

MATCH REPORTS MASTERS

SEASON 2016-2017

MASTERS ROUND 1 v RYDE-HUNTERS HILL PIRATES AT CAMPERDOWN PARK, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 25, 2016: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

At an 'all but' renovated Camperdown Oval, C.C.N.S.W. embarked on a new Masters season with a washout against the Pirates of Ryde Hunters Hill. As a campaign opener – me hearties – this game was not your typical fare. The field had taken a fair dousing overnight and the Blues did not have things all their own way for the entire afternoon in the tar-like pitch conditions. The Blues did however spend the bulk of the innings with Ryde Hunters Hill either at cutlass-point or walking the plank, after John Munden won the toss and opted to use ball and musket.

The Blues' new ball combination of Lee Witherden (6-0-11-2) and Graham Buck (5-1-16-1) set the tone early for a dominant team performance which was only knocked off kilter after the first rain stoppage. The match began late and was abbreviated to 32 overs per side once play started. Witherden and Buck bowled tight lines from the commencement and it was Lee who struck early to trap a peg-legged Williams on the crease for 1.

Le Fevre followed soon after, popping up to Mark Delaney off Buck and at 2-11, Ryde were indeed suffering from 'Dry Belly Ache', more commonly known as lead poisoning to non land-lubbers. Two pieces of remarkable fielding were to follow to euthanize the RHH top order.

When Garry James (5-1-23-1) thrust aloft a drowning left hand to snare Liyanage at square leg during Witherden's withering opening spell, the Blues could have been excused for their 'Delirium Tremens' (hallucinations brought on by alcohol), with RHH rolling all over the deck at 3-13.

And batsmen were to continue falling like drunken sailors. A stabilizing 4th-wicket partnership by Denina and Arambewela saw RHH to 41 but that's where the visiting Armada was ambushed to lose 5 wickets for 7 runs in a feverish spell of mayhem with lead ball on plank.

The carnage was triggered by Steve Beck's brilliant work from gully which was more than just a warning shot across the bow of Ryde Hunters Hill. Ooh Arrrrghh me maties! It was a direct hit from a dropped and parried Arambewela's edge to first slip from Mick McCormick's (4-0-13-0) bowling. Steve was all over the crumbs like seagull shit on a sea wall and threw the stumps down to restrict Arambewela's lucky reprieve to three seconds.

The Pirates lost the eyes of their batting in a powerful Blue squall which saw the impressive Richard Bryant (5-2-18-3) powder keg Ryde Hunters Hill's middle-order with good straight fast bowling. His haul of three barrels wasn't exactly Red Rackham's treasure but it was good enough to see the opposition to 'can't win' status at 7-48. After Garry James chimed in to cleaned up Millard's mainsail, the Pirates were in a stupor at 8-48. The Cricketers' Club bowling attack had fired well with solid contributions from Mark Delaney (4-1-9-0) and Mick McCormick who toiled manfully for little Spanish gold.

Cue the rain delay and upon resumption some 25 minutes later the Pirates took advantage of the slippery conditions with some lusty hitting taking their score to 8-94, within two overs of the 32-over-per-team limit when a storm battered the good ship C.C.N.S.W. for a second and final stoppage. An

early tea was taken but the game never resumed. The Cricketers' Club was spared a tricky run-chase that never the less felt a highly gettable score with the chance to claim full points taken away by fickle elemental forces.

A meritorious eye-patch must go to Peter Hall who kept an incredibly tidy wicket in testing underfoot conditions. Hally skittled himself about with abandon, making a handful of great leg-side run-saves and blowing out his family's dry-cleaning budget in a single session, throwing down the gauntlet to regular custodian Brett 'Mr Favellous' Favell in the process. The points may have been ultimately split but the Blue flag of the Cricketers' Club fluttered proudly at full mast on the reclaimed Camperdown Island ... er, Oval.

The Team was (playing 12): - Mike Pinter; John Munden (c); Craig Somers; Mick McCormick; Steve Beck; Peter Hall (w); Terry Pontikos; Garry James; Lee Witherden; Richard Bryant; Graham Buck; and Mark Delaney

The Result was: - Match Drawn (Rain stopped play)

Ryde Hunters Hill Pirates: - 8-94 (29.0 overs)

Drew with

C.C.N.S.W.: - Did not bat

FoW (Ryde): - 2 (B. Williams) 11 (N.P. Le Fevre) 13 (R. Liyanage) 41 (C. Arambewela) 42 (R. Denina) 42 (L.P. Fanto) 48 (.P Davis) 48 (S.P. Millard)

The Bowling was: - G. Buck 5-1-16-1; L. Witherden 6-0-11-2; M. McCormick 4-0-13-0; R. Bryant 5-2-18-3; G. James 5-1-23-1; and M. Delaney 4-1-9-0

The Fielding was: 1 catch to each of G. Buck, M. Delaney and G. James

1 run out to S. Beck

Player points: - 3 to R. Bryant; 2 to S Beck; 1 to L. Witherden

MASTERS ROUND 2 v ROSEVILLE WHITE AT ROSEVILLE PARK, ROSEVILLE CHASE ON SUNDAY 16 OCTOBER 2016: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

"Blues run red-hot in confidence-building win over Roseville"

The C.C.N.S.W. Masters team powered to its first win of the season with a clinical performance against Roseville White that was never in doubt from the first over of the match. The Blues were invited to bowl first on a green-tinged deck which gave true hope to bowlers. C.C.N.S.W. struck an early telling blow when Dave Benson's (9-3-25-1) second ball of the day landed in Stephen King's 'Dead Zone', vaporizing any bounce – the pill grubbing into Lloyd's pads to leave Roseville shocked at 1-4.

Benson's over was a wicket maiden, one of three maidens in a metronomic display of wicket-to-wicket seam bowling where nothing was given freely and the erogenous zones of the pitch were explored to pleasing effect. His spell got the Blues off to the start it craved and backed by brave fielding, runs for Roseville were at a premium.

At the other end, Graham Buck (4-0-13-0) produced some good early swing as the Whites tried to grind towards a platform of runs that would never quite be within grasp. The redoubtable Richard

Bryant (6-1-9-2) was injected and from the outset his firebrand bounce and pace troubled the Whites. After a series of probing zingers outside off which didn't quite force the batsmen to tango, Rich landed the perfect length, extracting some juicy fruit plus Bosomsworth's edge which thwacked into Brett Favell's trusty right mitt behind the wicket. After a period of stabilization, albeit under a timid scoring rate, Roseville had the early yips at 2-35 from 15 overs.

Richie's bowling style, which is best described as 'full-blooded' or some might insist, 'angry', belies his mild, good-natured demeanor. These comparisons also run contrary to the fact he'd start at unbackable odds to win any Stuart MacGill look-a-like contest. But there's no wrist nor red wine and Dutch cheese for the Blues' newest pace man, though 'Magilla' could be a prosperous nickname, moving forward. Rich is your archetypal beer-and-cigarettes quick and his sheer pace at this level is proving a wonderful asset for the C.C.N.S.W Masters team already.

It was soon apparent the mossy look of the wicket was a bigger hoax than a south coast clown invasion, the wicket as dead as MySpace – save for one or two moist spots of nourishment. But there would be turn. When Whites' captain Corrigan ventured in and took the long handle, Garry James (5-0-37-1) met the challenge head on but was unable to halt the flow of runs or make a wicket-taking statement on Roseville's senior order bats.

Corrigan planted his front foot and swung crazily at James as he and Ventura added Roseville's most fulfilling partnership of 36 for the third wicket. He enjoyed a life mid-innings when a skied false shot off Garry James thwarted a catching opportunity to deep mid-on – a costly slip. Ventura's patience was rewarded with a 41* run retirement but this served only to expose new Roseville batsmen after the incumbents had become set. The run-rate never threatened to blow out on the Blues though and once Mick McCormick (7-0-26-3) straightened to strike mid-spell, removing Penrose's poles for 2 after drinks, the Blues were back on top. 3-83

McCormick then planted a fateful blow on the Whites, disturbing the dangerous Corrigan's architecture on 35 and preventing another retirement. James put his shoulder to the wheel to snivel Archer for 2 when the left-hander ballooned an attempted slog for Mike ('Punter') Pinter to pouch at long on. 5-103. When McCormick 'neck and cropped' Duncan to leave Roseville reeling at 6-107 after 29 overs, the Whites innings was in a costlier fix than the timing belt on Gaz's late-90's Commodore.

The Blues with their tails up proceeded to mop up the crumbs of Roseville's innings. This featured the superb run out of Cooper from the cannon-balling arm of David Benson on the deep cover boundary plus Jim Hadley's (3-1-4-2) ripping late-order double strike, the latter which put paid to Ventura's comeback, out stumped after only four added runs. Roseville were clobbered for 115, a chase the Blues knew would be simple enough as long as their batsmen did not wilt in the warm October sun.

The Blues' fielding was a joy to behold. What has traditionally been the team Achilles heel is slowly and methodically being transformed into strength with debutant Derek ('Dexter') Wintle, Benson, Pinter and Somers leaving plenty of skin on Roseville Park to lead the way. 'Mr. Favellous' also starred with the dimpled gloves and a two-catch/run out/stumping haul saw the nuggety custodian feature in four dismissals.

Craig Somers (43*) and Jim Hadley (21) started the chase in calculated fashion. Their combination, although only realising a 24-run partnership, took *'blood from the seed'*, negating the danger from Roseville's opening pair of Corrigan and Cooper who bowled straight and with discipline in the conditions. The Blues' openers were perfect foils for one another. Somers turned and dabbled to build an impressive innings while 'Hads' blasted five pulsating boundaries, seemingly firm in belief of the old adage, *'a quick game is a good game'*. In his haste Jim chased an edge to second slip.

The damage had been done. Pontikos (10) emerged at number three to bore the bowlers senseless, ensuring changes were made and Roseville's rotation moved to its weakest parts. 34 was added for

the second wicket, Craig by this time playing lovely controlled strokes through the on-side vee and behind square. When Pontikos fell forward and was stumped to a looping leg-side custard pie from Ventura, this brought Mike Pinter (8) to the crease with the opportunity to bat the journey with the finishing line in sight.

Alas for Punter, this did not happen as he too fell victim to Ventura's curious blend of flight, dip and fruit salad, skying one to mid off. Somers is a dependable opener capable of great consistency, imperious stroke-play and this was an innings that sampled his entire trademark prowess: patience, discipline and derring-do and saw him retired on 43*.

He was replaced at the crease by Garry James (16*), who wasn't having it all his own way on the day. But in true Gaz style he set about restoring normal programming, swatting his way to the modest victory target with the help of Mick McCormick's (13 *) late cameo. A pleasing win overall which moves the Masters machine into gear and eyeing off bigger races ahead.

The Team was: - - Craig Somers (43*); Jim Hadley (21); Terry Pontikos (10); Mike Pinter (8); Garry James (16*); Mick McCormick (c) (13*); Brett Favell (w) d.n.b.; Richard Bryant d.n.b.; David Benson d.n.b.; Derek Wintle d.n.b.; Graham Buck d.n.b.;

The Result was: -

Roseville White: - 10-115 (34.0 overs)

Lost to

C.C.N.S.W.: - 3-118 (C. Somers 43*) (28.2 overs)

By 7 wickets

FoW: - **(Roseville White):** - 1-4 (Lloyd) 2-35; (Bosomworth); 3-83 (Penrose); 4-91 (Corrigan); 15-03 (Archer); 6-107 (Duncan); 7-107 (Barker); 8-109 (Cooper); 9-110 (Zatz); 10- 115 (Ventura)

FoW: - **(C.C.N.S.W.):** - 1-24 (Hadley) 2-58; (Pontikos); 3-88 (Pinter)

The Bowling was: - G. Buck 4-0-13-0; D. Benson 9-3-25-1; R. Bryant 6-1-9-2; J. Hadley 3-1-4-2; M. McCormick 7-0-26-3; G. James 5-0-37-1

The Fielding was: - 2 catches to Brett Favell (w); One catch to Mike Pinter; One run out David Benson

Player points: - 3 points to C. Somers; 2 points to M. McCormick; 1 point to D. Benson

MASTERS ROUND 3 v LANE COVE WHITE AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 30 OCTOBER, 2016: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

It's Groundhog Day. Cricketers' Club scores with fighting win at Camperdown

When an early season Sunday fixture is set down for Camperdown Oval it always feels like Groundhog Day.

You can usually check your weather app and set your clock to thunderstorms forecast for 3pm onwards after a steamy morning with temps in the high twenties.

Sunday was no different as the Masters team of the Cricketers' Club of New South Wales prepared to tussle with Lane Cove White Cricket Club.

The only difference with the Groundhog Day of silver screen-Bill Murray fame and the one the Blues are accustomed to is the latter normally plays out to the sounds of summer on the car stereo rather than Sonny and Cher, driving angry to Mallett Street. For the sake of argument this correspondent prefers *'Everlong'* by The Foo Fighters as a designated soundtrack.

And the Groundhog never sees his shadow at Camperdown. It's usually a long hot summer ahead. The closest thing we found to *'Punxsutawney Phil'* on Sunday was the ample shade cast by big 'Gazza' James, channeling his inner Margaret Fulton, fussing and fluffing over the Devon and pickle sandwiches like some kind of lunch Nazi. Admonishing early partakers who skimmed a cookie here and a snake there from the platter well before the official adjournment. It was a serious breach of lunch-break protocol and he let them know it.

It's not that the first session failed to keep the attention of onlookers, though it was hardly a feast of adventure. After John Munden won the toss, electing to bat on a violet crumbler, C.C.N.S.W. opening pair Craig Somers (43*) and Mike Pinter (16) worked industriously to build a run platform in careful and concise fashion, negating the direct early examination from Lane Cove's new ball pace pairing.

The pitch was rougher than a dried pineapple and similar in hue. The bounce was not true, rendering any delivery on a decent length in the channel of the stumps worthy of respect and restraint from batsmen. This made scoring difficult and gave the bowlers ideas of containment bowling early on.

That bright red cherry didn't last long, changing into a misshapen pumpkin scone early on which worked in the batsmen's favour when the ball was sent wider or dropped in short. But it wasn't coming on either and that made playing square of the wicket on such a two-pacer harder than the pastry on a cold meat pie. Catch 22.

Somers seemed to extend the confidence in his game shown the previous round to rarely looked troubled, even against the pace of McLeod who was pinging them into the toes of both Blues bats. Craig turned well behind square again to moisten a run rate that was as dry as desiccated coconut at 2 runs per over after the first ten overs.

And it was hard to decide on what a par score would be here. Some thought 180 would take some doing. Certainly it looked that way before drinks for C.C.N.S.W.

At the same time, said platform was being leveled and watered with a first-wicket partnership of 57 in the face of tight lines from Lane Cove, a start the Blues were happy to settle for.

After 'Punter' topped a juicy segment of fruit to cover, this brought Jim Hadley (53*) to the wicket and the promise of a change in tempo. At the other end Somers dug in beautifully, rarely playing falsely whilst scoring regularly throughout a patient, disciplined innings.

'Hads' exploded from the blocks tapping the newly renovated pickets with three brutal blows to race to 19 runs from his first 10 balls faced. The run-rate spiked with Jimmy's sugar hits to appear more energetic. Somers retired for the second time in consecutive matches, another gem of a knock that highlighted his consistency as much as anything else.

This brought skipper John Munden (3) to the crease after a minor re-shuffle gave Hadley early entry to fructose-up the run rate.

'Munds', more than capable of carrying the rate forward quickly appeared to eat a slightly raw decision and was adjudged out, trapped in front. Then in strode everyone's favourite trombonist, Brett Favell (11).

'Favs' found the fence twice with his first two shots but soon after negotiating a series of dots, skied a front edge to point. The Blues were 3-96 from 26 overs and needed to quit 'lollygagging' around.

Enter the waddling 'womble', Mick McCormick (10) who joined Hadley in the centre.

The veteran pair set about addressing the boundary frequency but were pinned down by a bevy of straight-breaking and looping trundlers, with the bad balls becoming harder to dispatch as the pill softened and overs flipped by.

'Hads' hammered his way into retirement with a six and a four that iced a superb layer cake of an innings – plenty of cream on top and filled with a substantive blend of attack and defence. This brought David Benson (3) to the centre.

Mick went after the looping arc of John only to find himself stranded short of safety, stumped – 'gone', as Bill Lawry would say. Richard Bryant put himself on John's Christmas card list by spanking his first ball into the clutches of point for a golden circle.

Terry Pontikos (14) entered the fray with the run rate on pause and Lane Cove sniffing a good result in what was a sticky session in more ways than one. His stay could have been short-lived when he chipped an attempted cut to cover only to see the fielder spill the beans.

Realising that Lane Cove should have been asked more questions of the ones and twos variety, the pair decided to deflect pressure back to the fielding side but 'Benno' banged one down mid-off's throat with the Blues still a half-ton away from a desirable score line. 6-135 after 35 overs.

Pontikos feathered a snick through to the keeper soon after. Lee Witherden (19) then emerged to play a dynamic and much-needed late-innings cameo. Lee spanked a brutal flat six into the mid-wicket hill and accumulated his score in only nine balls.

Garry James (2) only had eyes for the rapidly cooling barbecue chook, holing out to point.

Somers and Hadley re-joined the contest at the last. Assisted by Witherden, the trio rattled the score to decency, calming the Blues but there was nothing sedate about the frenetic finale, Witherden edging to the keeper and Jim belting two booming sixes in the last over to bloat the score to 9-184 from the Blues' allotted 40 sets.

It was fitting so see the two retirees carry their bats. The 'Wizard' and the 'White Pearl' were in sparkling form with their blades, slicing and dicing Lane Cove's otherwise enterprising efforts with the red orb.

Again Groundhog Day bit when Lee Witherden (9-2-30-5) found the early breakthrough with his first delivery, a straight one that kept low trapping Gall on the crease for a golden.

Plummer and Coleman were digging in however. The pair played intelligently and with fight, punishing the bad balls and repelling the goodness in a stand that yielded 63 for Lane Cove's second wicket.

Graham Buck (4-1-15-0) and Witherden were tidy early, swinging the ball both ways but once the pitch cut its teeth into the seed and with accomplished batsmen at the wicket, it was apparent another slow grind would be required for the Blues to pouch the points.

A crucial breakthrough was struck by Richard Bryant (6.3-0-42-4) when fortune smiled on the Blues. Plummer was given out leg before on 26 to a delivery angling well down leg side. It would be the first of an unprecedented seven l.b.w. decisions.

It was that sort of deck with the bounce limbo-ing lower and lower as the day wore on. Gaz remarked that he'd never seen so many leg before decisions in a single innings over his colourful 7,000 + game career.

Jim Hadley (3-0-18-0) and particularly Gary James (4-0-25-0) were unlucky and toiled manfully to stem Lane Cove's progress.

Munden rotated his attack sharply and the quicks were always his 'go-to' men. They didn't disappoint, dismantling Lane Cove between them.

Coleman retired after the innings of the day. A knock of skilful defiance that foiled and impressed the droning Blues team in equal measure.

He had them well on song with the asking rate but after his retirement wickets began to fall regularly and at drinks the Blues felt assured to have the bulk of Lane Cove's batting back in the pavilion. The score was 5- 92 from 20 overs.

There was no sign of the storm but the LB's continued to rain down on Camperdown with Lee Witherden and Richard Bryant trying to out-do one another in a concerto of classy pace bowling.

The extra zip of 'Richo' saw him smoked to the fence on nine occasions but he continued to make crucial breakthroughs with delectable wicket balls in a gutsy spell.

Cove's captain Dyer helped by McLeod led a fight back which put the visitors in the ascendency, by this time in advance of the asking rate and ready for the rain to come. Blue nerves began to jangle, as the realisation a sudden storm would end the contest on run-rate, gifting Lane Cove the match points.

A crucial blow came when Witherden forced the dangerous McLeod to drag one back into his castle. He followed this up with the scalp of the skipper, another paralysing strike to Lane Cove's chances and another huge slice of luck for the Blues. Dyer was given his marching orders, LBW after a stilted appeal to a ball that drew a healthy inside edge. The curse of the Groundhog had struck, Lane Cove were running out of batsmen and praying for the rain to arrive.

'*Witherden*' when pronounced repeatedly and quickly sounds a bit like Sylvester the cat chanting for a copy of world cricket's almanac. His effort on the day was enormous. He refused to give up, tearing in over after over from his first to final delivery for a well-earned "5 for", the Blues' first of the season. The immense pressure applied to Lane Cove was now taking its toll on their lower-order batsmen.

When David Benson (2-0-12-1) chipped in to remove Kingston with his first ball to seemingly snuff out Lane Cove's chances of a late-order fight back, the Blues had finally regained the ascendency. Lane Cove was 8-117 after 24 overs. Well in advance of the ask but fading fast.

John and Manoharan then put on a stubborn 31-run partnership for the ninth wicket to bring Lane Cove's tally to within 40 runs of the victory target. Manoharan tried to bring rain but only found Benno's trusty mitts at square leg from the bowling of a surging Richard Bryant. Lane Cove's last hope was their returning retiree, Coleman.

But it was not to be for the visitors, with Richo drawing another slightly lucky decision to thwart John's heroics, given out lbw for a well-compiled 25 with Coleman stranded not out at the other end.

Another hard-fought victory for C.C.N.S.W. Masters team. Groundhog Day.

The Team was: - Craig Somers 47*; Mike Pinter 16; Jim Hadley 53*; John Munden (c) 3; Mick McCormick 1; Brett Favell (w) 11; David Benson 3; Richard Bryant 0; Terry Pontikos 14; Lee Witherden 19; Garry James 2; Graham Buck (Non-batting 12th-man)

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W. (played 12): - 9-184 (J. Hadley 53*; C. Somers 47*) (40 overs)

Defeated

Lane Cove White: 10-156 (L. Witherden 5-30; R. Bryant 4-42) (29.5 overs)

By 28 runs

FoW (C.C.N.S.W.): - 1-57 (Pinter); 2-84 (Munden); 3-96 (Favell); 4-126 (McCormick); 5-126 (Bryant); 6-132 (Benson); 7-143 (Pontikos); 8-146 (James); 9-170 (Witherden)

FoW (Lane Cove): - 1-0 (Gill) 2-63; (Plummer); 3-67 (Perry); 4-68 (Callahan); 5-87 (McLeod); 6-102 (Dyer); 7-104 (Shaw); 8-111 (Kingston); 9-142 (Manoharan); 10-156 (John)

The Bowling was: - G. Buck 4-1-15-0; L. Witherden 9-2-30-5; J. Hadley 3-0-18-0; R. Bryant 6.5-0-42-4; G. James 4-0-25-0; D. Benson 2-0-12-1; and M. McCormick 1-0-8-0;

The Fielding was: - 1 catch to D. Benson

Player points: - 3 points to L. Witherden; 2 points to C. Somers; 1 point to J. Hadley

MASTERS ROUND 4 v WARRINGAH C.C. AT FRANK GRAY OVAL, CURL CURL ON SUNDAY 13 NOVEMBER , 2016: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

Seifman shines but Blues humbled in the heat by Warringah.

It began in some weirdness. Five burly men with a variety of plump cricket bags in a bench-lined dressing room that was cosier than a Donald Trump slumber party and hotter than his spa at the same soiree. Needless to say the quick kitting-up which would do any Marvel superhero proud wasn't followed by a pre-match pep-talk.

It was 30 degrees in the shade but a cooling sea breeze soon turned into a ferocious westerly gale - inciting some crazed play - unfortunately mostly from within C.C.N.S.W. ranks.

It was more than the collective Sat-Nav fail and night before ground-swap that saw the Blues enter the fray like Brown's cows and play like lost sheep. Complacency reared its ugly head for the first time this season after a couple of good wins had lulled the Masters squad into a false economy of their own worth.

This was a scrap for third position on the ladder, a great opportunity for the Blues to gauge their progress against a more-fancied opponent away from home. In a major setback, Warringah taught the Blues the valuable lesson that winning cricket begins with robust preparation. If not physically then at least mentally.

The nightmare started early and there was no letup. After winning the toss and batting, John Munden

(7) drove and punctuated the field three times before becoming the first casualty, a spooned a catch from Muldoon with the score on 12. Without any addition Mike Pinter (1) tickled one through to the keeper to give Wyatt his first pole.

With Craig Somers (6) and Jim Hadley (18) at the crease, calm was restored but it didn't last too long. 'Hads' freed the shackles with four booming boundaries in another of his now customary brisk starts. But Somers never got going and Wyatt struck again. 3-37.

The Cricketers' Club were in disarray but worse was to follow. Somers' dismissal triggered a middle order meltdown in what appeared to be an audition for places on the national team. With Craig's wicket it's fair to say the team went into panic mode at the prospect of finding a new mainstay to glue the innings together.

The Blues lost Mick McCormick (0) to a feather behind from a perfect leg-cutter from Wyatt. Hadley became the first of three scalps claimed by the leg-spin of Adams, followed by Dave Benson (0) who was trapped leg before first ball by the tweaker. Terry Pontikos (22) negotiated the hat-trick ball with the Blues innings now on life support at 6-37.

Brett Favell (6) thumped a straight boundary from Newman before the bowler refurbished his castle two balls later. Lee Witherden (0) didn't deal with an Isaac Newton-like fruit drop, losing his middle stump to the flighty spinner who was being made to look more like a Murali than a 'Funky' Miller type.

For all intents and purposes at 8-52, the match was effectively over. C.C.N.S.W. had lost 8-40 in one of the most chaotic and self-destructive sessions of batting seen since every Australian Test Match this calendar year. The stage was now set for a tail wag. Jonathan Seifman (43*) did not disappoint.

The *'Tonker from Honkers'* kept it simple as is his usual modus operandi, backing his defence to repel the sugar whilst nourishing the Blues card by sweetly punishing the bad pieces of fruit.

Like many of the Masters' side who enjoy the feeling of plank on pill, Jonno loves nothing more than to give it some serious tap. But on Sunday he showed brains and brawn - digging himself in with good discipline whilst facing 19 balls for his first six runs - before ultimately cutting loose in a wild blaze of boundaries.

A scything square cut was the shot of the day right out of the screws. There was more wood on it than in Ian Allmey's back deck. Jonno was finding the bushes as easily as a Nimbin nudist, striking more fours than the entire Warringah side.

There were eight pickets in his whirlwind knock, as he dragged some respectability from a rampant Warringah side whose bowling was made to look a lot more potent than it really was.

Seifman's retirement came after a flurry of delightful fours within 29 more runs which sizzled from his blade from a further 14 deliveries. Jonno had found his natural rhythm. His innings pepped up a downcast side and at least gave the Blues bowlers a token number to bowl at.

A 61-run partnership for the eighth wicket saved blushes of humiliation but when Pontikos and then

Stuart Ridge (1) both fell to Newman before Jonno could re-start his mincer, C.C.N.S.W. had been dispatched for 126 after 32.5 overs. Not even close to enough runs on what would prove a reasonably batsman-friendly track.

Warringah never looked like missing the modest target set for them. Everything had to go right for the Blues but nothing did. Stuart Ridge (7-1-25-2) and Lee Witherden (7-2-18-0) toiled gamely with the new ball. Ridge struck in the fifth over, removing Dolby for 5, Warringah 1-12.

Graham Buck (7-0-30-1) made it stereophonic breakthroughs with the wicket of Day, caught Hadley for 20. Warringah survived a potential two-wicket turning point when David Benson grassed a sharp chance at short cover from Witherden which was followed soon after by a missed stumping chance from Jim Hadley's bowling.

The moment had passed for an undeserving Blues side who had to suffer the steady process of Warringah's bats reeling in the total with only two further wickets lost, with David Benson (2.2-1-4-1) chiming in with a late pole.

The pick of the bowlers was Stuart Ridge who consistently hit the doily outside off and pressured the batsmen early. All of the other Blue canon-folk bowled well and without much luck but this was a tale about the batsmen failing to produce a total the bowlers could realistically defend.

The Team was (playing 12/batting 11): - John Munden (c) 7, Mike Pinter 1, Craig Somers 6, Jim Hadley 18, Mick McCormick 0, Brett Favell (w) 6, David Benson 0, Terry Pontikos 22, Lee Witherden 0, Jonathan Seifman 44*, Stuart Ridge 1 and Graham Buck dnb

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 10-126 (J. Seifman 44*) (32.5 overs)

Lost to

Warringah C.C.: - 4-127 (31.2 overs)

By 6 wickets.

FoW: - 1-12 (M. Pinter) 2-12 (J. Munden) 3-37 (M. McCormick) 4-37 (C. Somers) 5-37 (J. Hadley) 6-37 (D. Benson) 7-51 (B. Favell) 8-52 (L. Witherden) 9-116 (T. Pontikos) 10-126 (S. Ridge)

The Bowling was: - S. Ridge 7-1-25-2. L. Witherden 7-2-18-0, G. Buck 7-0-30-1, J. Seifman 2-0-12-0, J Hadley 5-0-25-0, M. McCormick 1-0-10-0 and D. Benson 2.2-1-4-1

The Fielding was: - Stumpings: Nil

Catches: One catch to each of G. Buck; J. Hadley, J. Munden and L. Witherden

Run-outs: - Nil

Player Points: - 3 points to Jonathan Seifman; 2 points to Terry Pontikos; 1 point to Stuart Ridge

MASTERS ROUND 5 v BURWOOD C.C. AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL,
CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 27 NOVEMBER, 2016: REPORT BY
MIKE WEAVER

MASTERS STRIKE BACK TO POST SOLID HOME WIN

Back to much improved home conditions at Camperdown, the C.C.N.S.W. Masters have rebounded from the previous disappointing away loss, to Warringah, at Curl Curl. Despite losing Captain John Munden with illness during the lead up days, the lads were able to post a creditable winning performance against the very well respected Burwood Briars.

The win demonstrated the strength and experience of the squad, as Mark Delaney, Steve Beck and Rick Bryant were welcomed in for this match. Graham Buck was also able to be included for John and made excellent use of his opportunity.

Recognition that we have a squad, from which every member will contribute to the Match Day XI or XII, at different stages, is important to maintain season winning momentum and team spirit. Everyone is to be recognised and utilised. Note that proven performers Mick McCormick, Jonathon Seifman and Terry Pontikas were also unavailable for this match. And with Stuart Ridge a very viable bowling option if called upon, the depth is apparent and should not be taken for granted.

V.C., Weaver, is poised to return from injury...

Scores: C.C.N.S.W. 6-230 (cc 40 overs, batting first) defeated Burwood 9-180 (all out)

The team that played is stated below (batting order), with some notation about each player:

Craig Somers: 50*. Craig lead the way again and is the best batsman so far this season. A feature was his superb leg side play. The coveted No. 3 looks his spot, in the coming weeks. Good effort in the field, missing a tough chance a backward point that he did well to get a hand on.

Mike Pinter: 40* ret. Fantastic for '*Punter*' to reach the batting retirement mark for the first time for the club. It was a very patient knock and set us up for a great start, with both openers retiring. Usual effervescent ground fielding display.

Steve Beck: 12 runs and 5-0-24-1. Looked in fantastic form smashing a superb six and a four. Unfortunately a misunderstanding with Brett Favell, as to who was actually going to run, resulted in an unfortunate end to Steve's innings. Some great off spin bowling followed though, for him to nab the prize wicket of Burwood's Greg Matchett.

Jim Hadley: 0 runs and 1 catch. Smashed the first ball he received to cover to record a rare 'duck'. Excellent as stand in skipper, under the circumstances, as Garry James was unable to field. Rang the bowling and fielding changes very well, although forgot to actually bowl himself! Jim's steadying influence is immense to this squad and his unselfish nature is always apparent. Demonstrated a very safe pair of hands to catch a skier.

Brett Favell: 5 runs, one stumping, 2 catches. *Fav's* did a good job behind the stumps as we have come to expect and is an excellent gloveman. Missed out with the bat again. Everyone knows his capabilities though and a good score is just around the corner. The best wicketkeeper batsman in this comp, when 'on song'.

Mark Delaney: 40* ret. And 5-0-25-2. Breezy 40* retired from this very fit and disciplined cricketer. Hit a massive six past the sheds which took some time for the opposition to retrieve the pill. Mark backed his innings up with two handy wickets at the bowling crease and his fielding was sound.

Richard Bryant: 40* ret. And 6-0-36-2. 1 catch. Very nice 40* retired from Rich with an ounce of good fortune, with one fielder scared to catch it. That is what this bloke does though - strikes fear in the opposition, with both bat and ball. Two wickets at a ripping pace on good hard off side lines, while occasionally attacking the stumps, helped ensure the win.

David Benson: 2 runs and 6-0-29-1. 'Benno' missed out with the bat this match, going after the spinner a little early and coming undone. Picked up a handy wicket and fielded well. His mobility in the field and superb throwing arm give the side a comparative advantage. Dave is an excellent team man and on his day handy in every facet of the game: batting, bowling, fielding and... organising the beers...cheers!

Lee Witherden: 4 runs and 7-1-25-0. Lee contributed a handy boundary in the run acceleration with G. James and bowled very well in this match without getting a wicket. He was very accurate, delivering at nice lines to compliment his outswingers. 0-25 off 7 overs, 1 maiden. Is bowling with good rhythm and determination. A very good fielder as well.

Garry James: 20*. Garry had returned to the team in great spirits, having come off involvement in his much loved interstate police team tournament. He made a dashing 20* to boost the team score at innings end. Unfortunately treading on a ball while running and twanging a thigh muscle, he was unable to take the field. A probable result of playing a bit too many cricket games, his fifth or sixth in ten days or so, means Mr James can relax and rest up from now on until the after the Christmas break. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year Gaz, see ya next year...

Graham Buck: 2 runs and 8.1-1-31-3. Graham was very happy to be included in the eleven at the death and was unfortunately run out after James trod on the ball, leaving the Burwood keeper with not much to do to effect his dismissal. His mixture of slower and quicker balls was very well executed. He bowled the right lines in this match, to a more protective field, which enabled him to snare 3 very important scalps. It was an excellent contribution from a player that always wants to give his all for the team.

Next match is against Macquarie University away and the last before Xmas. (We want to do well again, so please arrive early, gents).

The Team was (playing 12): - Craig Somers 50*, Mike Pinter 40* ret, Steve Beck 12, Brett Favell (w) 5, Mark Delaney 40* ret, Jim Hadley 0, Dave Benson 2, Richard Bryant 40* ret, Luke Witherden 4, Garry James 20*, Graham Buck 2 and Mike Weaver (dnb)

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 6 – 232 (C. Somers 50*, M. Pinter 40* ret, M. Delaney 40* ret, R. Bryant 40* ret) (40 Overs)

Defeated

Burwood C.C.: - 10 - 180 (37.1 overs)

By 52 runs.

FoW: - 1-89 (R. Beck); 2-99 (J. Hadley); 3-103 (B. Favell); 4-120 (D. Benson); 5-156 (L. Witherden); 6- 202 (G. Buck)

The Bowling was: - L. Witherden 7-1-25-0; G. Buck 8.1-1-31-3; R. Bryant 6-0-36-2; D. Benson 6-0-29-1; S. Beck 5-0-24-1 and M. Delaney 5-0-25-2

The Fielding was: - Stumpings: - One to B. Favell

Catches: - Two to B. Favell; one to each of R. Bryant and J. Hadley

Run-outs: - Nil

Player Points: - 3 points to R. Bryant; 2 points to M. Delaney; 1 point to C. Somers.

MASTERS ROUND 6 v MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY AT ROSS GWILLIAM FIELD, MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY SPORTS GROUND ON SUNDAY 11 DECEMBER, 2016: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

Scrooged: A Cricketer's Club Christmas Carol

The Blues Masters side has ended its year on a successful note with a thrilling victory over the previously unbeaten Macquarie University.

It was the turn of the C.C.N.S.W. Masters men to play '*Grinch*', restricting the University side to a gettable 155, and then reaching the score late in the day. In a highly disciplined batting display that invited a tense last hour of play, the Blues used a miserly run rate to arrive at the target with restraint being a continuous theme.

As a contrast to the recent collapse to Warringah, the top and middle order were all about the value of their wickets and it was refreshing to see. Macquarie University was full of confidence on their home deck, boasting the Comp's two leading wicket-takers, slow bowlers at that and also a handful of the top ten batters.

The wicket was generously grass-covered in areas but dead all over in terms of sustained support for pace and seam. The bounce was low but steady on a small outfield that made scoring tricky when fields were set deep.

Richard Bryant extracted spitting bounce early, bowling at a blistering clip. A lone uncaught fine edge between keeper and first slip to show for his troubles.

On a day which saw Mike '*The Treasurer*' Weaver not only come back from a long lay-off but also take the helm with the brackets 'c', the Cricketers' Club seemed steeled for a long-haul effort in warm conditions.

Naturally Weaves lost the toss and was itching to get out there. He'd been living and breathing every nudge for one and cut for four for months. Training sessions, tours, you name it. He's been the most active injured player in the history of league cricket.

It was the big test finally for his 'gammy' knee, the wretched cartilage betraying a man who just can't seem to get enough cricket into his system and certainly not from want of trying.

Macquarie University came out to bat with stride and purpose, with openers Rose and Sutton teeing off early with a mixture of commanding and daring shots, racing to 70 runs from 12 overs. The scorching start included six finely struck boundaries that left the Blues shell-shocked.

Cricketer's Club, as far as energy in the field was concerned, was phoning it in for the first ten but almost to a man became revitalised when Lee Witherden (9-1-40-1) broke through Rose's concentration to rock his off peg. The wicket followed a series of saved boundaries. The breakthrough sparked a team-wide lift in attitude that caused a four-wicket crash for 13 runs before drinks to see Macquarie University stagger to the break at 4-83..

Sutton retired after a brilliant and breezy match-high score of 52* but not before being troubled by

Richard Bryant's (8-0-43-0) pace and later Witherden's length and movement through the air. The Blues were exerting great pressure from the field now and would be rewarded with two later order run outs through the trusty arm of Jim Hadley, both at stages when the Blues wanted to strike to keep their momentum.

David Benson (6-3-18-3), a man with the Midas touch with the pill this season, again set the tone with a great spell of wobbling darts at first change. He knocked over Macquarie's number 3 and 5 bats with castle cutters and together with Graham Buck (9-2-20-2), ensured a game-winning 5 wicket combined haul for only 38 runs in 15 overs. 'Bucky' bowled a beautifully controlled spell that proved he has the ability to contain as well as claim key wickets. University couldn't buy a run at one stage, the sluggish wicket and deeper set fields proving a challenge for incoming batsmen.

While Macquarie's tail wagged somewhat, universal opinion was that this was one of the C.C.N.S.W. Masters' finest efforts in the field and with cherry. All the bowlers applied tight lines and discipline with runs at a real premium. Catches were held and players backed each other up in the field in a pleasing display of teamwork.

Benson ('*Beno*'), Witherden ('*Lee-Roy*') and Hadley ('*Hadds*') covered plenty of ground, using their still-lively arms to good effect from the boundary. Weaver ('*Weaves*') and Craig Somers were omnipresent in close, applying pressure and saving runs being added to the ask.

Macquarie went into a spiraling funk they never really emerged from. Mick McCormick (3-0-8-1) chimed in with the wicket of the stubborn Edgerton. Mark Delaney took a 'special' skied catch at mid-off from '*Beno*'s 3rd set of rocks, holding his nerve and the nut as the ball swirled down upon re-entry to the stratosphere.

Jim 'Wizz' Hadley (5-0-18-1) trapped University's number 10 plumb in front after the batsman attempted a reverse park of his feet in front of the poles to a ball that was hitting all three halfway up.

'*Mr Favellous*', Brett Favell kept a clean and tidy wicket in a great day out, having a hand in the two run outs and stopping an avalanche of runs down leg, conceding only 2 byes for the innings.

If the Blues had turned 'Scrooge' in the field then it was quite clear they would encounter similar starch from the undefeated University. A total of 155 seemed simple but mid-range chases like these in cricket rarely are for most teams.

A bounty of a lunch spread awaited both sets of combatants. The cold chopped fruit plates and sandwiches would have done Jamie's school dinners proud for the presence of healthy choices and kept on loving parched players throughout the afternoon. Full marks to the Macquarie boys. This scribe rated it the best spread of the season to date.

Mike Weaver (33) and Craig Somers (10) started the Masters' climb deliberately and cautiously, using ten overs to knock off the first 30 runs. Both men were in good nick but University gave very few cheap runs. Instead of regular boundaries, bunting singles around seemed the smart play.

Somers was the first to depart, unable to extend his superior run of form when he feathered an edge to the keeper from the bowling of Payne. Jim Hadley (41* ret) took to the centre as the Blues team sat back, expecting fireworks as per Big League program.

But '*Hadds*' was having none of it. He studiously applied himself to grinding a start until the faint run rate saw him glitch back into '*Axe man of the Apocalypse*' mode. He skied an attempted straight slog so vertically that by the time it came down, the entire University slips cordon were under it and playing rock, paper, scissors to decide who'd pouch it.

The indecision proved costly. The 'keeper called off other catchers in better positions and promptly made a hash of it, over-reading the position of the ball and grassing it back over his shoulder.

'Hadds' sought to re-apply himself and make the opposition pay. His next lash out would be more substantial and saw a collective gulp from the Macquarie team as Jim swatted one expertly long over mid on, one bounce.

At the other end, 'Weaves' was putting theory into execution, turning the strike and showing inventiveness of his own such as his cheeky cross-line fetch to a vacant mid-wicket boundary that helped break the shackles. Their partnership added 37 for the second wicket.

'Weaves' finally lost concentration after facing a series of full pitched balls from Coey and then battered the next wide half-tracker straight down the gullet of gully. However he'd more than done his job in a fine return from the Masters' Administrator and Chief Financial Officer.

Mark Delaney (15), the swashbuckling leftie looked to force the pace early. He too benefitted from an early life after clubbing a high dolly to mid on which was spilt by the Englishman with the mad 'fro, Sutton – who's mane was a manic mix of Barry Richards and Ronald McDonald.

Mark cut and drove well, looking to milk the slow straight-breakers of Folkard for boundaries but with a stacked off-side field more often than not the ball found University men rather than open ground. Patience was the order of the day as the pair compiled a further 27 runs in 10 overs, ticking the Blues towards the target.

Hadley was resolute, standing in defiant defence like an ancient Druid at a Stonehenge gala day. University was already ruing lost chances and heads began to drop. There would be another couple of chances as Blues batsmen were given lives through further poor catching. Another way to look at it was the scoreboard pressure applied to the fielding team through their modest tally. But scoreboard pressure runs both ways.

Jim retired with the self-confessed 'slowest 40' of his career but, for the balance of the batting line-up, his retirement simply made the game 'safe'. At 100-odd for 3 in 30 overs with 55 more runs to rub off and the bulk of the batting intact, we could not possibly lose it from here. Could we?!

The runs dried up after Jim left and Mark was stumped off the wily bowling of Folkard. New batsmen Mick McCormick (14) and Brett Favell (8) attempted to lift the rate but found the going tricky. After the platform had been successfully laid, it seemed smart enough for the duo to continue with circumspection in their shot selection which runs contrary to the natural instincts of both players.

Both belted early boundaries before bogging down to the ultra-slow bowling of Folkard and Edgerton. With a pair of spinners barely pushing it through and a field set on containment, the run rate dipped back down to under three an over. Even with seven wickets in the bank it looked like a touch and go affair with over 5 runs per over now required from the last ten.

Just as 'Favs' started to find some rhythm he missed a straight one from Edgerton to go leg before. Pontikos (7) came to the crease intent on turning the strike and exploiting tiring fielders with quick singles. A boundary and consecutive threes from the pair dialed the pressure down.

The batsmen discussed a hit and run mentality with so many wickets still in hand and overs disappearing. Pontikos was immediately run out by the bowler after a suicide attempt at a single. This brought David Benson (3*) to the square with the Blues now only 16 runs adrift with three overs remaining. Run a ball stuff.

Mick became Edgerton's second scalp, also falling leg before to a straight ball. The task of reaching the victory target would be left to a pair of bowling heroes, 'Beno' and Richard Bryant (12*). 'Richo'

made short work of the cleanup, smashing a four then a booming straight six to claim the winning runs in certain style.

The Team was: - Craig Somers 10; Mike Weaver (c) 33, Jim Hadley 41* ret Mark Delaney 15, Brett Favell (w) 8, Mick McCormick 14, Terry Pontikos 7, Richard Bryant 12, David Benson 3*, Lee Witherden dnb and Graham Buck dnb

The Result was: -

Macquarie University C.C.: 10-153 (D. Benson 3-18) (39.5 overs)

Lost to

C.C.N.S.W.: 6-156 (J. Hadley 41* ret; M. Weaver 33) (38.4 overs)

By 4 wickets.

FoW: - 1-30 (C. Somers) 2-62 (M. Weaver) 3-94 (M. Delaney) 3-105 (J. Hadley 41 *retired) 4-123 (B. Favell) 5-140 (T. Pontikos) 6-147 (M. McCormick)

The Bowling was: - L. Witherden 9-1-40-1; R. Bryant 8-0-43-0; D. Benson 6-3-18-3; G. Buck 8.5-2-20-2; J. Hadley 5-0-18-1; and M. McCormick 3-0-8-1

The Fielding was: - Stumpings: Nil

Catches: one each to M. Delaney, J. Hadley and M. Weaver

Run-outs: - two to J. Hadley

Player Points: - 3 points to J. Hadley; 2 points to D. Benson; 1 point to G. Buck

MASTERS ROUND 7 v OLD IGNATIANS AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 8 JANUARY, 2017: REPORT BY TERRY PONTIKOS

Blues rinsed in upset home loss to Old Ignatians

In an inauspicious start to 2017, the C.C.N.S.W. Masters outfit has let a golden chance to keep pressure on the ladder leaders slip, a poor batting performance capping a lackluster effort at Camperdown Oval.

With the new amenities christened at the revamped spiritual home of the Cricketer's Club, this was an ideal opportunity for the side to stake a title claim on a perfect Sunday afternoon for cricket.

Instead, a meek effort from a strong side on paper was anything but pretty and did not do justice to the picturesque backdrop. The team now finds itself outside the top four sides on the table.

Old Ignatians won the toss, choosing to bat on a wicket greener and moldier than the team's scorebook after being mothballed with beer spillage over the Christmas break. The wicket gave no assistance to the bowlers, especially the quicks, and prevailing logic was that Camperdown Oval is now a plus 200 run par ground, full stop.

The visitors started well, throwing the bat but boundaries on the dense outfield were almost as hard to come by as genuine wicket chances. Old Ignatians had a half-century up before their opening partnership was broken by a doozy from Garry James which middle pegged a free-scoring Smith to the chorus of 'Niiice Garry!'

The castle cropper forced a bail into the gob of everyone's favourite symphony trombonist, Brett 'Favs' Favell who immediately left the ground to ice his pucker. Mike 'Punter' Pinter took the gloves for the first time and acquitted himself well.

James was in his element off the field – regaling the team pre-match with tales of his New Year's policing exploits – and on it as he found the rhythm and flight required to trouble the Old Ignatians' top order.

Garry sent both openers packing in a wonderful spell that on another day would have surely seen him rack up a five-for had Lady Luck smiled more kindly on him.

But the pressure was enough to apply the breaks to Old Ignatians' scoring and their innings began to splutter when Forde was run out from a neat throw by Richard Bryant with Punter doing the rest. The visitors ambled to 3-63 at drinks.

A couple of middle order partnerships ensured a revival of the batting side's fortunes as captain Toal and Calloway added 66 for the fifth wicket before the skipper retired on a well-crafted 40 which had punished anything loose from the Blues attack. Calloway and Frawley added another 24 for the sixth wicket as the overs dwindled.

The Blues had missed a trick in not wrapping up the scoring in the 150s, perhaps allowing Ignatians a couple dozen more runs than their effort demanded. In sweltering conditions the Blues bowlers toiled manfully but this wasn't one of the Masters' sharpest efforts in the field, a disappointment after the standards set prior to the Christmas break.

Garry James was easily the pick of the bowlers and Lee Witherden kept charging in till the end, deservedly picking up a couple of poles. In all, skipper John Munden rotated through eight bowlers, mainly due to the sticky conditions but in a tepid innings neither side was ever on top for long spells with bat or ball.

A 173 run target was a tricky ask but confidence was high that the Cricketer's Club could rub the chase off comfortably against a modest attack that had only tasted victory once this season.

Craig Somers (45) and Mike Pinter (21) built another solid base with Craig's outstanding form and consistency once again coming to the fore. 'Punter' was first to go, run out at the bowler's end with an attempted quick single proving too sharp after a handy piece of work by the fielder in short at mid on.

With the score at 1-63 the stage was set for big hard-hitting leftie Steve Beck (14) to advance the C.C.N.S.W. run chase. Somers retired for a fifth time this season after another superb, patient and chanceless knock. In the 'Hall of Mirrors' department, the Blues' dysfunctional middle tier of batters could do far worse than look for inspiration in their trusty opener, the 'Pearl'. He plays a simple, disciplined game based on concentration, hitting in the 'V' early and expanding his shot selection after growing comfortable with the pitch conditions. Craig would be the first to admit his method does not amount to rocket surgery.

With Craig retired on the stroke of drinks (1-75) the Blues looked to have things comfortably in hand. Almost half the runs were banked with nine further wickets in hand. What followed was a precipitous collapse which the Blues Masters seem to have patented – exploding to drop 9 wickets for 70 runs in 16 overs of pure, unadulterated carnage.

It's not known whether any of the incoming batsmen used the panic button feature in the new brasco (*Editor's note: means 'Toilet' Working class prison Australian word for the ceramic bowl used in modern WCs. Comes from a makers brand Brasco written on the top rear of the lip of the bowl*) of Camperdown but there was certainly no shortage of duress out in the middle as one after another Cricketers' Club players either gifted their wickets or undervalued them to the point of worthlessness.

John Munden's (1) dismissal started the rout, feathering a nick to the keeper from Gillespie's bowling. 2-92. When Steve Beck, who had been batting intelligently with a nice blend of aggression and watchfulness, missed one and was cleaned up by Gillespie – and with C.C.N.S.W having wilted to 3-93 – panic had officially set in.

Brett Favell (3) holed out to deep midwicket. 4-98. A lazy effort from Terry Pontikos (7) saw an inside nick to the keeper from Rowles. 5/111. Dave Benson's (1) castle was rearranged to make it 6-112 and the brain-dead Blues were in all sorts of bother.

Mark Delaney (17) batted bravely with the help of a runner after tearing a thigh muscle in the field. He threatened to buck the trend of the meltdown that raged around him to see the Blues home. However the calm all-rounder couldn't find any support from a middle order that had abdicated all responsibility.

By the time Mark was joined by Richard Bryant (16*) the ask had escalated to a run a ball and the Blues were still 61 runs adrift. Bryant never leaves anything in the tank and never lets his team down, his face a sheen of 'warning red' from effort – unlike some of his teammates who achieved theirs through the blushes of embarrassing shot-selection.

When Delaney mis-hit to be pounced at mid-on the resistance was all but over at 7-120. 'Whiz', Jim Hadley (1), hadn't yet stepped up to the plate but was incapacitated due to an ankle complaint that worsened earlier in the field. He still hadn't fully explained the extent of the injury or how it came about at a New Year's barbecue but by this time the Blues were in no mood for tales of festival frolics.

Lee Witherden (5) tried gamely to lift the scoring rate with seven runs per over now required. He became Callaway's first victim when his stumps were skittled at the Australia Street end. Sifting through the wreckage, the Blues needed a further 53 runs with the supply of batsmen and overs making that sound you hear in submarine disaster movies.

Jim smashed a drive to mid off which was spectacularly caught by the Old Ignatians' captain and the Blues' heads collectively dropped. Bryant was stranded at the other end and set to be joined by batting hero Somers. But the ask was too great.

After a glimmer of hope with the pair turning the score over into the 140s, Craig also fell to a 'screamer', caught at mid on to a dubious grab. But Old Ignatians deserved their victory and simply wanted the win more than a disappointing Blues side that was left scratching their heads as to how it all fell apart so spectacularly.

The Team was (playing 12): - Craig Somers 45, Mike Pinter 21, Steve Beck 14, John Munden (c) 1, Brett Favell (w) 3, Mark Delaney 17, Terry Pontikos 7, David Benson 1, Richard Bryant 16*. Lee Witherden 5, Jim Hadley 1 and Garry James dnb

The Result was: -

Old Ignatians C.C.: 8-172 (G. James 3-32) (40 overs)

Defeated

C.C.N.S.W.: 10-147 (C. Somers 45; M. Delaney 17) (36.3 overs)

By 25 runs.

FoW: - 1-61 (M. Pinter); 2-92 (J. Munden); 3-98 (S. Beck); 4-98 (B. Favell); 5-111 (T. Pontikos); 6-112 (D. Benson); 7-120 (M. Delaney); 8-129 (L. Witherden); 9-130 (J. Hadley); 10-147 (C. Somers)

The Bowling was: - L. Witherden 9-0-32-2; R. Bryant 7-0-35-0; J. Hadley 4-0-9-0; G. James 9-4-32-3; M. Delaney 3.3-0-7-0; D. Benson 5-0-24-1; S. Beck 2-0-11-0 and J. Munden 1-0-9-0

The fielding was: - Stumpings: Nil

Catches: - One to M. Delaney

Run-outs: - One each to R. Bryant and L. Witherden

Player points: - 3 points to Garry James; 2 points to Craig Somers; 1 point to Lee Witherden

MASTERS ROUND 8 v GEORGES RIVER C.C. AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 22 JANUARY, 2017

Match forfeited by Georges River

MASTERS ROUND 9 v LINDFIELD LEGENDS AT ACRON OVAL, ST IVES ON SUNDAY 5 FEBRUARY 2017

The game - and indeed all games in the round - was called off- on the direction of the Committee of the Association on the grounds that temperatures in Sydney would exceed 40^o.

The round will not be rescheduled at a later date.

The problem is that the ABC weather forecast for Sydney (stipulated by the Competition Rules to be used) - only predicted 38^o and the local predictions in some areas near the coast where some games were to be played were only c. 35^o which led a number of teams to complain.

MASTERS ROUND 10 v PENNANT HILLS AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN, ON SUNDAY 19 FEBRUARY, 2017. REPORT BY MIKE WEAVER

THE BLUES' LOSE 'THE BLUES', REGAIN WINNING WAYS, IN FINAL HOME GAME AT CAMPERDOWN

C.C.N.S.W. Masters have chased down Pennant Hills respectable 8-182 off 40 overs, in just 32.5 overs and with 3 wickets to spare. Cricketers' Club was without regular skipper John Munden, who succumbed late to a calf strain. Experienced players Mick McCormick and Jim Hadley could not be included in the eleven. This made the win, against very good opponents, more meritorious. Star opening batsman Craig Somers, after a communication problem during the week, was still able to assume his place in the final lineup.

The win looks relatively easy, however Pennant Hills fought hard and if some opportunities had been taken by them, may well have come out on top.

Stand in Skipper Mike Weaver won the toss. It had taken a large consortium of team advisers to persuade him not to bat upon winning, due to the green tinge and softness of the wicket. A deal was done, if C.C.N.S.W. were to bowl first, with the captain wanting personal guarantees that there would not be any 'choke' batting second.

This same consortium of advisers continued to voice their views and suggestions constantly to their on-field leader throughout the match Craig Somers, Steve Beck, Brett Favell, Lee Witherden, Graham Buck, and Garry James, thank you for your regular stream of information, suggestions and general assistance).

Involvement and input by all is an important part of 'The Blues' team culture.

Lee Witherden and Graham Buck opened the bowling, with Lee bowling up the hill. Lee was able to extract a wicket with his second ball, a low out swinging full toss, squeezed to gully and snapped up expertly by Somers, to get the unfortunate P.H. opener for a duck. Graham began a little nervously and his loose deliveries were very well dispatched by the Pennant Hills No. 3 and eventual retiree Paris, who took full advantage of the very short leg side boundary.

Crack all rounder and successful Nelson New Zealand tourist David Benson, was called upon to relieve Graham, who was to be saved for his more familiar 'death bowling' role. In tandem with Lee, the free flow of runs subsided due to determined persevering bowling by these two. Lee removed the other opener after a top edge catch, from a ball that sat up, was comfortably held by 'keeper Favell.

Thereafter it was decided to operate with off spin at one end, protected by a large leg side boundary and a variety of medium pace from the other.

The popping wicket suited Blues champion off spinner Garry James to a tee. He was the pick of the C.C.N.S.W. bowlers, bowling nine overs straight of well flighted and varied 'right to left' turners, delivered in characteristic, passionate fashion, and in accordance to the fields that he wanted set.

The result was only 29 runs conceded and trapping the Pennant Hills No. 4 and No. 5 bats each lbw, just as they had looked ready to accelerate. Steve Beck carried on after Garry, following suit in restricting the run rate over, for another five overs. He grabbed a good wicket, enticing a catch to mid on to the safe hands of his good buddy Richard Bryant, to remove the stubborn Mitch Sturt (*Ed note C.C.N.S.W. member*).

From the other end, Richard Bryant and Mark Delaney both bowled handy, short spells, each taking a wicket and keeping runs down. Mark's wicket of P.H.'s John Mesar (*Ed note C.C.N.S.W. member*), an edge to first slip, was superbly taken by Steve Beck, diving to his left and behind the keeper, for a juggled snare. Although struggling for pace and rhythm after a six weeks layoff, Rich managed two successive maidens and got rid of the dangerous Craig Mackenzie (*Ed note C.C.N.S.W. member*). In his final over, Benson taking a good catch at deep point, off a well struck shot.

Graham Buck took up the challenge of a second '*death bowling*' spell, in place of Delaney. Backing his skills after the earlier hammering received, he induced two important wickets in his two final overs at innings end - a straight forward catch to Mike Weaver at mid-off and a nice stumping by Favell.

The regular wickets that were taken at different stages were very important in effectively halting the opposition's momentum. 9-182 was a satisfactory result after offering them first bat, albeit with a slow outfield.

The run chase started badly with the in-form Somers surprisingly dismissed LBW to a good swinging delivery in the first over. Weaver went in at number three, intent to lead from the front. He survived a confident appeal after having scored just 4 runs, the umpire correctly not making his decision based on any suspicion. A little off put after this, he scrambled some hasty singles and mistimed pull shots to the vacant areas, that at least tested out his gammy knee, if not much else. Nevertheless, a quick mini partnership of 29 with Mike Pinter, who was solid and ran between wickets very well, enabled some innings momentum. Unfortunately 'Punter' succumbed lbw to an '*in-ducker*' from Sturt which kept low, without addition to the score of 31. This was immediately after Weaver was nicely caught, skying a ball to deep midwicket.

Any feelings of nervousness that may have then been felt by the team, were then dissipated in a superb partnership, made under pressure, between Steve Beck and Brett Favell. Both players mixed watchful defence with a slaughtering of any deliveries dropped short by the Pennant Hills bowlers. Steve 'Haydos' Beck crashed every bad ball he received to the gaps, managing four sixes and two fours in his 42* retired not out. And some balls he punished weren't so bad. Brett stroked two sixes and two fours, and generally placed the ball very well. It was a timely display by both players, who have each been promising much all season. Brett unfortunately was undone by a delivery that stopped on him, skying a catch when retirement at 40 himself looked imminent. The partnership made was 50 runs, in less than 8 overs.

With the game set up for the taking there was still work to do by C.C.N.S.W., with more than half the runs still to get. Mindful that there are plenty of overs remaining, after Steve retired, Dave Benson and Mark Delaney batted sensibly until drinks and for a period afterwards, when the opposition bowlers, lead by Mesar, lifted notably. Mark batted carefully to ensure there was not a collapse, especially after drinks, when only seventy more runs were required. After surviving hitting a catch straight to mid off, he then fell to the persistent Mesar. His innings included two fours, one a very nice back cut.

Richard Bryant then came and went quickly, again caught off Mesar and the match was once more in the balance.

Having dealt with an alarming muscle spasm just minutes earlier, Garry James came to the wicket and slapped a quick 18 runs, including 3 nice boundaries through covers, with Benson remaining the anchor. This cameo finally took the game out of Pennant Hills' reach. Later, Benson was dropped at deep mid off. It was a difficult chance that was more a prevention of four runs, rather than being a genuine chance, with the fielder doing well to get a hand to the ball.

After James fell, it was left to Benson and Witherden to '*seal the deal*' for C.C.N.S.W., with Benson releasing the shackles to smack a six and Witherden crashing a four. It was a mature, measured display by Benson, continuing on from his good form displayed against the Kiwis on the recent Nelson tour.

After the game, here's what they said.

Garry James: *"It was important when we batted to take advantage of the shorter boundary, which we did. Pennant Hills are a good side"*

Graham Buck: *"I wasn't the one to open the bowling today. My role in the team is more as a death bowler"*

Mike Weaver: *"Ian Chappell says if you walk, you are disrespecting the umpire"*

"I thought Rich Bryant did very well to come up with his two successive maiden overs, it was just what the doctor ordered at that stage of the game."

Craig Somers: *"I've adopted some aspects of Steve Smith's batting technique this season"*

Next game and final Competition game for C.C.N.S.W. is against third placed Auburn on 5 March, away. Nets will be available at 8pm on the Wednesday prior.

Many thanks to John Munden for his assistance on the day and arranging removal of the covers etc. Congratulations all round to the C.C.N.S.W. squad members participating in this game.

The Team was: - Craig Somers 1, Mike Pinter 9, Mike Weaver (c) 16, Steve Beck 42* ret not out, Brett Favell (w) 35, Mark Delaney 16, David Benson 23*, Richard Bryant 3, Garry James 18, Lee Witherden 8* and Graham Buck dnb

The Result was: -

Pennant Hills: - 9-182 (40 overs)

Lost to

C.C.N.S.W: - 7-183 (S. Beck 42* ret; B. Favell 35) (32.5 overs)

By 3 wickets

FoW : - 1- 2 (C. Somers) 2-31 (M. Weaver) 3-31 (M. Pinter) 4-81 (B. Favell) 5-113 (S. Beck) 6-132 (M. Delaney) 7-144 (R. Bryant) 8-175 (G. James)

The Bowling was: - L. Witherden 6-0-27-2; G. Buck 6-0-45-2; D. Benson 6-1-23-0, G. James 9-1-29-2; R. Bryant 5-2-19-1, M. Delaney 3-1-16-1 and S. Beck 5-0-20-1

The Fielding was: - Stumpings: One to B. Favell

Catches: one each to B Favell (w), S. Beck, D. Benson, R. Bryant, C. Somers and M. Weaver

Run outs: Nil

Player Points: - three points to S. Beck; two points to B. Favell; one point to G. James

CLASSICS ROUND 10 v AUBURN AT DAVID TRIBOLET OVAL, MONA PARK, AUBURN ON SUNDAY 5 MARCH, 2017.

Cancelled due to rain.

Sydney Masters Cricket Association - Sydney Masters Over 40s

FINAL LEAGUE TABLE 20-16-2017 SEASON

RANK	TEAM	P	W1	D	L1	WKTS LOST	RUNS FOR	WKTS TAKEN	RUNS AGST	POINTS
1	Mosman	11	9	1	1	57	1470	95	1097	385.50
2	Auburn	11	8	2	1	64	1485	78	1332	360.25
3	Warringah	11	8	1	2	53	1314	84	1171	358.70
4	Cricketers' Club of New South Wales	11	6	3	2	51	1144	69	1178	328.20
5	Burwood Briars	11	6	2	3	61	1340	82	1374	309.00
6	Macquarie University	11	6	2	3	64	1375	73	1205	303.75
7	Collaroy Plateau	11	4	3	4	74	1325	69	1360	275.25
8	Lindfield	11	4	2	5	73	1279	66	1309	253.95
9	Georges River	11	3	4	4	53	1434	49	1209	252.70
10	Roseville Navy	11	3	3	5	66	1284	61	1268	248.20
11	Campbelltown Camden	11	3	3	5	64	1406	63	1499	243.30
12	Pennant Hills	11	3	2	6	70	1502	62	1422	237.10
13	Ryde Hunters Hill	11	2	4	5	66	1056	46	1239	218.80
14	Old Ignatians	11	2	2	7	83	1172	55	1399	193.60
15	Lane Cove White	11	1	2	8	84	1215	57	1494	179.75
16	Roseville White	11	1	2	8	73	1105	47	1350	166.25

Last re-calculated: Apr 5, 2017 3:24AM (local time)

