

Poloc Academy lose to Western Union select [posted 09/08/09]

Honestly, true. "Victoria CC" arrived at Shawholm for Sunday's Strathclyde League encounter, complete with rent-a-players Z Pasha (Kilmarnock CC) and Mahmood Alam (East Kilbride CC). Surely a club with not one, but two, Saturday elevens can field a team of their own registered members on a Sunday? If not, why enter the league as "Victoria CC"? How depressing. Especially when the rent-a-players proceed to have a big influence on the game: Alam scoring 64 out of 227, before he and Pasha bowled fifteen overs in the second innings. Pasha, in fact, bowling nine! That's one over the allowed allocation? Maybe this "bending of the rules" is allowed too, a bit like not giving out batters caught behind, not giving stumpings, and - *certainly* - not giving LBWs. Yikes, whatever next? It really is depressing.

As was noted by an observer at tea "The guys've done well, they've taken fifteen wickets!" Nowt funnier than life, eh? For some of the Academy boys, this match was the first time they'd encountered player/umpires and it is fair to say they are all now members of the "We thought *Youngy* was exaggerating, but now we know he's not!" club. The fact "Victoria + friends" made it to 227 owed much to the player/umpire cheating referred to: a gloved catch to *Dombo* was overlooked, two "stonewall" LBWs were refused, and two stumpings by *Jas'* were poo-poo'ed. Even wickets that were "allowed" by the player/umpires had elements of farce: wicket one seeing Swarn nick a Bilal Chaudhry delivery to *Dombo* who took it in front of first slip. Umpire's verdict:? Nothing. He stands still. After another appeal - and travel advice from a few *'Loc* fielders - the batter is given out by the [embarrassed?] square-leg umpire! Bonkers. And it didn't get any better, particularly as two stumpings, which 'keepers and slips usually know are "in" or "out", were deemed "not out". Incorrect. Both were "out". Astonishing, and we've not even got to the more routinely contentious decision: LBWs!

And, of course, part of the ridiculousness of this nonsense is that a fair few of the oppo' players can play a bit. Opener Raja bunts it effectively, Ali plays decent shots and rent-a-player Alam's 64 was an impressive display of shot making all around the paddock. So why cheat?

What a game tho' nevertheless. 227 all out was posted in the end and *the 'Loc* were still comfortable this was chase-able-down, at tea. The top-order was pretty much as usually is, altho' *Pasty* was playing elsewhere. *Muscles* opened with *NJ* therefore, as the latter continued his rehab'. And everything was going fine until Aamir inexplicably ran himself out. This was then followed by Dani' continuing his tough trot, hacking across the line after getting just 4. Could any *'Locster* come in and realise ship-steadying was a decent idea before trying to do the spectacular? Scotty M was next to try,.....and fail, as he lost his leg stump shuffling across. Joshy then went for a *Webbed Feet Award* entry, and *Bil'y* ran himself out. Bonkers. Luckily Matty and *Toko* did, eventually, bring some order to chaos and they would slowly bring *the 'Loc* back into things. Matty eventually went, stumped down the leg side - a decent bit of cric' - and *Toko* found himself with *Dombo*,.....briefly. *Toko* eventually tried a swish too many. *Dombo* then had a brief time with *Batspeed* before finding *Youngy* as his last partner. In the end only 160 had been mustered in reply. A pretty poor result from a decent start. And here's yet another irony, the way *the 'Loc* boys batted the Victoria President's XI wouldn't have needed any more than about 170 anyway, so why the cheating!

The bowling out of the Select side had been no mean feat given the circumstances, and owed much to some decent grabs by *the 'Locster* fielders: Aamir and *Youngy* taking good catches in the deep, Matty a grab in the slips, and Dani' a couple too. Amir's "3-for" was a nice display of straight and, in the main, full swing bowling, whilst *Nichty* helped himself to a "5-for" at the end. Bil'y, too, had bowled a tight opening spell.

Another defeat tho', irrespective of the circumstances. Still top of the division tho', and two matches versus Prestwick to play. Everything still to play for. And, finally, note to self: book those neutral umpires.....

Academy lose at last [posted 02/08/09]

It had to happen eventually I guess. And Sunday against Queen's Park was the day, two years after the Academy boys first donned their flannels and entered the Strathclyde League. And let's remember why we entered the league. Not really to win it, but to learn how to play in these longer matches. And hopefully the boys will learn from this - their first - defeat. They hung on in there in the match, Queen's Park only winning it with three balls left. There's a positive. But what isn't a positive is the bad-tempered behaviour on show. Why oh why grown men old enough to be the Academy boys' dads felt the need to bait *the 'Locsters* no-one will be able to explain to this scribe. But bait them they did - on the field, and off it. To the extent that *'Locster* fielders targeted had to be moved from fielding in front of the clubhouse! What's that all about? And whilst it has to be said that *the 'Locsters*

have to learn not to react, it's not unreasonable to expect adults to take the lead. And this wasn't the only point of controversy: there's four overs left and Joshy's bowling, *QP* need 21 to win. The visitors number two batter is still in, and he's controlling the run-chase. His partner is at the striker's end and drives a delivery straight back at Josh. The big fella sticks out a hand and deflects the ball onto the stumps at the non-strikers ends. Howzat! The batter - Kamran - walks. And we're talking five/six yards towards the clubhouse. But then the umpire says "Not out". He hadn't seen it! No consultation, no second opinion: "Not out". Kamran returns and bats through for an unbeaten 60-odd to see his side home. On such decisions are close games decided. But there were also other mistakes, and not by the officials. Zaeem bizarrely picked up a ball sitting inside the rope whilst standing outside costing 2 runs. Catches were grassed. Balls were misfielded, and some of the bowlers were less-than-economic at key stages. As it was it came down to the 70th over [Ed: the match had been reduced to 35-overs-a-side] and Queen's Park needed just 2. *Youngy* bowled the over with the other bowlers bowled out. Ball #1 cleaned up Din, ball #2 was a dot, but ball #3 was hit straight for the required 2 runs. Pity. Defeat. But still positives: as noted, hanging in in a game despite some intimidation, chipping away and sticking to bowling plans as best they could, and almost seeing themselves come through another close one.

Going back to the first innings, *the 'Locsters* had posted 165 for 8 with contributions from *Muscles* (35) and *Toko* (39). But others had gotten starts but not gone on: *Pasty* (11), *Dani* (20), *Bil'y* (13) and *Dombo* (12) come to mind. Maybe the score was 15 to 20 light, and that's not just with the benefit of hindsight readers!

Defending 165 was certainly possible, but the visitors got off to flyer, as Zaeem and *Dombo* went at around 5s. 51 for 0 off the first ten overs wasn't the ideal start. *Dombo* had given the gloves to Scotty as he'd a 'plane to catch at 8 o'clock and so his seven-over spell was all pretty much up-top. He'd eventually dismiss 'keeper Tafiq for 3 after *Bil'y* had gotten rid of Tariq Din, and would return figures of 7-2-32-1, after an economic start was dented by, in particular, Kamran. After Jason's and Zaeem's opening spells *Pasty* and *Bil'y* then bowled nicely in tandem - *Bil'y* would bowl his seven overs for just 23, whilst *Pasty's* 3 for 29 in his seven-over spell was crucial in pulling his side back into the game as wickets started to fall. Then Josh started well, which brings us to that run out incident already noted. Pity.

So defeat, but no disgrace. And things to learn, not least about how to deal with oppo' baiting. And so we'll finish this short report where we started: the bad-tempered and frankly unacceptable behaviour that was on show. There's just no need for it, and it does the game no good. *The 'Locster* youngsters have some things to learn in this department too; but surely the *QP* boys, sorry grown adults, have to take a hard look at themselves? Win at any cost? Disregard *The Spirit of the Game*? Only the individual can decide.....

The winning run continues [posted 05/07/09]

It was *Dark Side* versus *Rebel Alliance* Part Lots on Sunday as the two clubs faced off in the Strathclyde League return fixture. There were a few changes in the *Forces of Evil's* line up with *Chief Darth* Hart off invading a hitherto friendly western European country with some members of the *Evil Empire's* Youth Wing. So in Timmy's absence Jamie Sinclair was given the skipper's arm band [Ed: does such a thing exist in cric?]. And, for the fourth time in eight days *Youngy* called wrongly to give Sinclair the choice. He chose to have a bat.

The 'Dale opened with "Overseas Amateur" Leon Scott, and Winter *'Locster*, Paddy Barbour. For *the 'Locsters* Zaeem and *Bil'y* opened the bowling. As ever at *Toytown* the boundaries aren't the biggest, but this match was played on the far side of the square meaning there was a tote'y wee boundary towards the hockey pitch, and a long - okay, normal-sized - boundary towards *Hutch'y*. Scott has a reputation for tee'ing off from ball #1, and this game was no different as he opened his account with four boundaries. However it took him five overs to hit'em, with innumerable "swings and misses" at - in particular - *Z's* deliveries from the far end. In fact Leon determined the forward defensive - shock, horror - was a better option. But to no avail, and to everyone's - including his own - entertainment he continued to play and miss. It was genuinely amusing. Leon, in particular, seeing the funny side. In amongst this "entertainment" Paddy had nicked off to *Teflon* Millen who, in his own inimitable style, had juggled the regulation catch. But catch it he had. 8 for 1. Then it was 9 for 2 as Jamie Sinclair chipped a *Bil'y* delivery to Josh at mid-on. 17 for 3 then followed as Leon nicked a *Z* delivery to *Dombo* who was loitering with a sore hammy in the slips. It was a genuinely good, low, grab by the daft Kiwi who showed Scotty how to take a smart catch behind the twigs without juggling. Watch and learn *JSD*, watch and learn.

Then, having made the inroads they'd hoped for - 17 for 3 in the seventh over - for some reason the bowlers decided to stop bowling anything resembling good "channels", and the whole mood changed. Bowling changes

were made but the new guys coming in to the attack seemed similarly unable to control the red cherry. With the field spread and split to try and cover all the bases, *the Dale* pushed up the run rate. Singh and Andrew Scobie added 97 for the fourth wicket, thanks in the main to a failure of a plethora of miss-hits to land in other than gaps, *the 'Locster* bowlers bowling "pies" as noted, and the odd dropped catch thrown in for good measure. Messrs. Chaudhry, Dombroski and Millen step forward. None were "dolly's", but all were chances that sometimes stick. At drinks the home side were sitting pretty at 114 for 3. The message at the interval being to stick in and try and improve the areas bowled in. And the message seemed to have got in as *NJ* took a one-handed grab over his head to finally get rid of Singh, and then *Youngy* - having brought himself into the attack - got rid of Scobie. Talk of Scobie, who top-scored with 62, begs mention of the "Cheeky Moment in the Game". Nicky bowling to Singh. Singh pushes the ball out to mid-wicket. *Youngy* scoops the ball up and makes to shell in to Scotty who's standing up. At the last minute Singh jumps back into the line of the throw. *Youngy*, who's in mid-throw, pulls out of the throw midway and the ball half lobs, half rolls safely past the stumps. Accident averted, Singh's life saved. Scobie's reaction? "Cheers buddy, thanks for that"? Eh, nope. "Com' on, one run!" Unbelievable. In the words of *Nichty*: "Cricket's the loser".

Back to the game tho'. Scobie and Singh departing meant there were two new batters in play. But, unfortunately, *the 'Locster* bowlers' errors continued. *Muscles* was given a go, as *Youngy* - who'd just bowled a couple of overs - tried his seventh bowler. But, despite getting rid of Mark Williams, *AK* was similarly expensive. As the tail wagged, big Calum Lindsay smacked a quick-fire 46 (much in tandem with Leon Newman who made 14), before Johnny Mackay - using the cricket world's largest bat - bunted a cameo 24 that included a maximum onto the astroturf! A shot, dear reader, your reporter believes might cost Mr Millen some cash as there was - allegedly - an offer of a new bat for Mr Mackay should the latter hit a 6! Tee, hee. See you in *Greaves* Scotty!!

Once the dust had settled the scoreboard showed 241, and *the 'Locsters* would need to go at sixes for 40 overs to get the win, and keep *that* run going. Nicky opened with Aamir for the second game running and the guys got off to a flier as they flayed *the Dale* opening bowlers around. 41 for none after six overs was an ideal start. "Ideal", however, was *not* the word to describe the shambolic running cock-up that resulted in *NJ*'s early departure. Run out. Sigh. *Muscles* tho' was having a purple-patch of a weekend and, putting the *Keystone Cops* run out behind him, went on to add 55 with Dani' who was in at three. Aamir eventually went, bowled by Singh, but he'd contributed much to the good start continuing. Scotty then joined Dani' and the runs kept coming as Sinclair tried, in vain, to find - as *Youngy* had in the first innings - a bowler who could bowl "full and straight". And when Scotty was cleaned up by Lindsay for a quick-fire 37 it was *Toko*, with ma' and pa' in attendance, who carried right on, bunting maximums and hitting boundaries, all round *Toytown*. With the required run-rate falling as fast as the credibility of the notion there are dangerous footholds at Shawholm, the game's only really contentious incident popped up. Mackay to *Toko*, leg-side delivery, flash, noise, ball pouched by Scobie. Big appeal. *Toko* unmoved,.....*as* was umpire Leitch. And how unhappy was Mr Mackay! The bedding, pillow, blanket *and* toys all came out of the pram as both umpires were left in no doubt as to *JM*'s feelings on the matter, and Poloc much more generally!

But by then 'twas all in vain as the winning runs came with plenty overs in hand. So a good win with good contributions with the bat from all the batters, not least the not out *Toko* (54*) and Dani' (70*). But, and it *is* a "but", the first half bowling, and fielding, was poor, very poor. The guys can't expect to chase 240+ every week, and so will have to bowl much better in the remaining games of the season. Next week it's Prestwick away.

You Bute! [posted 28/06/09]

Poloc's Academy side made the first ever trip to Bute to play the islanders on their home patch. Boat trip! And what a day!! Well planned, smooth crossing, chauffer-driven to the ground, nice policies, great tea, and a win! Can't beat it. In fact all that was missing was some attractive cheerleaders,.....wait a minute they were there too - quietly,.....okay, loudly, supporting their men-folk, complete with "4" and "6" cards, singing, and deckchairs in gazebo. Fan-tastic!

The game itself was great fun too. *The Meadows* ground isn't Shawholm, but it's picturesque and quirky. One quadrant of the ground has a boundary that's likely only around 30 yards - anything wayward down leg-side races for 4, and nicks result in maxima! Love it. And the home side's Guy Crichton obviously knows the geography of his home ground as he hit ten 6s on his way to 101. Well batted that man,.....or should I say that Guy [Ed: groan!] Around him there were contributions from skipper Mark Crichton and Alan Peacock, both making 30-odd. All three were victims of *Youngy*, but at a cost! Grandad and Aamir bore the brunt of the Bute County middle order's

fireworks before, with the big hitters gone, Scotty Millen was given a provisional bowling licence to roll his arm over for a couple of overs. And somewhat distressingly he grabbed a wicket! There's no justice.

Going back to Crichton's knock - and semi-seriously for a moment - the big-levered home batter was dropped more than a couple of times on his way to his ton, Zaeem seemingly a particular favourite target for his bunts. In addition to *Youngy's* "3-for", *Bill'y* grabbed two scalps, with Scotty, Zaeem and *NJ* taking a wicket each as eight wickets fell. After 40 overs of carnage, at what the locals call "The Bowlers' Graveyard", 224 had been posted. But was that on a "normal"-shaped/sized ground? Who knows,.....and post-match the guys still didn't know!

In *Pasty Face's* and Dani's absences the top order saw *NJ* promoted to open with Aamir. But the opening partnership gathered just 8 before *AK* got a genuinely good delivery from Mark Crichton to send him back to the spectator hill. Nicky then survived a decent LBW shout before settling down with Scotty Millen, in at three. And before you could say "play yourselves in guys" it was 123 for 1 and the guys were motoring along. Both had gone past 50 and looked comfortable. Then, of course, both got out, both courtesy of catches by that man Mark Crichton again - 123 for 3! *Toko* in with Max. And now it was fireworks time as *Toko* took [Ed: hey, that's an anagram!] to the back up bowling. Bunt, bunt bunt. 4, 6, 4. Suddenly it was all over - 224 chased down inside 29 overs. *Toko* 83 not out, nine 4s and five 6s. Thank you and good night!

No, seriously, "thank you" - a great day out, pleasant surroundings and decent crowd, good banter and nice teas! Can't beat it. Pencil-in the 2010 away trip in your diaries now people. The Academy remain unbeaten - next up the return against Clydesdale.

Four out of four! [posted 14/06/09]

The Academy versus Victoria away fixture became a quasi-home game as the match was switched from Glasgow Green's astro-turf to Shawholm's turf. And in the continuing sunshine the match would end up with win #4 for *the 'Loc*. The match itself was a game of two halves; in fact two parts really. The first part saw the Victoria top-order bunt and bash their way towards what looked like being a gargantuan total. Seven-an-over was the run-rate as Raja (55), Jase (39), Ali (63) and Mohammed (21) hit 6s and 4s apparently at random. But surely they couldn't keep missing fielders as they went aerial every ball. The answer: nope. And as the big hitters departed the tail was less effective and offered little resistance as the Academy bowlers all chipped in, grabbing wickets. *NJ*, Josh and *Bill'y* took two each, and *Pasty* notched up a "3-for". None bar *Bill'y's* economy figures would look too good however, but the job had been done - Victoria all out. 209 to win.

What was needed was a quick start. And it came. *AK* and *Pasty* started off at 5s,.....and the run-rate didn't fall throughout. *Muscles* was first out as he was bowled by Dar for 6. Scotty followed shortly thereafter as he nicked off to Jase, to Mohammed behind the stumps. This brought *Toko* to the middle. And the man in form - he'd smacked 126 the day before - didn't disappoint. 88 runs later and it was another good knock. But unlike the day before it was in a winning effort. Adding to *Pasty's* run-a-ball 27 up top, Dani' gave good support to *Toko* and his unbeaten 41 was a well-compiled, sensible, knock. Well batted guys.

A final comment or two on proceedings: by the end of the match Victoria had three substitute fielders on after a number of on-field injuries. One had suffered a nasty gash to his leg after slipping and sliding in to the sightscreen at the river end and was taken to Casualty, another twisted something, and third had a bad case of cramp. Our best wishes for a speedy recovery go to Ulhas for a speedy recovery from his gashed leg. *The 'Loc's* innings also ended up with Victoria having swapped wicket-keepers mid-way through their fielding effort and - not including the sub' fielders (one of whom fielded in bare feet throughout!) required - Victoria's number ten bat, Rashid Butt, having fielded the entire time in jeans and a white dress shirt! That's Sunday cric' for you I guess!

So game #4, win #4. Nice - now it's off to Bute in a few weeks time.....

Academy win again....in another thriller [posted 07/06/09]

Three wins on the bounce was the outcome of Sunday's Strathclyde League fixture at Shawholm. With Dani' and Scotty away, and more call offs than Burley might expect for a friendly away in Albania, it was a much-changed Academy side that took on Queen's Park; but the result was the same. A competent bowling performance was matched by a run-chase that saw the guys home with a few balls to spare.

164 all out in 39.5 overs was passed in the 37th over of *the 'Loc* reply.

The first half of the first half [Ed: hope you're still with us?] had suggested that the home side might be chasing much less than 165 to win however, as the visitors slumped to 50 for 7. *Pasty Face* was twirling his leggies and had grabbed a "4-for", and in tandem with *Bil'y* and *Maddy*, had skittled the Queen's Park top order. But as we know: "it ain't over 'til it's over". And Naveed, batting at nine, would go on to "bunt" an unbeaten 64, with the tail for company. In fact some of the late swinging resulted in some pretty big maximums being struck. And as ever a couple of dropped catches in the deep could've been assessed after the match as having cost *the 'Loc* dear. As it was they didn't, but the point's still valid. *Bil'y* ended up with a "3-for" to sit along side *Pasty's* "5-for"; 164 all out the total posted.

In reply *the 'Loc* lost their first wicket with the score on 13; *NTB* bowled. *Muscles* went on however and, despite losing *Dombo'*, *Nicky* and *Toko* cheaply, to decent catches, he held things together. Momentum was then added by the rest of the middle order, particularly *Batspeed* (28). And, after Aamir had perished for 23, it was *Nichty* (41*) that worked with the tail to see the side home. A decent run chase then, not least given the middle order "oops" that had seen just 15 runs from batters three through five. Well done to *Batspeed* - the "man in form" - and to *Nichty* for holding their nerves, keeping the 'board ticking over, and - in the end - securing win #3.

A win snatched from the jaws of defeat, that had nearly been snatched from the jaws of victory!!

[posted 31/05/09]

Today saw the re-arranged Strathclyde League encounter with Clydesdale played at Shawholm. And it was another scorcher of a day as this, the latest, derby encounter between the forces of good and the *Evil Empire* was played out. The Strathclyde League, and the Poloc Academy's appearance therein, has provided yet another two derby fixtures - great stuff!

Skipper *Darth Hart*, himself, won the toss, smirked, and determined his side would bat first - in other words he really decided that what would happen would be that *the 'Loc* boys could sweat in the mid-day sun rather than his boys. Cheers! Anyway, in the field it was. *The 'Dale* opened with Guyana Under 19, and Overseas Amateur, Leon Scott, and Aged Under 19, and complete amateur, Johnny Mackay :-)) 12 were added before Mackay was first to go; snaffled by *NJ* off *Joshy's* bowling. This brought the experienced Haroon Sher to the middle and he and Scott added 48 for the second wicket, both finding the boundary rope with a frequency that convinced Youngy Snr. that they were quite enjoying the seam attack, and so spin was turned to. This brought almost immediate rewards as, after smacking a maximum off ball #1, two balls later Scott became *Pasty Face's* first victim of the afternoon. LBW. Fraser and Andrew Scobie then quickly followed, the latter *NJ's* first scalp, before Sher departed courtesy off a beautiful slip catch by *Nichty* off *Pasty Face's* bowling. 72 for 5 now. Then it was 74 for 7 as Tim Hart and Ben Buchanan became Youngy Jnr's third and fourth wickets of the innings. But complete collapse was averted by Zeeshan Bashir's entrance to proceedings. He held the tail together and would be the ninth wicket - falling to a decent grab running backwards by *Muscles* - having taken the score on to 121. Newman then was last out as *Toko* - a.k.a. *The Finisher* - came into the attack and finished with a wicket. 121 all out.

After tea - thanks the Ms's Coyle - it was *the 'Loc* run chase. Matty opened with *Muscles* and sensible progress was made. 22 was on the 'board when the latter holed out to Berman at mid on. A little unlucky methinks as it wasn't the worst shot. Matty then batted nicely with Scotty M and 53 was added before Scotty was run out. He'd played freely, striking the ball sweetly, accumulating 32. And his knock had added a nice impetus to the reply just when it was needed. *Dombo'* then became *Nichty's* third partner of the afternoon, until - that is - he, too, was run out. This left *Dombo'* and *Toko*. At this juncture *Darth* decided to call for his elite *Stormtroopers*. And so it was we had the nice cameo comp' between Bashir and Scott, and *Dombo'* and *Toko*. And probably on balance *the 'Loc* guys sneaked it, with Bashir picking up *Toko's* wicket, but *Dombo'* staying put to - hopefully - see the match through. 111 for 4 was the score when *Bil'y* (who'd come in for *Toko*) was run out victim #3. This in *'Dale* septugenarian Newman's first over. 111 for 5. 11 needed to win. *Dombo'* was joined by *NJ*. Said *NJ* rushed Newman's first floated delivery, missed it, and was promptly stumped by 'keeper Scobie. 111 for 6. Two overs later and *Dombo'* became victim #2 for Newman. Unbelievable! Enter *Joshy*. 2 needed to win. And a-la *NJ* it would be a short stay: another first-baller: looped delivery, swing-and-a-miss, bowled. 2 to win, now eight down. Farcical. And how was victory secured? Why, of course, by overthrows: Hart to Young Jnr, cut, single, overthrows, win.

Unbelievable: a comfortable win - in fact a crushing win - turned into a near defeat. Possible reasons why were briefly floated in a short post-match conflag - needless to say they centered on complacency, and no little disrespect for an oppo' bowler. Said bowler finishing with 3 for 8 thank you very much! But, on reflection, the

farical end maybe shouldn't take away from another very good performance with the ball with the Academy's youngsters showing no little aptitude, and their efforts being backed up in the field with almost everything being held.

Academy win first up [posted 04/05/09]

The Academy's first Strathclyde League match versus Bute County resulted in win number one. Number one of many it's hoped. A comfortable win can be summarised by the visitors batting first and being skittled for just 71, a total *the Loc* boys chased down for the loss of just a couple of wickets before drinks.

Bute County Cricket Club was formed in the 19th Century we learned on Sunday, yet despite this - and its involvement in west of Scotland cricket since - the 2009 Strathclyde League opener was the first time Poloc and BCCC had played each other. Resplendent in the brand new Slaz' "trackies", the Bute guys arrived in good time for a 1pm start, a fw post-match refreshments and a comfortable return trip to catch the last boat back home. And winning the toss, the visitors' skipper opted to have a bat.

At 7 for 2, with Daniels and the first of two Crichtons back in "the hutch" however, this didn't look such a smart decision - *Bil'y* and Josh grabbing a wicket a-piece to leave Bute in a bit of bother. 41 was added for wicket three though, with stability being restored. Opener Mannell and his third partner, Crichton, had combined to push their side's total along nicely - in quite different fashions. Mannell, a sweeper and puller; Crichton, a giant of a man with long levers who bunted the wee red sphere to between 10 o'clock and 1 o'clock, including one flat-batted smack back over *BZ's* head,....and the sightscreen at the Burrell End! How to separate the two? Answer: spin. *NJ* and *Pasty Face* came in to the attack and carnage resulted. Crichton nicked *Pasty* to *NJ* at first slip before between them, the offy/leggie combo' saw to the remaining seven Bute batters, including Mannell who went having top-scored with 31. *NJ* finished with 5 for 19; *Pasty* 3 for 13.

Worthy of note, too, was some decent work in the field, with Max and Elliot taking three good high catches between'em, to add to *NJ's* good low grab at slip and Scotty recording stumping number one of a new season.

72 to win then. *AK* and *Pasty* opened for the Academy and had put on 49 before the latter decided a 50 opening partnership just wasn't on and was beaten by one that nipped back from Lintermanns. This brought *Toko* to the crease and with the healthy crowd calling for some blade-action he faced ball #1 from wicket-taker Lintermanns. A swish of *JJ's* bat later and his strike-rate was 400. The crowd roared their approval! Sadly this was the high point as less than a handful of balls later *Toko* was re-seated on the spectator benches, out for an all-too-brief 9. This left Scotty Millen to grab his customary "not out" (5*) and chaperone *Muscles* through to the win.

So one out of one, with the Bute boys turning out to be great guys, and clearly cricket mad! Next week it's *the Dark Side*, again at home.