

# THE ARCHIVE

## CLASSIC GENTS MATCHES

This dramatic game is still much whispered about by those lucky enough to be present. Only two Gents scored double figures, the total of extras conceded by the visitors was a record, the visiting captain demanded that a Gents' player be sent off the field, and there was a small riot. If this were not enough, the groundsman, particularly troubled on this day, took an axe to the bonnet of his car then went for a drive around the suburban hinterland of Motpur Park with the axe still protruding.

The match came about after Baker Street Irregulars had cancelled at nine days' notice. They also cancelled in 2017, this time at a respectable 19 days' notice, before behaving like the consummate charlatans they are by giving only three days' notice in 2019, costing the Gents a pitch.

### Gentlemen of West London v. Monty RH

Sunday 24 July 2016, Old Tenisonians. Gents won toss. Sunny, 25C

Won by 33 runs

Gentlemen of West London			Monty RH				
Small	c Bobby	b Pami	0	*Mehtab Khan	c Kumar	b S. Patel	27
Newcombe		b Mehran	3	Bobby		b Desai	0
Dubey	c Majeed	b Mehtab Khan	58	Asim		b Small	93
Desai	c Moin Khan	b Pami	1	Mandeep		b H. Patel	4
†Chakravarthy	run out		0	Munier	c Newcombe	b H. Patel	11
*Kumar		b Mehran	3	Moin Khan		b S. Patel	7
Kota	not out		83	Rinku	c Kumar	b H. Patel	7
S. Patel	c Moin Khan	b Rinku	6	Majeed	not out		28
Krishna	not out		9	Daud	not out		1
H. Patel dnb				Pani and Rohan dnb			
Extras		b11 lb3 w51 nb6	71	Extras		b1 lb2 w19 nb1	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>7 wickets</b>	<b>35 overs</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>7 wickets</b>	<b>35 overs</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>FoW:</b> 2, 13, 15, 15, 23, 151, 173				<b>FoW:</b> 1, 104, 130, 142, 150, 153, 200			
<b>Bowling:</b> Pami 6-0-32-2, Mehran 7-1-32-2, Rohan 8-0-51-0, Rinku 7-0-64-1, Moin Khan 3-0-20-0, Mehtab Khan 2-0-8-1, Asim 2-0-13-0				<b>Bowling:</b> Desai 5-0-42-1, Krishna 6-2-24-0, Kumar 2-0-17-0, Kota 5-0-19-0, H Patel 7-0-39-3, S Patel 6-0-37-2, Small 4-0-20-1			

A dramatic and sometimes acrimonious game saw the Gents deliver a fine performance. From a parlous 23-5, with the 17-year-old quick Mehran swinging the ball prodigiously, Nilesh Dubey and Pavan Kota inspired a recovery to 234-7. Monty nearly did it, and outscored the Gents with runs off the bat 178 to 163 but conceded 51 wides out of an absurd extras total of 71, the most ever conceded in a Gents match.

The hosts batted for 42.2 overs in a 35-over game, the visitors 37.5. This was not only decisive in the context of the result (the Gents conceded 19 wides, 32 fewer in a game won by 33 runs) but also inspired some bad feeling in the second innings, which came to a head after a declined run out. That said, Monty were not bad sports and loaned a fielder for the second innings as Laurie Wright was a no show.

This match was birthed after navigation of the turbulent waters of the Fixturelist.org matchmaking website, where sides do not always pitch their strength accurately and always describe themselves as friendly. Such blind dates can backfire, although in fairness three such new opponents have been played in 2016 (Bengali Troopers, White Swans and Alexandra Park) who are sure to be on future cards. The only thing we had to go on here was a brief chat with their organiser during the week and, just before the game, their patchily completed scorebook, which featured a mountain of runs against Yarl with Asim scoring 100.

Kumar won the toss and batted. Monty's opening bowlers were right on the money and Pami struck with the fifth legitimate ball of the first over, Small nicking to second slip. Newcombe was bowled by the inswinger before Desai's dismissal provided the first trigger point, the batsman standing his ground after edging to slip Moin Khan off what he thought was a bump ball. Umpire Sanjay Patel thought not but neither he nor square-leg umpire Krishna could confirm a clean catch. The fielder claimed it was and you have to have basis of trust so Desai was given out. The fielder thought that the consultation between the umpires, good practice, had impugned his integrity, a simple misunderstanding but one that somehow seemed to fester. Fifteen for three.

Kalyan Chakravarthy on debut was run out after being sent back by Dubey (he would later keep very well) and Kumar bowled by Mehran to make it 23-5. Monty were by this point understandably confident, chuntering about the Test match, asking Kumar to "keep sending batsmen in until you've used up the 35 overs" and negotiating a later T20 game. Dubey and Kota were inspired. Kota took the rest of Mehran's spell and played him soundly and carefully. Rohan and Rinku presented fewer challenges (although the latter saw Dubey shelled off a tough chance in the slips), the ball was swinging less and the runs mounted. Dubey's edge aside, the batsmen were untroubled. The stand grew and grew, greatly assisted by wides and byes.

Dubey fell in the 26th. over for 58 (eight fours) whereupon Kota, 36\* at the time, became a man transformed. He struck a further 47 in nine overs with excellent assistance from Sanjay Patel and Vamsee Krishna. His 83\* was his third innings of the weekend after the TAL T20 double header and a club personal best. He hit nine fours. Patel helped add 22 before spiralling to slip and Krishna was serene, as 61 unbeaten runs came up for the 8th. wicket. The final total was scarcely credible given the start.

Desai bowled Bobbv fifth ball of the reply before Mehtab Khan, Asim and latterly Mandeep put on 104 in just 16 overs. Desai and Kumar suffered during this assault but Krishna was economical and with Mehtab Khan the only bowler not to be called wide. The batsmen were secure and scoring at near the required rate when misfortune struck, Khan suffering cramp and having to be helped from the pitch.

By this time, two of the spin triplets Kota and Hemin Patel were bowling in tandem. Adding the spell of the third, Small, the slows went for 16-0-78-4, impressive when 7.5 an over were needed. The Gents then took four wickets in five overs to edge the game in their favour. Hemin Patel had Munier caught Newcombe at deep mid-wicket and Rinku caught Kumar at silly mid-off. Sanjay Patel, replacing Kota at the Tennyson Avenue end, accounted for the returning Mehtab Khan, another pouch for the captain, and Moin Khan.

Moin Khan then returned for his second stint as umpire and, to the chagrin of the Gents, started to coach his players. The hard-hitting Majeed began to flay the bowling and was involved in the big moment of controversy when Khan declined a run-out appeal. Perhaps it was not wise of Krishna to say "You're giving us nothing today" but Khan's response was disproportionate, swearing at the Gents and telling Kumar to send Krishna from the field. Sanjay Patel, very fired up, then took the law into his own hands and had a ding-dong with Khan, thankfully only verbal.

Meanwhile, behind the boundary ropes, events were proceeding oddly. An in no way strange couple came to watch for a few overs announcing that they had permission from the groundsman to spectate here, a state of affairs that raises questions. Why would you need permission? Which grounds have forbidden them entry? Word of advice: if you're going to watch cricket, don't stand in front of the scoreboard and don't bombard players and scorer with a series of fatuous questions about who's winning, who the teams are and where they live, otherwise people will think you are troubled.

This was not the only bizarre off-field incident, the groundsman having earlier taken an axe to the bonnet of his BMW tourer after it would not start. This did the trick and he went off for his Sunday drive, and surprisingly was allowed to return by the security services, with the axe still protruding. The Gents' scorer's capability was then impugned after a number had flipped over on the rubbish scoreboard. It's the hot weather.

The bowling of Sanjay Patel and Small then guided the Gents to victory, Asim and Majeed being unable to find the ten runs an over needed. The fielding was impervious and the vocal support strong. Asim fell bowled Small seven short of his century in the final over and the Gents were victorious. Where this stands in the list of club performances can wait for another day but it will be one to savour in the winter.



Masterfan Ken Toft, whose ability was called into question after scoring a winning 238-3 for Northfields, has silenced his critics with improved performances in his last two games. Changing tactics by getting an earlier train from Milton Keynes, he took 5-36 in his first 11 overs against Bengal Troopers and followed up with a masterly display in this game. Arriving after eight overs (Gents 23-5), he added 211-2 in 27.

ECB Director of Conflict Hemin Patel denounced Monty as “a bunch of twats” that evening before, no doubt cognisant of his three wickets, modifying his position during the following week and demanding to play them again in 2017. Monty were not all bad but fit in to the category of graceless visitors. They romantically describe themselves as a travelling side, that is they cannot be blessed to get their own ground. It’s not hard chaps, internet and telephone are widely available. But the fractious Monty were angels compared to the hosts on the top pitch at Greenford on 7 July. Bad feeling was simmering from the word go and the match was abandoned when the visitors stormed off the pitch and went home mid-game, one of them having threatened according to eye-witnesses to stab a home player. Deep joy in the beholding.