

NOMADS v ESHER 2017



A Day We All Smiled

I wasn't too sure where the ground was so I decided to follow Chris Page in his new car to the ground.



All got the Memo and arrived on time, we tossed and I called correctly. I was genuinely questioning what to do, there was significant damp on the surface of the wicket and it looked bowler friendly. I asked the Esher skipper John Woollhead for 5 minutes decision time and went back to the dressing room to consult my senior colleges. All said bowl so I took their advice and decided we would bat.

"When you win the toss, bat. If you are in doubt, think about it, then bat. If you have very big doubts, consult a colleague, then bat."

WG Grace

When I took my 3 kids to Lords Eng v Ireland earlier in the summer we played cricket on the coronation Lawn after lunch, with WG's fine statue utilised as the wicket. One of my lads asked *"who's the dude with the beard."*



In my slim years many moons past Nomads lost very few if any when the batting order was Wakefield, Gavin, Al Derranged, Stokes, While, Wycherley. The Skipper was very confident with one of those guns Rob Wycherley back after I guess about a ten-year break. We were treated to a nice little not out at Hampton Wick Royal, the Thursday previous and Rob who has never disappointed this particular Match Manager (fine hundreds under my leadership v Stowe and Nashville spring immediately to mind circa 2004) and Rob did not disappointed me on this day when he turned up with a fine young Hampshire lass from Upham, Emma Cutcliffe.



Apparently Rob stroked a very fine (79) off 70 balls, but unfortunately the other Nomads didn't see any of it because we were too busy chatting up Emma.



Skips was very concerned having chosen the opening pair when reports started to filter in of a super Chris Tavaré Impression the previous day at Charterhouse from our club captain, Tom Brockton. That fear was soon dismissed with Tom Brockton (48) aided by Rob whom got Nomads off to a flyer 105 when the first wicket (Tom) fell off 16.3 Overs.

Esher cricketer Alex Mason knew Tom from their days together at Northwood C.C. and audibly told the Esher bowlers to under no circumstances give width to Tom on the off side, *'into his legs'* you could hear from the pavilion. Esher's bowlers took note and bowled short with plenty of width outside off stump and Tom took full advantage cutting with ease.



John Woollhead abandoned the seam attack that had done their Skipper no favours and turned to the spin of Steven (20 1 82 2) and Blackhurst (8 1 31 2) and then Burnett 11 5 40 2. Things immediately tightened up and Esher pulled back the run rate considerably, the next 28 overs only prospered Nomads 84 runs for the loss of 5 wickets. When Tom fell just short of his half century and Oliver Smith (0) strode to the wicket, then returned shortly after, having hard handed the ball to short cover. The crowd could see his frustration and were expecting a Matt Prior type bat through the window or a Rambo esq demolition of the pavilion but a petulance glove slap was all we were treated to. As is tradition Oliver collected the money and paid the dues credibly later in the day. John Thornton (33) who the next day embarked on his sixth overseas tour this year, to Rotterdam with XL, played some nice strokes with Rob and then Andrew Smith (13).

It was around about at this point that the best site ever to be witnessed on a cricket ground was seen, Steve Dummer carrying a bottle of Vintage Port for the Skipper. Steve had to pull out of the match with a bad back after a bowling injury, (yes we're all thinking it, *Bowling!*) but it is simply fantastic that he made the effort to come from Basingstoke to Esher – The 'Spirit' of cricket and friendship at its best. Chris Page also turned up at around 2.30 having been working for Bill Johnston earlier in the day, u can't win them all!



Nomads at the 45 Over point were well behind what I thought was a Parr score for the wicket but we were assisted by an excellent knock from our Westminster school contingent, Bank of England Debutant Kit Winder (34*) (who's cousin is Esher's 1st team leg spinner) and Joe Ireland (15*).



I didn't think 220 would be enough for the Nomads and batted a few overs longer than expected. When I finally signalled the last over to the batsmen, Kit hit two exquisite consecutive Sixes over extra cover into the pavilion. Credit to the Esher Bowlers for pulling us back from a potential high 200's score.

Unfortunately genuine talented Nomads youth is rarely seen. On this day however we didn't have to open the bowling with Chris Page's hand grenades we had Kit Winder and Ben Smith who opened the bowling and after 2 wayward overs from Ben the two made us look like a very capable cricket side.

I recognised some genuine talented players in Esher's top order but Kit cleaned bowled both C Burton and M Sarren-Clare for ducks, and when Ben Smith had M Hopkinson caught behind for 23 with a cracking delivery it effectively meant the Nomads were in charge of the game. When A Mason and John Woolhead, who batted aggressively were removed by our spinners and later Esher found themselves 131 for 7 the serious run chase was effectively over. Beddington's Ben Butcher another youngster the pick of the spinners with 12 0 56 2.



Sanjay Thapan another Bank of England recruit bowled extremely well to return figures of 5 1 7 1 and it looked like we could take all 10 at that point. It wasn't to be, Esher's H Witton hit a fluid run a ball 52*. When I rested Sanjay from his bowling duties Chris Page could be heard in the pavilion saying '*Stokes clueless, bloody clueless that boy*'. The truth however was the Skipper should have brought himself on earlier as he could have had 4 wickets in his solitary over. (Figures don't always tell the truth)

Esher finished on a credible 221 for 8. Match Drawn.

The lunch and Tea was first class and well worthy of mention, so a massive thank you from all the Nomads to Duncan P and his team. We drank well, and chatted with a large Esher crowd, while being treated to an U17's 20.20, semi final Esher v Cranleigh, that Esher won comfortably.



Thank you to everyone there from both sides that collectively made it a most enjoyable day for all.

Nice to chat afterwards to another BoE cricketer from years past Vince Chandler and thank you to all of the Esher members for a cracking evening, that Nomads continued in the town. Including the curry house where the bill will be settled with interest just before Xmas.

Thank you very much to our dependable scorer Steve Brewer and thank you to the Mighty Blunderbus for umpiring.

Thank you, John Thornton for stepping in, and sorry to all those that didn't make the side especially Andy Marshall.

A special Thank You to John Woollhead who was the perfect host, a credit to his club, my view may change if he doesn't stop trying to poach my beloved Saturday Skipper.

We all I'm sure look forward to a rematch next year.

Cheers Andy

Blum checks for Zee Germans
'Be Fair' It must have been a good day even Page smiled.



Man of the Match - Rob Wycherley - literally 'the dogs balls'

