

Prestwick seen off in the Evening League [posted 05/08/14]

It wasn't the best of evenings at *the 'Loc* tonight, fairly dark and dank conditions greeting the *Prestwick 8* who'd come up the M77 for an Evening League match. The eight featured "Overseas Amateur" Blake Emblem however, as well as five other 1st XI regulars. The Academy side, chaperoned as usual by *Piercey*, featured the usual suspects from the junior ranks. After the toss it would be Prestwick who batted first. And in a first innings that - fortunately - saw just the one rain break, the visitors posted 120. Exactly a-run-a-ball, two wickets falling in the process. Ahmed-Raza got the two wickets to fall, both courtesy of catches: one for *CJ* behind the stumps, and the other by *Stiffy* in the deep. Best bowling was likely from *Hollywood* and *Beast* who opened the bowling, their combined figures being 8-0-30-0, whilst for Prestwick Jake Stafford top-scored with 35, with cameos from Rafiq (28) and Emblem (29*).

121 was the target therefore, and with just the eight bodies to avoid in the field, it should be relatively straight-forward if the batters did their jobs. And pleasingly they did. *Willowbobby* and *Stiffy* opened for the *Panthers* and put on 87 for the first wicket, Dougie being run out for 23 after a *Keystone Cops* running between the wickets event with Elliott. *Stiffy* was then joined by *Rosco* but he didn't disturb the scorers and came and went for a *Webbed Feet Award* entry. This left *Beast* time to get a cheeky wee *Sheriff* (12*) and he and *Stiffy* saw their side home, Elliott finishing 73 not out (54 balls). So a good run out on a fairly depressing night weather-wise, but good nevertheless to get a game in after the recent even worse (!) weather.

Not quite enough [posted 29/07/14]

The Academy side finished 4 short of their target to beat Kelburne this evening, losing by 3 runs as they just couldn't get to the finish line marked "103 runs". They were chasing Kelburne's total of 102 for 6, a score that owed much to Campbell's 34, and Ogilvie's unbeaten 28. On the bowling side Ahmed-Raza was again the standout performer as - bowling first change - he returned 4-0-11-1. *Hollywood's* (4-0-17-1) and *Beast's* (4-0-18-1) opening the attack were also pretty good and meant that a really big score would be difficult to post for the Whitehaugh hosts.

In the run-chase, Dougie and *Piercey* opened, the skipper continuing his pinch-hitting role. Dougie (2) would go cheaply, but *Piercey* - with an eventual 22 - carried on with *Beast* (in at three) and put on a decent second-wicket partnership. But neither went on to make a really big score, *Piercey* being trapped leg before by Campbell and *Beast* getting cleaned up by the same bowler. After these two departed *CJ*, like Dougie, went cheaply, leaving Uzzair (16*) and Yash (2*) to try and get the winning runs. But it wasn't to be and the Academy would finish on the slightly odd-looking 99 for 4, just those 4 runs shy of their target. A good match nonetheless and an exciting finish - close but no cigar!

Still unbeaten [posted 20/07/14]

Piercey's Posse are still unbeaten in the Sunday League after the side returned from The Tryst with the win points after today's clash with Stenhousemuir. The winning margin was a whopping 108 runs, and isn't to be sniffed at given the home side featured both *Stennie's* overseas players, as well as four others who'd played in the CSL match between the clubs - won by Stenhousemuir - in June. The game was played in good spirit and on another warm and sunny day. The ground was also in good nick, with only a little dampness in the outfield, the last remnant of the day before's torrential rain. After the toss - won by *Piercey* - the Academy were batting.

Piercey and *Pasty* opened but had put on just 18 when the former was bowled by Gardner. *Beast* was in at three, and he and *Pasty* added another 30 for the second wicket, this seeing *Pasty* caught at slip by Jappie for 25 (30 balls). This brought *CJ* to the middle to create the first of two family batting combo's that would be seen in the innings. The *James Boys* looked comfortable, and - though the run-rate slowed a little - they batted sensibly, rotating the strike well. The score went past 50, and had reached 87 when Lewis (26 from

47 balls) was third out, holing out to Morton off Grant's bowling. 87 for 3 then became 103 for 4 after Uzzair came and went for 5 (sixteen balls). There were then a couple of partnerships in the teens before the second family partnership - between the *Stout Boys* - added 28 for the seventh wicket. *Stouty* getting caught by Halcrow off Pono's bowling ended this burgeoning partnership, but Matty continued on to top-score with 29 (19 balls). His departure at the end of the 34th over then allowed the tail their time in the sun. Robert (8), *Hollywood* (8) and Bilal (8) all chipped in with useful runs in the closing overs, Haider being last out in the final over. 184 all out.

After the usual top tea at *Stennie* it was the home side's turn to bat. And their reply started with the same opening pair who'd opened in the 1st XI league on the same ground a month ago. But the Academy's opening bowling attack of *Hollywood* and *Beast* never let them settle, and an early breakthrough came. In fact breakthrough followed breakthrough, as the home side struggled to form partnerships. None of the batters would get past 11, and only four would get in to double figures. The first sixteen overs of spin saw three wickets taken and only 53 runs conceded. Then the change bowlers of Matty and the *Enforcer* dealt with the most of the rest. There was a run out thrown in for good measure too, Haider returning a good flat throw to *CJ* from backward square leg to get rid of Grant. Matty would, in fact, get a "3-for", and when he bowled Douglas without scoring, home pro' Jappie was stranded on a sheriff, his side 76 all out.

So a good game, more invaluable experience for the Academy's young players, and great to play on another beautiful day, *Stennie* being good hosts.

So near yet.... [posted 15/07/14]

It was a case of nearly this evening as the Academy *nearly* pulled off a great run-chase, looking for 143 to beat visitors Active Life Club in the Evening League. In the end the side was dismissed 13 runs short, and it wasn't to be. But the defeat likely has its genesis not in the batting effort in the second innings, but in the rotten fielding that sporadically reared its ugly head throughout the first. Throw in some pretty woeful bowling at times - particularly length - and, likely, a win might not have reflected the Academy's performance overall.

In that first innings, only two Academy bowlers had gone at less than 7.5 runs-an-over! The two were Ahmed-Raza, who again showed real control as he returned figures of 4-0-17-2 amidst the carnage, and *Ihty* whose two overs up-top cost just 9. The rest however had "18" certificate numbers, with far too many balls dragged down with the result being the Active Life wagon wheel showed a majority of their runs being scored backward of square on the leg side! Oh-oh. 145 runs were plundered, and only 7 in extras. One small consolation maybe. There were also some bright spots intermittently on show. *Piercey* and *Stiffy* both pulled off good grabs, and Yash executed two smart stumpings.

146 to win. And the run-chase started at a rare old pace. The Academy raced out of the traps and were 80 for 1 after ten overs. #Toffee Surely? Eh, nope, a mid-second-half-of-the-innings collapse took all the steam out of the chase. *Beast* was batting well with *Piercey* (after *Stiffy* had made a quick 34 at the top of the order) but then for some unknown reason decided to run down the wicket at one and was stumped. 93 for 2. He'd made a good 18 at more than a run-a-ball. Problem now was there was a "end open" for the visitors, and boy did they dive right in. *Beast's* dismissal was the catalyst for two wicket maidens right in the middle overs. Momentum gone. Run-rate climbing. Backs to the wall. And though over seventeen was an event in itself and saw 9 runs accumulated through wides and no balls (called for Mohammed being deemed to be using an illegal action), the side really were never in it after Lewis's departure. *Piercey* followed shortly afterwards, and though *CJ* (11 from sixteen balls) and *Roberto* (11 from just eight balls) did their best, the side eventually ran out of batters in the last over, being all out for 132. 13 short of the target.

So a cracking night to be playing, a decent run-chase, something to think about for more than a few as regards standards achieved with ball in hand or in the field, and maybe something to reflect on for the opposition too as regards their actions and reactions when the no balls were called.

Derby win in the sunshine [posted 13/07/14]

The Academy returned from over-by this evening with Sunday League win points in their pockets. In a well-matched and competitive match, *Piercey's* charges saw off the *Dark Side* by 37 runs after posting 221 for 5 batting first. The big total owed much to the skipper's own barnstorming innings at the top of the order as he put on 77 for the first wicket in partnership with *Beast*. He'd eventually be dismissed for exactly 50, his first half century for the club. Lewis made 32, too, but they weren't alone in the top order in making scores. Owais was the other Academy batter who got to 50, his departure coming after he'd made 1 run more than *Piercey*. And *Ihty* chipped in with an unbeaten 45 too, batting at five. In fact none of the batters who made it to the middle failed to get in to double figures. 221 for 5 then, and a decent total to post.

After tea it was *the 'Dale's* reply. Their run-chase was spear-headed by Ghaffar and Siddiqui, and it was the latter who made the biggest contribution - top-scoring on the day with 70. He eventually went, caught by Owais off Matt Stout's bowling. Like the Academy, though, there were others making scores in the top order too. Ashraf score 32, and there were double-figure contributions from Ghaffar, Haider, Kakar and Adie. But aside Siddiqui, no-one else came up with that really telling knock, and as wickets tumbled at regular intervals after Siddiqui's departure, and as overs ran out, the home side were eventually all out for 184. Ahmed-Raza had again bowled well, and his "3-for" was the pick of the bowling (8-0-33-3), whilst Owais cleaned up the tail with 2 for 1. The win was secured when *CJ* took a great diving catch off Owais' bowling to see the back of last man Mahmood. A win by 37, and *Piercey's Pals* continue on their merry way!

Good win at Torrance House [posted 08/07/14]

The Academy side returned from East Kilbride tonight with the Evening League win points after a good 10-run win over their hosts. Batting first after winning the toss, *Stiffy* and *Stouty* [Ed: any relations of *Pinky* and *Perky*?] gave the side a decent start, putting on a half-century partnership before they were parted in the ninth over. *Stouty* would end up his side's top-scorer with 32, whilst *Stiffy* made 24. There were then a few token contributions from the rest of the top and middle orders before the "better" Stout hit a cameo 19 not out that included four 4s to see a defendable total of 107 - for 5 - posted. The other not out batter was Uzzair (13*).

Defending 107 required a decent opening spell or two from the bowlers, and Haider - opening - delivered exactly what was required. He'd get through his four-over allocation really economically, returning figures of 4-1-11-1. His wicket saw Meikle dismissed, the first home wicket to fall with the score on 24. Two more wickets then fell before 40 had been registered, and wickets continued to fall in fact pretty much throughout the second innings. The biggest partnership mustered was just 24, and was that first one. This was likely the key to the Academy's eventual win, their ability to keep chipping away. Two bowlers - Ahmed-Raza and Matthew Stout would end up with a couple of wickets each, Matt returning figures of 4-0-5-2! Well bowled. The final over saw East Kilbride need 26 to win, Uzzair was the bowler and East Kilbride's "Overseas Amateur" Bascombe was on strike. The over started "interestingly" - at least from an Academy perspective! 6 6 ! "Don't panic!" And luckily, though three wides were also bowled, Uzzair didn't panic and Bascombe tried one maximum too many and holed out in the deep. Phew! The rest of the over then passed fairly uneventfully, and the 10-run win was secured.

Defeat at Prestwick [posted 24/06/14]

The Academy fell to their first loss of the season at Prestwick this evening. With a number of "regulars" either away on holiday (like Aliyan), or playing with the Under 15s in their Scottish

Cup game at Hamilton Crescent (Owais, *Ihty* and *CJ*), or unavailable for other reasons (*Stouty*, *Stiffy* and *Rosco*), it was a much-changed XI from the side that routed Drumpellier in the Sunday League two days ago. And after the toss at the Henry Thow Oval the Academy were in the field first. The home side had a number of 1st XIs in their ranks, including - like the Academy - one of their overseas players. Batting first Prestwick would score 138 all out, being dismissed with just a ball of their 120 still to be bowled. Top bowling performance came from Saqi' who recorded a "5-for". *Piercey* rotated the bowlers to such an extent that even (!) JSD Millen, Esq. rolled his arm over! [Ed: cricket's the loser! Does *Scotty* even have a bowling licence?!?] For the home side there were cameos from Stafford Jnr. (32), Lawler (20) and Fleet (36). 139 to win.

11 for 3 didn't help as a start to chasing nearly 7-an-over, *Beast*, Dougie and *Piercey* all going cheaply. Scott, batting at three, hung around though and would eventually top-score with 26, getting in to double figures ultimately being an achievement matched by only two teammates! Saqi' was one, with 16, *Disk* the other with 10. 91 for 9 was the final damage when the dust had settled on proceedings, Usman and *Hollywood* being the two not out batters. And mention of Usman begs mention, too, of some allegedly unsavoury sledging by the home side at Usman's expense. Unnecessary if true. So defeat by 47 runs. Not particularly close as a contest in the final analysis, but some positives, particularly Saqi's wicket haul.

Academy win at a canter [posted 22/06/14]

Drumpellier were the visitors to Shawholm this afternoon in the Sunday League, as the Academy side made their home debut for the season. [Ed: honestly, their first home game, and - yes - we know it's nearly July!] Drumpellier's side would only eventually have nine players as two of those listed on their teamsheet - Saleem Sajjad and Darren Macey - didn't show. However after the toss, it was the *Langloan Nine* who'd bat first, skipper Hardy winning the toss and electing to have first use of the deck. However at 23 for 3 in the eighth over he maybe wished he'd opted to field first? The three wickets to fall were Hill (0), Sajjad (11) and Hamilton (3), Aliyan grabbing two of them, and Haider the other. And though 16 were added by Sajjad and Aziz for the fourth wicket, this'd be as good as got from there-on-in as wickets kept tumbling, until, that is, a final wicket partnership of 25 between veterans Hamilton (5) and Hardy (27). This was ended by Ahmed-Raza, courtesy of a good grab standing up by *CJ*. Ahmed-Raza had bowled well and deserved his scalp, returning figures of 6.4-2-14-1. Also bowling well was *the Robster* who took a cheeky "3-for" returning figures of 6-3-18-3. Elsewhere however, though wickets were falling, there was a fair amount of lethargy on show, and in general the other bowlers - aside *Beast* who maybe gets pass marks - didn't really hit their straps.

The run-chase after a sensational "build-a-roll" tea courtesy of *El Presidente* can be filed in the folder labelled ""Routine" as *Stiffy* (39*) and Dougie (38*) amassed the required runs without too much drama. The finish line was crossed in the nineteenth over, Elliott scoring three 4s off Hardy's second over to get the side to 91, and his own score 1 better than Dougie's! Their partnership was 91 - well batted.

Evening League debut results in the win [posted 13/05/14]

The Academy XI played their first ever senior Evening League match this evening, returning from Bellahouston Park with a win. The opposition was Active Life Club, and they'd fallen 13 runs short of the Academy's total of 116 having batted first. In defence of their score, the Academy's bowlers had - in spells - bowled well. Ultimately Uzzair took the plaudits with a "4-for", though it could be argued that Aliyan's figures of 2-0-4-1 up-top were as important, as was Haider's 1 for 17 in his four overs. But it's wickets that tend to attract the headlines and so it'll be Uzzair's 4 for 16 in four overs that will likely be remembered from this first Evening League adventure.

But it was a match that very nearly didn't get played. The outfield - particularly in one quarter - was sodden, with lying water in places - as the start time of 6pm passed. The

Active Life players were also - much to the Academy's players' bemusement - throwing sand down on the area in what one assumes was an attempt to address the lying water problem?!? Notwithstanding these attempts it was clear - even with the artificial wicket being used for the game - that the ground wasn't playable. Throw very long grass into the outfield and, overall, it wasn't exactly an appealing proposition. Active Life's Captain was keen to play however and so "to play, or not to play" was put to the vote. Your reporter was certain he'd be sipping warm cocoa within half-an-hour at this juncture it should be said, however - and reinforcing the old adage of "never work with children...", the Academy players ignored their Coach's look and confirmed they wanted to play! [Ed: that'll teach him!] So game on it was.

After the toss the Academy chose to bat and *Stiffy* and Owais opened. And it was the former who'd be first out, guiding a short-of-a-length delivery from Asim to 'keeper Kazmi having made 4. Owais then batted nicely with *Rosco* before, again, he lost his partner, Ross smacking a Mohammed delivery straight down long-on's throat. He'd scored a run-a-ball 16. It was Owais and Uzzair now, a partnership that was eventually broken when Owais was cleaned up by Jalil for 40 (47 balls). Uzzair was struggling a bit to rotate the strike, whereas his new partner *Stouty* was scoring in his own inimitable style. He'd score a breezy 21 from just sixteen balls - a cameo that included the customary switch-hit - before departing to let Lewis have a hit. He too scored quickly adding a nine-ball 9 before being bowled in the final over. There was just time, therefore, for *CJ* to score a couple before "Time" was called and the side had posted 116 for 5, Uzzair not out on 8 (25 balls).

117 to win it was then, but as has already been stated the run-chase proved unsuccessful, Active Life losing eight wickets *en route* to finishing 13 runs short of their target. Another thing worth mentioning though about the second innings was that it saw no fewer than five outfield catches from one of the Academy players, *Stiffy* pouching five as all eight Active Life wickets to fall saw the departing batter out by this mode of dismissal. Bizarre.

Academy win at Renfrew [posted 27/04/14]

The Poloc Academy's first run out this season saw them in Sunday League action at King George V Playing Field against Renfrew. Skipped by "Overseas Amateur" Pierce Fletcher, the side was otherwise filled with the club's youngsters. After a delayed start (at around 1.40pm) because the changing rooms had not been opened up, the toss resulted in the home side batting. Graham and Khan were the openers; Aliyan and Ihtisham taking the new ball for the Academy. And the breakthrough didn't take long: 7 for 1 was the score when Khan was bowled by *Ihty*. 41 were then added by Renfrew - between Graham and 2nd XI skipper Khasiya - in fourteen overs, before Khasiya was the second wicket, holing out to *Stiffy* in the deep off Ahmed-Raza. 46 for 2 then became 48 for 3, before a full-scale collapse saw the home side slump to 58 for no fewer than 9! And Ahmed-Raza had taken a "5-for" along the way. Well bowled. Bowling in tandem with Haider - who returned the remarkable figures of 8-5-6-3 - Ahmed-Raza enticed false shots from an array of home batters as he pouch'd wicket after wicket. Haider, meanwhile, was unlucky he only grabbed the three scalps, seeing two catches dropped off his bowling. The home side innings was eventually boosted by home pro' Ahmed Said batting at eleven and putting on 30 with Atif Chaudhry, before the former was dismissed courtesy of a smart caught and bowled by *Piercey* who'd come in to the attack with Aliyan, *Ihty*, Ahmed-Raza and Haider all bowled out. 88 all out.

The Academy openers in their innings were Owais and Dougie, and they put on 50 for the first wicket - Owais holing out to Chaudhry off Javid's bowling having made a run-a-ball 32. In at three was Uzzair, but he over-balanced playing and missing a Majeed delivery and was out, stumped by Graham, without scoring. 50 for 2. *En route* to successfully chasing down the 89 needed for the win points, one more wicket would fall - Dougie departing, caught by Chaudhry again, for 21 (30 balls). This left *CJ* and *Stiffy* to see the side across the finish line with more than 23 overs to spare.

A good run out then for the youngsters, well chaperoned by *Piercey*, and some impressive performances from the bowlers.