roseville no. 7 Harry, who remained 52\*. Weaver managed a wicket, a cheap wicket at the death, returning for the penultimate over. Excellent catching from Michael Pinter was also a feature of this final phase, with Navy accumulating 8-156 from the 32 overs.

So it was a fair bowling and fielding performance overall, but not to the level that the C.C.N.S.W. Masters needed to be, or indeed were capable of. Strictly in hindsight, it would have been beneficial if the Cricketers were as keen to commence the game, as much as their opponents and their captain obviously were. This is a lesson to be learnt for coming situations. The time prior to start could have been utilised with bowlers and fieldsmen alike warming up and being more switched on in general. This is not to blame any one individual. And it is something to take away from this game and apply the lesson learnt, positively, next time. As I know we will.

Chasing a difficult score, C.C.N.S.W. got off to a disastrous start with opener Weaver (3) succumbing to a top edged pull shot, first slip running back to accept a fine catch. The indifferent bounce contributed to the dismissal, although the shot type was attempted a little hastily, it could be argued. Undaunted, *'self promoted due to circumstance'* no. 3 Dave Benson (27) knuckled down against some very persistent Navy Bowling. With *'I've got to get to the wedding reception, if I can't get to the wedding'* McCormick (8) looking to attack at every opportunity, the second wicket partnership needed substance. After smashing two fours, Mick unfortunately fell lbw, his gamble to open not coming off.

From then on, The Cricketers were not really in the hunt, as all Roseville bowlers executed consistently well in the very helpful conditions, taking all their catches. Steve Beck (1), John Munden (3) and Brett Favell (4) all fell to unintentionally lifted shots. John was the most unfortunate, square leg taking a 'screamer' at backward square leg. It was just as the big Englishmen was looking reasonably comfortable, batting in conditions that would have been somewhat familiar to him. 5-36

With most of the top order skittled, Craig Somers (15) persevered along with a fighting *'Benno'* to bring the score to 52. Dave's plucky innings, which featured 3 boundaries and dogged defence, then ended to a caught at the wicket, from a ball seaming and lifting off the deck. It was a dismissal no fault of his own. Craig played some very nice on-drives in his return match for the Club after a break and he will be hoping to build on this performance in the next game.

With pressure mounting to lift the run rate, Mike Pinter (3) was unluckily caught and Craig was bowled with a ball that did a lot off the track, to reduce the score to a non-rectifiable 8-72. On a positive ending note, Lee Witherden (12) played a typically enterprising short knock, crashing two fours, with second top scorer Peter Gordon (24), to help the total to three figures. Peter demonstrated that playing as late as possible was a sensible way to scoring runs, with several nice glides behind point yielding 4 boundaries. The fact that sundries amounted to just one leg bye, shows that the opposition bowlers were really on their game and with the conditions not the best, C.C.N.S.W. should not be too critical of their batting in this match.

So congratulations to Roseville. C.C.N.S.W. are again left to reflect on what might have been! Lessons learnt, see you for the final Masters' season fixture!

**The Team was:** - Mike Weaver 3; Mick McCormick 8; David Benson 27; Steve Beck 1; John Munden 3; Brett Favell (w) 4; Craig Somers 15. Mike Pinter 3, Lee Witherden 12; Peter Gordon 21; Graham Buck 1; Garry James (c) dnb

**The Result was:** -

**Roseville Navy C.C.:** - 8-156 (32 overs) (G. Buck 3-39)

**Defeated**

**C.C.N.S.W.:** - 10-100 (31 overs)

**By 56 runs**

**FOW:** - 3 (M. Weaver) 19 (M. McCormick) 20 (S. Beck) 32 (J. Munden) 36 (B. Favell) 52 (D Benson) 62 (M. Pinter) 72 (C. Somers) 81 (L. Witherden) 100 (P. Gordon)

**The Bowling was:** - G. Buck 7-0-39-3; M. McCormick 7-0-31-2; G. James 7-0-21-3; M. Weaver 4-1-10-1; J. Munden 2-1-10-0; L. Witherden 3-0-22-0; S. Beck 2-0-18-0

**The Fielding was:** - 3 catches to M. Pinter; 1 catch to each of S. Beck; B Favell and M. Weaver; 1 stumping B. Favell

**Player Points:** - . 3 to G. James; 2 to G. Buck; 1 to P. Gordon

**MASTERS ROUND 11 v OLD IGNATIANS AT RIVERVIEW COLLEGE,  
LONGUEVILLE ON SUNDAY MARCH 6, 2016: REPORT BY MIKE  
WEAVER**

**'ASHES TO ASHES, DUST TO DUST, IF YOUR OPPONENT OR UMPIRE DOESN'T GET YOU, AN INJURY MUST' - Season Defined In Loss To Old Boys.**

All hopes of ending the regular season with a victory for C.C.N.S.W. were dashed on Sunday, as injury played its cruel part.

The day began with 9 full club members, and 2 C.C.N.S.W. cricketers yet to be formally registered, arriving well prior to start time, ready and keen to operate as a cohesive cricketing unit. With them was one self designated C.C.N.S.W. manager/match fees collector, determined not to be required to take part on the field, so as to nurse his broken right little pinky finger. He was also very focused on keeping a perfect scorebook for the team. Sadly, he was unable to achieve either goal.

The cunning captain Garry James had no hesitation in batting on the hard grassy but flat strip, having taken into account the hot conditions and noting that the opposition had just nine players arrived, closer to scheduled commencement. The timing of the won toss was illegal, according to the arriving umpire, who had not been present to witness the flip. Nevertheless the decision stood and Old Ignatians took to their task without complaint.

What was to follow was nothing short of a captain's cricketing nightmare. It was as well this was the last fixture of the regular season. For Garry may need all of the winter to erase it from his memory, at least the opening scene.

Firstly, crack English former minor county batsman, John Munden, tore a calf muscle, overexerting himself in the pre-game hit up. Wretched fortune for 'Big John', as it has unhappily been for a fair part of his campaign this summer.

Then, after just one over, the score was C.C.N.S.W. 3 for none. Yes, that's right you read correctly. Three out for zero, after the first six. Not six overs, the first six balls. Craig Somers

was the first. Adjudged lbw with just the one sighter, the batsman claimed profusely afterward that he had edged the ball into the pad. The Umpire's view was polarisingly different. Mick McCormick was forced to come to the crease a lot earlier than he could imagine just ten minutes or so prior, with the batting order so hastily re-shuffled. A very late in-swinging delivery at a good pace had the unsuspecting stock analyst- come business lecturer trapped lbw for a golden duck.

Mike Pinter then desperately tried to see off the opening over so he could have a few words with chief witness, opener/ non-striker Steve Beck, to investigate, in tandem, as to what was really going on. The opportunity for this support was not granted however, as Old Ignatians' Reddacliff then shattered 'Punter's' castle, with his last delivery cutting back between bat and pad.

Credit to the bowler who delivered left hand inswinging slingers accurately and at a very decent clip, right from his first effort. It had definitely ambushed the C.C.N.S.W. troops.

In that frantic six minutes, the mood had changed dramatically in the Cricketers' camp, from somewhat jovial to very sombre. Craig had conveyed to all that it was near impossible for the C.C.N.S.W. Classics team to be prevented their maiden premiership for the club, unless they were to be dismissed for less than 20 runs in next week's finale. A message to any Classics player reading this, for the good of us all, please don't predict your outcome!

The nerveless Brett Favell then sauntered to the crease to join the now very serious Beck. Both played defensively for two or three overs to stop the carnage, before 'Fav's' did what he knows how to best, attack the attack. His breezy 19 included one four and a customary six, straight back over the opening bowler Calloway's head. This effectively forced a change in the bowling, at least at one end. Unfortunately Brett then got a bit too greedy, having eyed the largely vacant leg side field, and skied a catch. 4-24.

It was left to the two new late season recruits, Steve Beck and Richard Bryant, along with the very handy all-rounder Dave Benson, to retrieve the situation for the 'Baggy Blues'. All showed their fighting qualities which will continue to typify this club in future seasons. Steve worked hard to see off the opening threat, demonstrating solid defence and a calming influence, his innings blossoming with some powerful drives and cuts. He hit three fours with several other well struck shots finding fieldsman, before surprisingly being adjudged caught behind for 30. It was a very encouraging performance, auguring well for the future. 'Benno' 24, played his usual creative knock, before losing a little discipline, to be stumped for 24. High credit to Dave for combining very well with both Steve and Richard to lift the team's innings out of the mire. 6-85

With Mike Weaver relieved of his scoring duty and summoned to the crease for the team cause, hopes were raised of a decent lower order display and of posting a more than competitive score. What ensued was not immediately in line with the leadership team's expectations. 'Weaves' lasted little more than an over and a half, before his gingerly, lightly finger gripped blade was hung out to dry for a catch to the keeper, his score just 2. This in addition to the extra one run he had found for Favell, while in the scoring box. His moral total contribution of 3 runs was not to prove crucial in the final outcome of the match. Persistence was clearly demonstrated off the paddock though, in correcting the book for the missed score, as teammates Benson and Buck could testify (Many thanks to accountant Mike Pinter for his expert assistance in this matter, cheers)

So it was left to the skipper Garry James to mount a resurgence, with Richard Bryant, in a sterling partnership of 64 runs. It was Garry's best innings of the season, craftily nudging the ball into gaps and through the vacant slips. There were also three well hit boundaries, one a cracking square drive off the dangerous Reddacliff, returning for the final overs. Richard, playing against the team of his old school, showed his motivation, striking two 4s along with 3 huge maximums, two in succession. Both men looked set to reach 40. But just as talk began in the rooms of records for the eighth wicket, Garry lofted a catch. 8-152.

The innings then ended almost as quickly as it started, Bryant was caught behind for his final score of 39 runs, attempting to smash the spinner. Graham Buck was then needlessly run out for the Cricketers' fourth team duck, leaving Dale Richards stranded on 1\*. Last three wickets for 2 runs, 2.4 overs left. A great fight-back to post 154, unfortunately no retirements prevented a better total that was to prove necessary.

Satisfied with posting a score after a disastrous start, all team mates took the field after tea with a sufficient degree of confidence, except for Weaver, who experimented for a time with wearing a batting glove for protection, umpire and opposition captain approved. Despite their best efforts, The Cricketers were not able to get the breakthroughs required, as the opposition's opener and No. three batsman were both able to retire after reaching 40 runs, despite some anxious moments for each of them. This meant that the second wicket did not come until the score was 112.

Graham Buck, 1-12 off six overs, showed a much improved effort with the new ball, trapping one of the openers lbw. It seemed most bowlers could not decide how best to bowl on the pitch, which was a little different to others experienced during the season. It was grassy and fast, however deliveries to extract pace were well dealt with well by the home side, who showed their familiarity with the home track.

Garry James, 0-34 off nine, tried hard as usual. I don't think the track really suited spin, although there was a freshening breeze later in the afternoon that assisted his efforts. A clear but difficult stumping chance was missed off his bowling, with the ball zipping off the deck. Another stumping effort was contentiously given not out.

Richard Bryant was possibly the pick of the bowlers. 3-36 off 8 overs, after an indifferent first spell with the new ball, completed a very fine match for him, despite the loss. He is a great find for the club. This spirited three wicket second spell by 'Richo' revived genuine hope of victory. The Skipper rang the changes well using Mick McCormick 0-36 off 7.4, Dave Benson, 0-18 off 3 and Dale Richards, 0-16 off 3 to varying degrees. Mick had one or two closes lbw appeals turned down, which could have been a turning point to fortunes. Dale (or possibly Garry, I can't remember) had a catch put down off his bowling at fine leg. The culprit was Weaver, who was most disappointed, despite a possible reasonable excuse of a broken finger.

The total was reached 4 wickets down by the Old Boys in the 38th over. Thanks to St Ignatians for the game and for the excellent tea. Well played.

After the match a lot talk was positive about next season and what we want to achieve and with a new captain informally announced, John Munden. Thanks to John for staying on with his bandaged leg, until the end, completing my scoring duties. Congratulations to Garry James for leading the team with great spirit. There were injuries affecting players this game and several other key players throughout the season, at crucial times.

So... I think a focus could be on fitness, in preparation for next season, perhaps to be lead by Garry. I believe with Police Academy boot camp type training with associated appropriate 'Sergeant' style directive leadership, the C.C.N.S.W. Masters squad could present, come October this year, as the hardest fit over forties line-up in cricket history.

See ya all at the C&S challenge match. Congratulations to the Classics squad for their great season. Best wishes for a great day this Sunday, should see you there. Thanks to Classics players and regular C&S players such as Tommy Robertson, Ed and Regan Smith, who helped us out against some tough opposition, on occasions.

To the C&S boys, congratulations as well on a great season and commiserations on losing the final of Jack Pace Shiled.

And to Ed's team for March 20th - 'Ashes to Ashes...Dust to Dust, if the Knox boys don't get ya, the Masters must !!

**The Team was:** - Mike Pinter 0; Craig Somers 0 ; Steve Beck 30; Mick McCormick 0; Brett Favell (w) 19; David Benson 24; Richard Bryant 39; Mike Weaver 2; Garry James (c) 31; Dale Richards 1\*; and Graham Buck 0

**The Result was:** -

**C.C.N.S.W.:** - 10- 154 (37.2 overs) (R. Bryant 39; G. James 31; S. Beck 30) (37.2 overs)

**Lost to**

**Old Ignatians:** - 4-155 (37.4 overs) (R. Bryant 3-36) (37.4 overs)

**By 6 wickets**

**F.o.W.:** - 1- 0 (M. Pinter) 2-0 (M. McCormick) 3- 0 (C. Somers) 4- 24 (B. Favell) 5- 64 (S. Beck) 6- 85 (D. Benson) 7-88 (M. Weaver) 8-152 (G. James) 9-153 (R. Bryant) 10-154 (G. Buck)

**The Bowling was:** - R, Bryant 8-0-36-3; G. Buck 6-4-12-1; M. McCormick 7.4-0-36-0; G. James 9-0-34-0; D. Benson 3-0-18-0 and D. Richards 3-0-16-0

**The Fielding was:** -1 catch to G. James

**Player Points:** - 3 points to R. Bryant; 2 points to D. Benson; 1 point to S. Beck;

## Sydney Masters Cricket Association - Sydney Masters Over 40's 2015-2016 Final League Table

### Sydney Masters Cricket Association

RANK	TEAM	P	BYE	W	D	L	WKTS LOST	RUNS FOR	WKTS TAKEN	RUNS AGST	POINTS
1	Campbelltown Camden	11	0	9	1	1	62	1529	86	1005	384.45
2	Mosman	11	0	8	2	1	64	1525	88	1315	365.25
3	Collaroy Plateau	11	0	8	2	1	54	1131	61	848	352.55
4	Roseville Navy	11	0	7	1	3	85	1712	96	1218	336.60
5	Warringah	10	1	7	3	0	42	753	57	737	324.65
6	Epping	10	1	5	2	3	56	1200	74	1217	293.00
7	Sri Lanka Lions	10	1	5	1	4	72	1567	65	1627	290.35
8	Georges River	11	0	5	4	2	49	1104	66	1151	285.20
9	Burwood Briars	10	1	4	3	3	49	829	63	829	257.45
10	Old Ignatians	10	1	4	1	5	70	1288	62	1294	249.40
11	Macquarie University	11	0	4	1	6	67	1233	68	1411	248.65
12	Lindfield	10	1	3	2	5	76	1090	56	1094	225.50
13	Roseville White	10	1	3	1	6	73	1016	70	1243	220.80
14	<b>Cricketers Club of NSW</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>1550</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>1579</b>	<b>206.50</b>
15	Lane Cove White	10	1	2	1	7	84	1250	53	1424	195.50
16	Ryde Hunters Hill	10	1	1	4	5	50	611	37	638	177.55
17	Kenthurst Upper Hills	10	1	1	3	6	47	746	41	908	168.30
18	Wyong	10	1	1	3	6	38	454	33	575	145.70
19	Lane Cove Blue	11	0	0	3	8	68	873	53	1348	141.65
20	North West Sydney	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00

Last re-calculated: Mar 9, 2016 3:24AM (local time)