CCNSW VINTAGE MATCH REPORTS 2023-2024 SEASON

VINTAGE ROUND 1 v CENTRAL COAST AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2023: REPORT BY MICK McCORMICK

Vintage squad for 2023-24 Season before game vs Central Coast at Camperdown

Back row: David Glen, Joe Scarcella, Paul Georgiadis, Ajoy Roy, Greg Brooks, Garry James, Stuart Ridge (c), Mick McCormick, Gerry O'Shea, Emmanuel Mouglalis

Front row: Sittampalam Ragavan, John Finucane (w), Frank, Baliotis, Peter Rolls (v/c), Daniel Pellen

The first surprise of the day came with the early season appearance of Camperdown Oval itself. Rather than an emaciated beach look, turf was actually a significant proportion of the surface. After clearing the various frisbee games from the field, Stuart Ridge in his first outing as Vintage captain lost the toss and saw CCNSW being sent into bat on the pitch closest to the pavilion.

The game was set to be a battle between the last two season's premier sides that also had been an epic decider in the last game of last season that has been variously described as "Brookstopia".

The Central Coast opening pair was accurate on the slow and low wicket. Peter Rolls looked comfortable in the opening role, (pun intended) and Gerry O'Shea played some well-timed shots to keep the bowlers at bay. A trifecta of lbws however transformed the steady opening, firstly Rollsey hit on the roll (pun intended) was fired quicker than a Qantas baggage handler.

Gerry O'Shea was lucky to survive a run out with 'Joe the cameraman', Scarcella, having his lenses obscured by the posterior positioning of the wicketkeeper. That luck was a mere splatter as Gerry was then adjudged lbw with a suspect splinter of timber seemingly involved. Daniel Pellen became the Central Coast left hander's 3rd lbw victim. Frank Baliotis also went early leaving the lineup struggling at 4 for 24.

Greg Brooks (15) immediately released a swathe of clean hitting to the boundary. Mick McCormick (22) took advantage of the close boundary to dispatch the loose balls. The partnership built well taking the score to 62 until impatience simmered to the surface with the seemingly innocuous '*dobbly do littles'* getting under Greg's bat and then getting through a patient absent swipe from Mick. 6 for 64.

John Finucane (23) was scratchier than a hen with tinea early on, but settled to play a vital innings with Sittampalam Ragavan ("Raga") (13) that took the score to 100. Garry James (19), after educating the 93-year-old mother of the opposition captain about what really goes on in an obstetrician's practice (she was within earshot), entered the field and blazed with the bat in his usual fashion putting an invaluable partnership together.

A solid contribution from 'Joe the cameraman' (14) resulted in a respectable score of 8-140.

During the tea break it was feared the 93-year-old mother would refuse to allow Garry James her expertly crafted brownies and he would have to eat a whole package of donuts instead. The latter can be confirmed...enquires continue as to his access to the brownies.

On taking the field CCNSW was apprehensive following the close encounter at the end of last season.

Stuart Ridge immediately settled into his metronome rhythm and troubled the openers. He got a ball to lift which caught the gloves of the opener travelling directly to the gates of Brookstopia which normally would have efficiently ensnared its victim, however a rare mistake in the kingdom saw the ball hit the turf.

At the other end Raga settled into stride with accurate, skidding away swingers, making it difficult for the openers to score.

It wasn't until the 5th over that a dart like direct hit from Paul Georgardis ran the opener out. There was a sigh of relief in the realm of Brookstopia. Paul continued to cover the ground like a Jack Russell on heat, saving many runs.

It was the spark that lit the flame as wickets started to tumble. Raga backed up catching an edge which was well caught by wicket keeper John Finucane low down to his right. Stu Ridge bowled the other opener then next ball, cartwheeling the stumps of the incoming batsman.

Frank Baliotis was almost as excited as he was visiting the sphinx in the off season. Unfortunately, the hatt rick did not materialise. Central Coast were in a pickle at 4 wickets for 7 runs. Jonny Finucane threw chilli peppers onto the wound by innocently asking Central Coast to update the scoreboard not believing the score was 4 for 7. Somewhat bewildered they updated the scoreboard to read 4 for 8.

Raga picked up another wicket, well caught at mid-off by Joe the cameraman. 5 for 14.

Stuart Ridge picked up a third wicket when Frank Baliotis moved with Fred Astaire like feet to take the catch at cover, 6 for 19.

Geoff Patterson from Central Coast was the only one mounting any resistance until a shortish ball from Garry James was unceremoniously smashed at knee height to Gerry O'Shea at mid-wicket who took a superb catch. 7 for 29.

Garry James picked up another wicket with a neat stumping by John Finucane. 8 for 32.

Central Coast sank further into the mire as their indoor cricket recruit pulled a calf muscle negotiating the extra meterage of the pitch.

The final pairing used the opportunity for batting practice and took the score to 50 before the King of Brookstopia fired one at the pads of the batsmen, brutally banishing him from the dominion.

Mick McCormick picked up the final wicket when the left hander dragged the ball onto the stumps. All out for 58.

A very satisfying first win for the new Vintage captain with all contributing.

The Team was (playing 12): - Peter Rolls 11, Gerry O'Shea 10, Daniel Pellen 1, Frank Baliotis 1, Greg Brooks 15, Mick McCormick 22, John Finucane (w) 23 , Sittampalam Ragavan 13, Joe Scarcella 14 *, Garry James 19 *, Paul Georgiadis dnb, Stuart Ridge (c) dnb

The Result was: -

CCNSW: 8-140 (40 Overs)

Defeated

Central Cost: 10-58 (35.4 Overs) (S. Ridge 3-7)

By 82 runs

FoW: - 1-20 (Rolls), 2-21 (G. O'Shea), 3-24 (F. Baliotis), 4-24 (D. Pellen), 5-62 (G. Brooks), 6-64 (M. McCormick), 7-100 (S. Ragavan), 8-108 (J. Finucane)

The Bowling was: - S. Ridge 7-2-7-3, S. Ragavan 7-1-12-2, J. Scarcella 4-2-4-0, G. James 7-2-6-2, P. Georgiadis 5-2-8-0, M. McCormick 3.4-1-10-1, G. Brooks 2-0-2-1

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - J. Finucane

Catches: - J. Finucane (w), F. Baliotis, G. O'Shea, J. Scarcella,

Run outs: - P. Georgiadis

Player points (awarded by umpire): - 3 points to J. Finucane; 2 points to G. James; one point to S. Ragavan

Scorecard: **https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/org/sydney-masters-cricket-association/vintage-summer-202324/vintage/game-centre/f567e311**

VINTAGE ROUND 2: CCNSW vs CASTLE HILL AT BEROWRA PVAL OVAL , BEROWRA ON SUNDAY 29 OCTOBER 2023: REPORT BY GREG BROOKS.

The over 60s CCNSW side stamped their seniors' travel cards and headed north to the picturesque suburb of Berowra. This was a late change as the hosts usual ground at Kenthurst was unavailable due to repairs. The Berowra Oval is in very good condition and the wicket hard with a nice covering of grass. David Glen was the only player with memories of the ground but admitted they were vague as he was channeling Under 10s rugby!

Castle Hill RSL won the toss and sent us in. Gerry O'Shea and Frank Baliotis got us off to a good start putting on 41 before Baliotis was adjudged lbw for a well made 25. O'Shea (30* ret) kept accumulating running many threes to all parts of the large ground. Sittampalam Ragavan ("Raga") (7) and Mick McCormick (4) both came and went looking to accelerate the run rate. The Prez' (your writer) slogged a few and managed to retire with 31^ while David Glen (13) formed a partnership with Garry James who also found the wicket to his liking

adding 30* ret in quick time. Joe Scarcella (30* ret not out) and Ashok Peiris (ret out 22), our guest wicket keeper while John Finuncane is smoking cigars and drinking rum in Cuba and Mexico, kept the score rolling along as we reached 200 in the 37th over. Our skipper Stuart Ridge (20*) and debutant Emmanuel Mouglalis (2*) took us to 5-230 at the completion of our 40 overs.

A large target to chase and Castle Hill got off to a wobbly start and never really recovered. Stusrt Ridge did the early damage withtwo wickets in his first four overs while Greg Brooks picked up one from the other end. Garry James added two more after replacing Brooks at the southern end to have the hosts reeling at 5-21.Add in a smart run out where Ashok threw to the bowler's end following a great throw from the outfield by David Glen and the game was just about done. Joe Scarcella, Mick McCormick and David Glen all bowled well during a period where the remaining batters chose to defend rather than attack. 'Raga' then came on and assisted Ridge in cleaning up the tail. Castle Hill all out for 72 in the 37th over.

We enjoyed a drink and some banter with our hosts and we all agreed that the venue was a great spot for a game of Vintage cricket.

We are backing up next week when we host Lindfield at Camperdown. This will be a much sterner test of our early season form and we are all looking forward to the challenge!

The Team was: - Frank Baliotis 25, Gerard O'Shea 30*, Sittampalam Ragavan 7, Greg Brooks 31*, Mick McCormick 4, David Glen 13, Garry James 30*, Joe Scarcella 30*, Ashok Peiris (w) ret out 22, Stuart Ridge (c) 20*, Emmanuel Mouglalis 2*

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 5-230 (40 Overs) (G. Brooks 31*; G. James 30*; G. O'Shea 30*; J. Scarcella 30*)

Defeated

Castle Hill: - 10-72 (36.4 Overs) (S. Ridge 4-6)

By 158 runs

FoWs: - 1-41 (F. Baliotis); 2-62 (S. Ragavan); 3-97 (M. McCormick); 4-145 (D. Glen); 5-201 (A. Peiris).

The Bowling was: - G. Brooks 5-2-7-1; D. Glen 3-0-5-0; G. James 7-1-14-2; M. McCormick 4-2-10-0 ; S. Ragavan 6-3-3-2; S. Ridge 5.4-3-6-4; J. Scarcella 6-1-18-0

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - Nil

Catches: - 2 to A. Peiris (w); one to each of F. Baliotis and G. Brooks

Run outs: - 2: One to D. Glen and one to G. James

Player points (awarded by umpire): 3 points to S. Ridge; 2 points to G. James; one point to S. Ragavan

Scorecard: **https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/org/sydney-masters-cricket-association/vintage-summer-202324/vintage/game-centre/5ff84825**

VINTAGE ROUND 3: CCNSW vs LINDFIELD AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL. CAMPERDOWN , ON SUNDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2023

Cancelled by rain

VINTAGE ROUND 4: CCNSW vs NORTHERN STARS AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2023: REPORT BY MICK McCORMICK

Luckily the Bureau of Meteorology got their Saturday forecast wrong with the prediction of considerable rain not eventuating. The humidity was pushing 90% at Camperdown on the Sunday morning and what better way to warm up than fold up covers big enough to cover the space shuttle. 24 senior citizens slaving and sweating profusely chasing sporting glory. And the game hadn't even started. The resultant pile of conglomerated plastic would have easily plugged the entrance to the new Rozelle junction tunnel.

State championship cross overs between the two clubs ensured the prospect of uncompromising competition once on the field with the added nuance of a Kim Philby like defection adding social media interest and whispers in the toilets.

The pitch was surprisingly firm. CCNSW lost the toss and were inserted.

In form opener Gerry O'Shea and Peter Rolls donned the gear early. Rolls,, having sustained an injury surfing (still thinking he was Wayne Bartholomew) was furiously rubbing his leg as the crowd jeered his slower than usual running between wickets.

The Northern Stars opening bowlers bowled accurately. Gerry hit some fine shots to keep the run rate on an even keel. One shot was driven well down the field close to the mid on boundary where a soccer ball had magically appeared some four metres inside the boundary like some David Copperfield illusion. The fieldsman signaled four as the ball passed the soccer ball until everyone, including the local dog, realised the soccer ball was not the boundary marker. It is a well-known fact that the last time a soccer ball was used as a cricket boundary marker was in a Christmas game of backyard cricket at Tim Cahill's house in 2004.In a surprisingly sensible umpiring decision Garry James estimated the pair would have run three, completely ignoring Rolls surfing trauma.

Gerry clipped and drove until he was caught and bowled by an excellent reflex catch. Rolls buckled down with Joe Scarcella, keeping the run rate ticking at a reasonable pace. Joe conscious of increasing the run rate got scuttled with an uncharacteristic swipe.

Greg Brooks started his innings in the best way possible sweeping his first ball from the opposition run-scrooge captain over the square leg boundary for six. He then took full toll of a couple of short balls from the Northern Stars recent leg spin recruit with one denting the roof of the pavilion. He quickly reached his 30* laying a valuable foundation for the remaining batsmen. Unfortunately, Mick McCormick could not capitalise on the set up when his forward defence lost all structure waiting incessantly for the ball to arrive.

Garry James took up the challenge, though it seemed he had a gastric band on obtaining the strike. Meanwhile Dr. Sittampalam Ragavan ("Raga") was getting on with it until a unfortunate run out ended the partnership.

As the overs started diminishing Frank Baliotis was caught at the bowler's end thinking about his upcoming Sri Lankan trip. Garry called loudly for a run off his pads. When Garry arrived at the bowlers end Frank was still thinking about what to put in his bags. Then as though someone said, *"you better get home, your house is on fire"* Frank took off like a fox terrier pursued by a leopard, ending in a gymnastic rollover manoeuvre Simone Biles would be proud of as the fielder and wicket keeper fluffed and fumbled leaving Frank safe and back on planet Earth.

Garry got his third undefeated 30*. Then John Finucane and David Glen ran like greyhounds between wickets to add some very valuable late runs. A final score of 5-163. A defendable score but needing good bowling and fielding against a strong batting line up.

Stuart Ridge settled into his normal line and length while Paul Georgiadis enticed the Northern Stars openers into hitting into the air resulting in a competent catch to Joe Scarcella followed by a lively caught and bowled to Paul himself. The new Northern Stars recruit then increased the risk taking with a number of edged and lofted shots narrowly escaping the fielders..

The Northern Stars captain required Dr Ragavan to delve into his bag of medical marvels for industrial quantities of magnesium to relieve his cramp brought on by attempting to bowl 8 overs and complaining he should be allowed to bowl 18. The drugs were to no avail and certainly had no calming effect.

Greg Brooks bowled beautifully conceding a miserly 3 runs over 5 overs. Mick McCormick took over from Ridge and bowled straighter picking up a couple of wickets including the aggressive lefty. Garry James threw the ball up and bowled a Jaffa arm ball to remove one of the more stubborn Northern Stars middle order batters.

Garry then blew up like a puffer fish when Mick McCormick loped around the pavilion boundary Michael Holding style, until he dropped as though shot by a sniper, failing to observe the crater like depression adjacent to the entrance gate, (note to A Hawkes... public liability claim pending) unable to propel forward on his stomach akin to a stranded walrus, he forlornly flapped his flipper at the ball just inches away as it continued to roll agonisingly slowly towards the boundary. The ball won.

Garry was somewhat recompensed the next ball, when a seemingly certain four halted centimeters from the cone designated boundary. The batters meanwhile were glove punching mid pitch having not crossed for a run whilst also risking a "Bairstow" incident as the ball was returned as they obliviously continued to wax lyrical over the shot not realising it had not made the boundary.

Raga then settled into his bowling rhythm even extracting some late innings bounce whilst keeping it tight. He was rewarded with two wickets, both plumb lbws. Joe Scarcella bowled the necessary tight overs when the opposition was looking to take more risk.

Greg Brooks and Stuart Ridge returned for the final six overs with the rain greasing the pitch and the ball. The light was also deteriorating and might have tempted formal umpires to cut proceedings short. The Northern Stars number 10 was batting ok until the slippery pitch saw him fall like one of the ice-skating group in front of Stuart Bradbury's gold medal win. An easy run out resulted. (There may have been a loud Leyton Hewitt *"C'mon*" call from the Pres in instigating the run out).

Although at more than 10 runs an over... with 'Mr Magnesium' and some bloke named Jim *(Ed Note Jim Hadley not playing for CCNSW this season)* at the crease, the fat lady still hadn't sung.

But Ridge appealed for a caught behind. The umpire, thinking the batter was walking, possibly because of Mr Magnesium's awkward after shot gait, finally raised the dreaded digit. This resulted in a spray at the umpire a humpback whale would be proud of. All out for 123.

A gratifying and eventful win with every player contributing

The Team was (playing 12): - Gerry O'Shea 13, Peter Rolls 31* ret not out, Joe Scarcella 14, Mick McCormick 6, Greg Brooks 32* ret not out, Garry James 31* ret not out, Sittampalam Ragavan 8, Frank Baliotis 12, David Glen 0*, John Finucane (w) 8*, Stuart Ridge (c) dnb, Paul Georgiadis dnb

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 5-163 (40 Overs) (G. Brooks 32* ret not out; G. James 31* ret not out; P. Rolls 31* ret not out,)

Defeated

Northern Stars: - 10-123 (37 Overs)

By 40 runs

FoWs: - 1-20 (G. O'Shea); 2-44 (J. Scarcella); 3-99 (M. McCormick); 4-115 (S. Ragavan); 5-142 (F. Baliotis).

The Bowling was: - G. Brooks 5-2-3-0; P. Georgiadis 3-1-12-2; G. James 7-0-29-1; M. McCormick 6-0-29-2; S. Ragavan 7-0-15-2; S. Ridge 6-0-23-1; J. Scarcella 3-0-13-0

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - Nil

Catches: - Two to J. Finucane (w) and one to each of P. Georgiadis and J. Scarcella

Run outs: - Two: - One to G. Brooks and one to P. Georgiadis

Player points (awarded by umpire): 3 points to G. Brooks; 2 points to G. James; one point to S. Ridge

Scorecard: **https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/org/sydney-masters-cricket-association/vintage-summer-202324/vintage/game-centre/abc5add6**

VINTAGE ROUND 5: CCNSW vs SRI LANKA LIONS AT TURNBULL OVAL, NORTH RICHMOND ON SUNDAY 3 DECEMBER 2023: REPORT BY JOHN FINUCANE

With passports at the ready and sandwiches packed the boys made the long trek to the mighty Hawkesbury River to tackle the joint competition leaders, and serious challengers to our title, the Sri Lankan Lions at North Richmond. Thankfully, the Bureau of Meteorology got it wrong again and the forecast thunderstorms stayed away to ensure that a cliffhanger of "Stallone" like proportions was played out.

Peter Rolls and Frank Baliotis had decided earlier in the week that they couldn't afford the fuel bill to get there so some changes to last week's victorious team were necessitated and Dan Pellen joined the XI. Skipper, Stuart Ridge won the toss and after inspecting the wicket, then listening to Garry James suggest we play on the outfield instead, he decided we'd have a bat. What demons would be exposed we'd soon see.

John Finucane and Joe Scarcella came and went quickly and at 2-4 things were looking a little shaky. Thankfully Gerry O'Shea and Dan Pellen then settled down to the grind and forged a good partnership to steer us to 45 before both fell in quick succession. A dubious lbw, well it looked dodgy from the sheds at square leg, for Dan (19) then saw Gerry (21) smash a full toss straight to the fielder. 4-46 after 18 overs and it was tough going.

Mick McCormick came and went after drinks for a handful before what was possibly the match winning partnerships of 30 between 'the Prez', Greg Brooks, (31* (again)) and David Glen (28) and then Dave and Garry James (14) who put on another 35. A spirited tail blasted a further 36 in the dying overs to get us to 8-147, the total helped by some Keystone Cops fielding by the Lions.

Very competitive we thought, well hoped, given a long outfield and a pitch to ponder what it would do as the afternoon wore on.

As we took the field we hadn't planned on our own fielding being reminiscent of a Pakistani test team. Our worst effort in several years was going to make life difficult. Early inroads looked good, 2-7 thanks to one each for the Prez and Stuart Ridge. The wheels then wobbled though as the Lions piled on the runs and we

dropped chances to hit drinks at 2-83 with two batsmen recycled. They moved past 100 with 3 down and 14 overs left, we needed someone to step up.

Sittampalam Ragavan was our man (3-23); ably supported by the skipper (3-28), we finally took some catches and worked our way through their tail. In the 37th over with 9 wickets down and with both recyclers back at the crease and 10 runs to win, who would crack?

Thankfully not Dan Pellen nor the Prez. An attempted quick single by the Lions was scooped up by Dan who got it in quickly. The umpire's finger shot up. They were short by millimeters and 11 grey haired rotund old men danced like Michael Jackson at a kids' birthday party.

VICTORY WAS OURS BY 6 RUNS.

As we move towards the Christmas break we now sit one win and 32 points ahead of the chasing second and third placed teams. Two tough New Year's games will probably decide the season for us.

The Team was: - Gerard O'Shea 21, John Finucane (w) 1, Joe Scarcella 1, Daniel Pellen 19, Mick McCormick 6, Greg Brooks 31*, David Glen 28, Garry James 14, Sittampalam Ragavan 8, Stuart Ridge 12*, Paul Georgiadis 3*

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 8-147 (40 Overs) (G. Brooks 31*)

Defeated

Sri Lanka Lions: - 10-141 (37.5 Overs) (S. Ragavan 3-23; S. Ridge 3-28)

By 6 runs

FoWs: - 1-3 (J. Finucane); 2-4 (J. Scarcella); 3-45 (D. Pellen); 4-46 (G. O'Shea); 5-76 (M. McCormick); 6-111 (G. James); 7-121 (S. Ragavan); 8-133 (D. Glen).

The Bowling was: - G. Brooks 5.5-0-23-1; P. Georgiadis 1-0-5-1; G. James 7-0-27-0; M. McCormick 5-0-11-1; S. Ragavan 6-0-22-3; S. Ridge 6-0-28-3; J. Scarcella 7-3-21-0

T**he Fielding was: -**

Stumpings: - One to J. Finucane

Catches: - One to each of G. Brooks, G. James, D. Pellen, S. Ragavan and S. Ridge

Run outs: - One to D. Pellen

Player points (awarded by umpire): 3 points to G. Brooks; 2 points to D. Glen; one point to S. Ragavan

Scorecard: **https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/org/sydney-masters-cricket-association/vintage-summer-202324/vintage/game-centre/b735e668**

VINTAGE ROUND 6: CCNSW vs BURWOOD/STRATHFIELD AT RON ROUTLEY OVAL, CONCORD ON SUNDAY 17 DECEMBER 2023: REPORT BY JOE SCARCELLA (with thanks to STUART RIDGE)

On a beautiful day at the picturesque venue Rothwell Park, we played against the Burwood/Strathfield Vintage team, which hadn't won any match before this. But we wouldn't be taking them lightly, as they had some good players and had recruited former first grader Geoff Cordner for this one.

Captain Stuart Ridge won the toss and elected to bat, making it our fifth successive game setting a target (comprising 3 successful tosses and twice put in).

Gerry O'Shea and John Finucane started steadily against an accurate bowling attack. O'Shea was first to go, caught behind, the first of Cordner's victims. Dan Pellen came in, played a beautiful drive through wide mid off to the boundary, before succumbing to an unfortunate LBW (snicked onto the pad) to Cordner soon after.

Joe Scarcella followed at no. 4. He and John lifted the run rate and looked on track for a promising partnership, with some lovely stroke play and boundaries. In what was to become a sadly familiar pattern for the innings, Joe was out after making a good start - run out on 15 chasing a second run. He picked the wrong fielder to challenge: you guessed it, Cordner. FFS slide your bat, Joe!!

Mick McCormick replaced Joe. Next ball John Finucane holed out (caught by who else but Cordner) to leave us 4-49 in the 15th over.

President Greg Brooks strode to the crease; played aggressively, hit a couple of fours, but expectations of another Brooksy onslaught were cruelly cut short by another questionable lbw decision, the merits of which continued to be debated with the bowler, unwisely positioning himself on the boundary near our dismissed President.

David Glen was in next. Dave is quicker than your average 60 year old and he, too, looked good, haring between the wickets and turning 1s into 2s and 2s into 3s. With David running like a rabbit and Mick huffing and puffing, they looked like ending up at the same end on more than one occasion. Dave made a valuable contribution of 18 before being bowled for 18 (by that man Cordner).

While all those wickets were falling around him, Mick McCormick was beginning to get his eye got in, but not before somehow hitting himself on the head with an extravagant follow through which removed one of his glasses lenses needing a search party to locate while he staunched the blood flowing from the bridge of his nose. Unfortunately Dr Ragavan was running late otherwise he would have been out there with his black bag brandishing a needle and thread. Another contender for the comedy moment of the season award which Mick appears to be running away with at the moment.

When Garry James joined him, Mick started to accelerate, playing nicely and hitting several boundaries before retiring on 30. After James and Sittampalam Ragavan ('Raga') were bowled, Emmanuel ("Manny") Mouglalis came and went, selflessly running himself out in pursuit of runs knowing that McCormick was in the bank ready to return to the fray. Stuart Ridge (12) was bowled by his unrelated namesake Mark Ridge. He and McCormick (37*) added quick runs to take us to a respectable total of 154.

Burwood's innings started with Ridge bowling to Ridge. However, the opening exchanges were a stalemate with Stuart and Paul Georgiadis keeping it tight and the Burwood openers taking few chances. In the 9th over, however, the pressure finally paid dividends with the other opener, De Costa, trying to take on Paul and slicing into the safe hands of O'Shea.

McCormick replaced Ridge in an early change and patience was required as the Burwood pair slowly accumulated. The President Greg Brooks replaced Paul and tightened the screws further as the Burwood

innings meandered towards drinks. An afternoon crowd at the SCG would have broken out the Mexican waves to entertain themselves.

In the 19th over Mark Ridge completed a painstaking 30 with partner Cordner looking solid at the other end - 54-1 with 101 needed and 9 wickets in hand. This brought the dangerous Karmakonda, who had put us to the sword with a quick fire 30 in the corresponding fixture last year, to the non-strikers end. The skipper was just pondering appropriate bowling match ups and field settings, when David Glen swooped on a quick single, whipping the ball in to keeper Finucane to run out the new man without facing - a critical breakthrough to improve the spirits at drinks.

With wickets in hand and a batsman in the bank the game was evenly poised with Cordner and new partner Trewin resuming the chase after drinks. No let up from the deep CCNSW attack though with Raga, fresh off an overnight flight from Sri Lanka, and Garry James taking up the fight. The arm wrestle continued, 80 required off 15 until Raga shook off the jet lag to pick up Trewin (another catch to the reliable Gerry O'Shea) and frustrate Cordner with his tight off stump line inducing a fine nick to John standing up.

Robinson and Latto put on another 20 to leave Burwood still in the hunt needing 60 off 10. A returning Mick McCormick put in a typically mercurial effort with a stunning one handed return catch from a knee high full toss and from there it was all over pretty quickly with Ridge (2) and James (3), with some sharp turn, wrapping up the remaining 5 wickets for 4 runs.

Another strong win to finish a great first half of the season, unbeaten in five games with one washout. After two easy outings, the last 3 have had some common themes. The batting hasn't quite hit its straps but a variety of contributions across the line up have ensured we have reached competitive totals. As a bowling unit we have built up scoreboard pressure in tight chases with everyone playing their part and not giving anything away, allowing us to finish strongly in the last 10 overs, bowling the opposition out in each game.

A special mention here for 'Manny' Mouglalis, who at very late notice very kindly offered to play half a game when it became apparent Raga's flight back to Sydney would be delayed. Great stuff Manny, your team thanks you.

The Team was (playing 12): - Gerard O'Shea 11, John Finucane (w) 17, Daniel Pellen 5, Joe Scarcella 15, Mick McCormick 37*, Greg Brooks 15, David Glen 18, Garry James 6, Sittampalam Ragavan 6, Emanuel Mouglalis 0, Stuart Ridge (c) 12, Paul Georgiadis dnb

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 10-154 (39.3 Overs) (M. McCormick 37*)

Defeated

Burwood/Strathfield CC: - 10-110 (37 Overs) (G. James 3-20)

By 44 runs

FoWs: - 1-15 (G. O'Shea); 2-21 (D. Pellen); 3-49 (J. Scarcella); 4-49 (J. Finucane); 5-75 (G. Brooks); 6-122 (G. James); 7-126 (D. Glen); 8-130 (S. Ragavan); 9-136 (E. Mouglalis); 10-154 (S. Ridge).

The Bowling was: - S. Ridge 6-3-6-2; P. Georgiadis 6-0-20-1; M. McCormick 6-0-30-1; G. Brooks 5-0-12-0; G. James 7-1-20-3; S. Ragavan 7-0-15-2

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - Nil

Catches: - One to J. Finucane (w); 2 to both G. O'Shea and D. Pellen; one to M. McCormick

Run outs: - One to D. Glen

Player points (awarded by umpire): 3 points to M. McCormick; 2 points to S. Ridge; one point to G. James

Scorecard: **https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/org/sydney-masters-cricket-association/summer-202324/vintage/game-centre/fe9a2840**

VINTAGE ROUND 7: CCNSW vs SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 14 JANUARY 2024: REPORT BY STUART RIDGE

Plenty to weigh up on a cloudy day at Camperdown against a strong Southern Highlands side - recent high scoring games at Camperdown and a strong track record of 5 games won defending totals, but a green looking new wicket and potential for rain delays in the weather forecast. The skipper won the toss and, giving more weight to the former, decided to bat.

Peter Rolls and John Finucane started watchfully against a tight attack picking off the odd boundary to reach 20 without loss after 8 overs with little indication of the drama to come. Peter was then smartly stumped down the leg side to trigger a monumental collapse of 6-7 in the next 4 overs including 5 wickets in 9 balls, 4 bowled. Good bowling in favourable conditions but probably fair to say some poor defensive application on our part.

Further immediate embarrassment was then prevented by the early arrival of a heavy shower. It was touch and go whether we would get back on but the outfield drained well and a big effort from President Greg Brooks with the super-sopper meant we could resume with another 21 overs to try and repair the damage - much appreciated and acknowledged by the opposition as I think at that stage most of us would have been happy to pack up and go home.

After surviving the unfolding wreckage at the other end, John resumed with new partner Garry James who, just to add to the day's misfortunes, was struggling with a broken toe. After adding another 18 without taking too many risks both fell trying to up the run rate and then in keeping with the tragic-comic nature of the day, Sittampalam Ragavan ("Raga") was run out by half the length of the pitch for our fifth duck.

But we weren't finished - trying to eke out a few more runs for the last wicket, to add further insult to injury, we were penalised 5 runs for a batsman running on the wicket which, including losing the 3 runs from the scoring shot, was a significant chunk of our meager total.

It was all over when skipper Stuart Ridge top edged a pull to be caught leaving us 55 all out in 29 overs.

Barring a miraculous effort, the only remaining question was if the weather would hold. The bowlers were unable to apply the same pressure or get the needed early breakthroughs as Southern Highlands eased to the win in the 11th over with the only highlight being Paul 'golden arm' Georgiadis' first ball wicket.

A humbling experience after five straight wins, but still plenty to play for as we hang on to top spot by six points.

The Team was (playing 12): - Peter Rolls 6; John Finucane (w) 23, Daniel Pellen 0, Frank Baliotis 0, Greg Brooks 5, Mick McCormick 0, Joe Scarcella 0, Garry James 12, David Glen 6*, Sittampalam Ragavan 0, Stuart Ridge (c) 1, Paul Georgiadis dnb

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 10-55 (29.1 Overs) (J. Finucane 23)

Lost to

Southern Highlands: - 1-59 (10.2 Overs)

By 9 wickets

FoWs: - 1-6 (P. Rolls); 2-23 (D. Pellen); 3-23 (F. Baliotis); 4-27 (G. Brooks); 5-27 (M. McCormick); 6-27 (J. Scarcella); 7-45 (G. James); 8-47 (J. Finucane); 9-47 (S. Ragavan); 10-55 (S. Ridge).

The Bowling was: - S. Ridge 3-0-15-0; G. Brooks 3-0-20-0; S. Ragavan 2.2-1-8-0; P. Georgiadis 2.2-0-10-1

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - Nil

Catches: - One to D. Pellen

Run outs: - Nil

Player points (awarded by umpire): 3 points to J. Finucane; 2 points to G. James; one point to D. Glen

Scorecard: https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/org/sydney-masters-cricket-association/vintage-summer-202324/vintage/game-centre/c8024b65

VINTAGE ROUND 8 vs GEORGES RIVER AT BEXLEY OVAL, BEXLEY ON SUNDAY 28 JANUARY 2024: REPORT BY STUART RIDGE

CCNSW won the toss and chose to bat at the picturesque Bexley Oval.

Gerry O'Shea and John Finucane got us off to a good start, adding an untroubled 36 in the first 10 overs. Georges River's first bowling change slowed the scoring rate and first Gerry and then John fell to the new bowler Karpin, bringing Peter Rolls and Greg Brooks to the crease. Brooksie fell for 6 trying to break the shackles and the innings then stalled with only 3-24 added in the second 10 overs. Mick McCormick joined Peter Rolls and runs remained difficult to come by with only another 24 added to leave us at 84 after 30 overs. Mick McCormick, Garry James and Emmanuel Mouglalis fell quickly trying to bring some urgency to the innings and with Rolls retiring at 30*. Frank Baliotis and Sittampalan Ragavan ("Raga") finally found some traction adding a much needed 40 runs in the last 6 overs for a final total of 6-144.

Skipper Stuart Ridge along with Paul Georgiadis took the new ball and things started well with Paul working his customary magic for a first ball breakthrough and Stuart picking up the other opener next over. New bat Adamson then counterattacked reaching his 30* out of a total of 40 in the 9th over with a couple of cracking shots off Ridge. However at 2-40 off 10 things were still evenly poised and our reliable bowling unit began to apply some pressure and chip away at the middle order. Raga, Garry James and Greg Brooks kept things tight but crucially two more Georges River batters were able to reach retirement giving them a buffer at the end of the innings. Mick McCormick and Joe Scarcella then picked up a couple of wickets each as the scoreboard pressure began to tell.

With 25 needed off the last 6 overs and 2 wickets in hand, the hard hitting Adamson returned to the crease and Ridge came back to try and close things out. Despite winning twice from similar situations this year it was not to be;, Adamson continuing where he left off with a flurry of boundaries to complete his 50 and prove the difference between the teams in an otherwise close fought game.

The Team was (playing 12): - Gerard O'Shea 19, John Finucane (w) 20, Peter Rolls 30*, Greg Brooks 6, Mick McCormick 20 Garry James 1, Emanuel Mouglalis 6, Frank Baliotis 19*, Sittampalam Ragavan 19*, Joseph Scarcella dnb, Stuart Ridge (c) dnb, Paul Georgiadis dnb.

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 6-144 (40 Overs) (P. Rolls 30*)

Lost to

Georges River: - 7-147 (37 Overs) ()

By 3 wickets

FoWs: - 1-38 (J. Finucane); 2-39 (G. O'Shea); 3-49 (G. Brooks) 4-82 (M. McCormick); 5-83 (G. James) 6-97 (E. Mouglalis).

The Bowling was: - G. Brooks 7-0-21-0; P. Georgiadis 2-0-13-1; G. James 7-0-23-2; M. McCormick 4-0-12-2; S. Ragavan 6-0-15-0; S. Ridge 7-0-39-1; J. Scarcella 6-0-22-2

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - Nil

Catches: - two to J. Finucane (w) and one each to G. Brook and M. McCormick

Run outs: - Nil

Player points (awarded by umpire): 3 points to P. Rolls; 2 points to M. McCormick; one point to J. Finucane

Scorecard: **https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/org/sydney-masters-cricket-association/vintage-summer-202324/vintage/game-centre/d11800d8**

VINTAGE ROUND 9: CCNSW vs ROSEVILLE ROGUES AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 11 FEBRUARY 2024: REPORT BY DANIEL PELLEN

What began as a summer of promise for our Vintage team, top and undefeated after the first seven rounds, had come crashing down to earth with successive defeats and the team was smarting. We'd dropped from top spot, and the skipper (Stuart Ridge) demanded more in round nine. The old boys responded emphatically.

In a not unfamiliar start, we batted first for the ninth consecutive game. The Rogues were not expected to spring any surprises, but after the last two games we were taking nothing for granted.

John Finucane and Gerry O'Shea (after his Waltersesque "warm-up" with a rolly see https://www.facebook.com/reel/352005761088070) slowly built a solid platform. A little slow for some, with 6 runs off the first four overs, but Gerry's glances and nudges, John's more aggressive strokes, and generally

good running saw the partnership blossom and the score was 0039 after ten overs. The skipper stopped pacing around the oval and relaxed a little.

We all forgot to tell John he was approaching 30 and he was duly dismissed for a fine 28. Sri Lankan Over 60s rep Sittampalam Ragavan ("Raga") generally stays for a good time not a long time, and so it was on Sunday. Driving and thrashing his way to a quick-fire 14, he was out before Gerry could say hello, but the four overs he was there yielded 24 runs.

This brought Greg Brooks ("the Pres") to the crease and after a couple of lusty blows which failed to connect it became the familiar story of the opposition returning balls from over the boundary. By drinks at 20 overs, O'Shea had retired after a typically well-constructed 30* and the Pres had been joined by Peter Rolls. 2-102 and the boys were eyeing off a 200+ score.

The Pres didn't need much longer, bring up his 30* with a maximum just after the break, and our token regional member Mick McCormick successfully negotiated the entrance gate this time and kept the runs ticking along with Rolls.

In his typically understated manner, Rolls was already closing in on his 30*. The runs were clicking along at 5+ an over and we'd passed the 150 mark by the time our third batter was in the bank.

McCormick stayed firm while we lost Dan Pellen (5) and Garry James (4) cheaply, in pursuit of runs. This bought the youngest member of the group, David Glen, to the crease. Soon to be known as BP (the Quiet Achiever), his solid technique and placement was on display again, and there was another in the bank. Though not before McCormick had beaten him to it. Five in the bank! But no time to cash in. A final quick flurry from a spluttering and wheezing Joe Scarcella (15*), contented Ridge (2) and Paul "Big Show" Georgiadis (3* – shot of the day ramp from ball one).

Final score 5-237 – thought by many old-timers to be the highest CCNSW Vintage score.

The less said about the Rogues innings the better. The opening words of Ball Park Music's "Nice To Be Alive" come to mind. We bowled and fielded well, but after 9 overs the Rogues were 2-9, the RRR was 7.7 and the chase was over. The Rogues seemed determined simply to deny us wickets, and therefore points.

Garry James (1-20) was the most expensive bowler, and his economy rate was 2.86! Scarcella coughed his way to 6-4-3-0. He deserved at least one wicket. Paul Georgiadis had the best figures, with 7-1-16-2, closely followed by Raga with 2-19. Ridge and Brooks picked up one each. At 3-50 after 20 overs, the Rogues were frustrating us. They couldn't score, but we couldn't get them out. Captain Whittaker from the Rogues took until about the 35th over to get his 30. O'Shea, Pellen and Glen were a wall on the off-side and Whittaker was requesting field changes. But the pressure paid dividends. Good catches were taken by Pellen, Rolls and Ridge and we got another four wickets and valuable bonus points. 7-86 after 40 overs, a thumping by 154 runs.

It's a tight end to the season, with only 16 points separating the top 3 teams with CCNSW in second spot and with two games to go. With the skipper and Raga on International duties in India next Sunday and a trip to the Hunter in the offing, the back-to-back championship is on the line.

The Team was (playing and batting 12): - Gerard O'Shea 30* (ret not out), John Finucane (w) 28; Sittampalam Ragavan 14, Greg Brooks 31* ret not out, Peter Rolls 30* ret not out, Mick McCormick 30* ret not out, Daniel Pellen 5, Garry James 4, David Glen 31* ret not out, Joe Scarcella 15*, Stuart Ridge (c) 2, Paul Georgiadis 3*

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 5-240 (40 Overs) (G. Brooks 31* ret not out; D. Glen 31* ret not out; M. McCormick 30* ret not out; P. Rolls 30* ret not out. G. O'Shea 30* ret not out)

Defeated

Roseville 7-86: - (40 Overs)

By 154 runs

FoWs: - 1-54 (J. Finucane); 2-75 (S. Ragavan); 3-174 (D. Pellen); 4-189 (G. James); 5-231 (S. Ridge).

The Bowling was: - S. Ridge 7-4-10-1; P. Georgiadis 7-1-16-2; G. James 7-2-20-1; J. Scarcella 6-4-3-0; S. Ragavan 7-0-19-2; G. Brooks 6-0-15-1

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - Nil

Catches: - Two to D. Pellen and one each to S. Ridge and P. Rolls

Run outs: - Nil

Player points (awarded by umpire): 3 points to G. Brooks; 2 points to P. Rolls; one point to S. Ragavan

Scorecard: **https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/org/sydney-masters-cricket-association/vintage-summer-202324/vintage/game-centre/3b99eca1**

VINTAGE ROUND 10: CCNSW vs HUNTER TAVERNERS AT WATERBOARD OVAL TORONTO ON SUNDAY 18 FEBRUARY 2024: REPORT BY GREG BROOKS

As we drove up the Pacific Highway bound for Toronto and Waterboard Oval there was, it is fair to say, some apprehension and nerves as we contemplated life without our skipper Stuart Ridge and one of our key seam bowlers in Ragavan Sittampalam. These two fine players were representing Australia and Sri Lanka respectively at the over 60s World Cup in Chennai, India. We will be following their progress over the next two weeks with great interest.

Our opposition the Hunter Taverners are a tough side to play especially at their home ground with its furry pitch, slow outfield and baseball mounds inside the playing area.

We assembled on time and duly lost the toss, my first act as the stand in skipper. Oh well we were going to bowl first anyway!

In humid conditions both Joe Scarcella and Paul Georgiadis delivered outstanding 7 over spells to rid us of any pre match nerves. Backed up by some fine team fielding and great catching the hosts were reeling at 5-20 after the first 14 overs. Paul finished with the remarkable figures of 4-12 and Joe deserved better than 1-8. Paul is quite remarkable in his simple approach, varying his pace and making the batter play every ball. For Joe, the one wicket he picked up was the best bat in their side so that was good!

Garry James came on and does what he does every match, bowl proper attacking off spin backed by good field settings and no shortage of "Ooohs" and "Arhhs"! He removed their top scorer with a very neat catch

behind by John Finucane…persistence pays at all levels of cricket. Garry was well supported by Mick McCormick who worked as hard as Barnaby Joyce after a parliamentary session but remained upright. Mick delivered the ball of the day to remove the dangerous and chatty James Price who loves rolling commentary on both his batting and your bowling…good value!

Your writer and the always reliable Gerry O'Shea cleaned up the tail in pretty quick time to close out the innings in 35 overs for a total of 66.

The hosts provided a terrific afternoon tea and we sent Gerry O'Shea and John Finucane to face the new ball. The opposition made it tough going with some tight bowling and a ring field so a platform of 0-24 from the first 12 overs was an ideal start. Gerry went lbw for a well made 19 to a jag back which saw Peter Rolls (25*) in at number 3. He didn't muck around, hitting 2 fours and a six as we accelerated towards our target. Getting the runs inside 20 overs maximises bonus points so with this in mind John (14) hit out and got out, having done his job. Dan Pellen joined Peter and immediately looked for runs with sweet timing and good running. He finished 14* and brought up the winning runs with a fine 6 over square leg. Peter never looked like getting out so well done to all four batters. We completed the chase in 20.3 overs to pick up valuable bonus points.

This was a great win with contributions from all in the team. Those that didn't bat or bowl fielded superbly and I want to thank everyone for their team first approach. The league title will come down to the final round. The result is in our hands and our continued team first approach will serve us well with any challenge ahead.

The Team was (playing 12): - Gerard O'Shea 19, John Finucane (w) 11, Peter Rolls 25*, Dan Pellen 14*, Mick McCormick dnb, Greg Brooks (c) dnb, Frank Baliotis dnb, Garry James dnb, Tim Jones dnb, Joe Scarcella dnb, Emanuel Mouglalis dnb, Paul Georgiadis dnb

The Result was: -

St. Clair Utd: - 10-66 (35 overs) (P. Georgiadis 4-12)

Lost to

CCNSW: - 2-67 (20.3 Overs)

By 8 wickets

FoWs: - 1-24 (G. O'Shea) 2- 44 (J. Finucane)

The Bowling was: - J. Scarcella 7-2-8-1; P. Georgiadis 7-2-12-4; G. Brooks 5-2-4-2; G. James 7-2-18-1; M. McCormick 6-0-17-1; G. O'Shea 3-1-7-1

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - Nil

Catches: - one to J. Finucane (w); 2 to G. Brooks and one each to F. Baliotis, T. Jones and D. Pellen

Run outs: - Nil

Player points (awarded by umpire): 3 points to P. Georgiadis; 2 points to P. Rolls; one point to J. Finucane

Scorecard: https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/org/sydney-masters-cricket-association/vintage-summer-202324/vintage/game-centre/4ca48127

VINTAGE ROUND 11 : CCNSW vs DE LA SALLE OLD BOYS AT CAMPERDOWN OVAL, CAMPERDOWN ON SUNDAY 10 MARCH 2024: REPORT BY MICK McCORMICK

Sunny blue skies accompanied the verdure of Camperdown oval to set the scene for the final chapter in the pursuit of back-to-back championship glory for the Vintage swashbucklers. A miserly seven points ahead of 2nd placed Southern Highlands who were playing the most talent challenged side in the league meant the fat lady hadn't even loosened her vocal chords.

To win the toss took on the brevity of obtaining Taylor Swift tickets for 14-year-old twin daughters. Captain Stuart Ridge fresh from World cup glory never flinched from the task, finessing the coin rotations perfectly to achieve the desired outcome.....BAT !!.

The opening pair of John Finucane and Gerry O'Shea donned their cream and off white protective regalia, shunned a warm up and strode confidently to the wicket to commence the quest for run accumulation. Gerry looked in fine touch and was waving his bat with orchestral precision keeping the run rate flowing... Finucane got a bit of a peach of a ball to be out for 3. Sittampalam Ragavan ("Raga") the second member of the team to have bathed in world cup success commenced his innings in his usual no nonsense style until he miscued one to mid-off on 10.

Dan Pellen who displays more promise than a Meriton sales agent got the Steve Smith treatment ...wrapped on the pads and fired. Unlucky again ...sure to be a big part of the trifecta next season. Gerard O'Shea remained unaffected at the other end quietly accumulating runs like a bower bird at a Christmas fête He conveyed his sage like wisdom to the incoming batter....all to no avail, as a conga line of head hangers exited the scene.

Mick McCormick joined O'Shea and was feeling more comfortable than a Jason recliner with a few well-timed shots until a zephyr of inswing disassembled the furniture. Peter Rolls entered the fray with Gerry retiring not out on an epic 31*. Rolls contributed a valuable 20; then Greg Brooks fired up like a Port Kembla furnace facing Mr Wobblegong, bowling from the cafe end.

The statisticians are still working out whether the toll of that over was a claimable rebate from the State government, it was so substantial. 5 fours; .the first nearly decapitating a forlorn fielder being hit with Schwarzenegger like force. For the first time in a Vintage game there was a thought of a mercy rule. Needless to say Peter Roll's birthday guests saw more than just cake.

It was over quickly. However Brooks' 32* ret not out in the bank gave the team the comfort of a childhood blanket. Joe Scarcella unfortunately went for a 'dance and deliver' shot against the 'flim flam' floaty bowling and was halfway to the pavilion before the wicketkeeper impatiently took the ball from in front of the stumps. Mick McCormick who was square leg at the time and is no Daryl Hare or Steve Bucknor, failed to observe the wicket-keeper's indiscretion. This was persistently, emphatically, and mercilessly pointed out for several hours following his umpiring stint.

Garry James probably played his best innings of the season. Impressive strike rate and effortlessly hobbling the speed of Dave Glen in the running between wickets! Garry and Dave put on a valuable partnership of 34 runs. Stuart Ridge also was aggressive and batted together with Paul Georgiadis who had the paddle working like he was in a Penrith whitewater event. They continued the momentum towards 200 runs. Paul went lbw quickly followed by Stuart caught at slip, endeavouring to extract every run from every ball.

We got to the final over and in what some would describe as a brave move whereas others would consider it devoid of any cognitive process, the 'flim flam floaty' bowler returned to bowl against Greg Brooks, the toll master himself.

The spectators lips were drying out from all their licking, Rolls' guests disbanded their cake, the dogs stopped lifting their legs as the anticipation of the carnage that was about to unfold pervaded the whole ground.

Sorry folks...anticlimax. Only to be described as a cluster fade, on the first ball of the over, the toll master dispatched the ball towards the midwicket boundary, it was fielded and a second run seemed secure. Stop start ...yes ..no ...wait ...no go ..don't yes maybe ..shit ! The wise sage was drained of wisdom...the President meanwhile looked as lost and confused as Hansel and Gretel looking for the route home in the forest, as the pair were stranded mid pitch, like boats stuck in the mud after the tide had retreated and Paul Georgiadis was run out.

Never has a run out encaptured so much pathos, so much waste. Final score 10-204.

The De La Salle openers were defiant, resilient even. A few skied shots failed to find a withered hand ...skidders along the deck avoided the stumps and grubbed past John Finucane behind in a thankless task. Paul Georgiadis managed to find the edge of the opening left hander's bat, well taken behind by John Finucane but both the umpire and Paul were oblivious to the wooden sound...a trip to Cochlear in the off season is recommended for both.

In the ensuing conversation some testing of the suitability of helmets for contact sport took place leaving John Finucane prostrate on the ground. Who says Veteran's cricket lacks intensity?

The incident however frustrated the CCNSW players as it was the first time all season a wicket had not been taken in the first half dozen overs. The wicket drought continued until Garry James enticed the number 3 to hit him straight to Stuart Ridge who snaffled a bullet like shot.

Calculations burned through the CCNSW players' craniums as to how many wickets would be sufficient to claim the title ....at least six being the conclusion...however the overs ticked by with scant inroads into the opposition. A number of run out opportunities arose but retirement-home throwing, scarpered those chances. A great bit of up to the stumps keeping to Raga saw the helmet tester stumped just shy of his 30....karma!!!

Garry James picked up another wicket again caught by Ridge. Greg Brooks then just took enough varnish off the off stump to sufficiently shake the bail from its groove.

The adornment of cheap medals placed over the players necks was in sight. But there were no laurels for resting just yet. Mick McCormick bowled late bringing an element of baseball to the proceedings with four hip height full tosses in a row. Unsurprisingly he was unceremoniously roasted and removed from the attack.

Paul Georgiadis then picked up another wicket with a ball that seemed to take forever to hit the stumps and even then the kookaburra was so lacking in energy that it seemed to require some form of vitamin supplements to actually impact the stumps sufficiently.

Stuart Ridge had more than the usual overs up his sleeve and enticed the batter to smash one out to the long on/ mid wicket boundary where Paul Georgiadis took one of the best outfield catches of the season. Stu came on for the final overs and zeroed in on the stumps finally benefitting from the pitches lower bounce comprehensively bowling the last two batters.

So, all 10 wickets taken in the end. Frantic phone calls to the Southern Highlands game confirmed that more than enough had been done by CCNSW to claim the title again. (Ed Note: CCNSW ended up 8.50points ahead of Southern Highlands)

Is a treble, a trifecta, a hat trick of Vintage premierships possible? ...To dream is to live. Time will tell but time is telling.

Bask in the moment. Well done you old bastards.

The Team was (playing 12): - Gerald O'Shea 31, John Finucane 3, Sittampalam Ragavan 10, Daniel Pellen 5, Mick McCormick 8, Greg Brooks 32*, Peter Rolls 20, Joe Scarcella 0, David Glen 14, Garry James 31* ret not out, Stuart Ridge 18, Paul Georgiadis 0

The Result was: -

C.C.N.S.W.: - 10-202 (39 Overs) (G Brooks 32*; G. James 31* ret not out; G. O'Shea 31)

Defeated

De La Salle Old Boys: - 10-161 (39 Overs) (S. Ridge 4-15)

By 41 runs

FoWs: - 1-13 (J. Finucane); 2-31 (S. Ragavan); 3-41 (D. Pellen); 4-53 (M. McCormick); 5-125 (P. Rolls); 6-125 (J. Scarcella); 7-159 (D. Glen); 8-199 (P. Georgiadis); 9-203 (S. Ridge); 10-204 (G. O'Shea).

The Bowling was: - S. Ragavan 6-0-33-1; G. Brooks 6-0-26-3; J. Scarcella 7-1-25-0; M. McCormick 1-0-8-0; P. Georgiadis 5-0-20-1; S. Ridge 7-1-15-4

The Fielding was: -

Stumpings: - One to J. Finucane

Catches: - 2 to S. Ridge; one to P. Georgiadis

Run outs: - Nil

Player points (awarded by umpire): 3 points to G. O'Shea; 2 points to G. James; one point to G. Brooks

Scorecard: **https://www.playhq.com/cricket-australia/org/sydney-masters-cricket-association/vintage-summer-202324/vintage/game-centre/fb5e105d**