
THE GENT

No.180

June 2024

Bowlers make a bright start



RIP Chris Locke, Len Baker, Nick Woodhead and Paul Harrop
Hemin Patel's 400 wickets
Gents 6-1 at end of May
Crossbats, London Saints and Salix score a combined 860 runs on 19 May
Averages

Match reports

Crossbats (won by 5 wickets)
South Bank (lost by 8 runs)
Byfleet (won by 2 wickets)
Putney (won by 6 wickets)
Hounslow Hurricanes (won by 60 runs)
Northfields (won by 134 runs)
Hook and Southborough (won by 56 runs)

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Gone but not forgotten

We have learned of the deaths of four of our opponents: Chris Locke (Bricklayer's Arms), Len Baker (Sunderland SC), Nick Woodhead (New Barbarian Weasels) and Paul Harrop (London Owls). Chris lost his wife in 2023 and died in April 2024 after an operation. He guested for Gents against Teddington Town in 2019 and was a friendly and popular opponent. Len, when 61, took 6-38 to skittle a solid Gents batting line up at Surbiton in 2006. Reference was made in the funeral service to a five wickets in five balls for one of his many other sides. Nick was a hard-hitting opener who scored fifties against the Gents for two different Home Office teams, Old Cubbonians in 1991 and New Barbarian Weasels in 2000. Paul was an off-spinner and a regular of Owls sides in the 1990s. He took two wickets in the low-scoring 1991 clash. This news within the space of a few weeks has hit hard. May they all rest in peace.

Hemin Patel's 400 wickets

Season	Matches	O.	M.	R.	W.	
1998-2007	52	197.1	23	917	55	What remarkable loyalty, skill and stamina are illustrated in the table. A big shift indeed. He has taken 16 four-wicket and seven five-wicket hauls, the most frugal of which of which was 5-8 against Ottershaw, a performance he modestly failed to mention once in his match report. The man has delivered every season. He is the quickest to get to 400, though he paid more runs per over than Stuart Snelling and Sanjay Patel. Ratnakar Sudireddy now stands on 101 fielding dismissals (73 ct./28 st.), just 25 behind Sanjay Patel (125/1). He has caught 11 batters off Hemin's bowling and stumped 14.
2008	21	97	15	357	33	
2009	23	121.4	13	570	39	
2010	25	116.4	6	631	41	
2011	21	118	5	611	32	
2012	5	21.4	0	118	7	
2013	10	35.3	5	188	14	
2014	5	25	2	128	8	
2015	10	30.4	5	147	9	
2016	17	87.3	6	375	25	
2017	17	77.1	2	409	20	
2018	18	76.5	3	411	13	
2019	17	75	7	303	25	
2020	6	35	2	166	16	
2021	13	62.5	8	298	12	
2022	19	88.4	1	494	24	
2023	14	74	1	382	26	
2024	2	9	0	52	1	
All	295	1,349.2	104	6,557	400	

Three excellent performances

Thanks to Play-Cricket and social media the deeds of our rivals are no longer a secret. Three matches played on 19 May stand out. Salix scored 275-3 *v.* Islip, winning by 120 runs. Raj Sadhra scored 103 and Andy Spurr, who also took four wickets, 98. It'll be a good contest when they come to Boston Manor PF in June. There was a slight rounding error on their website, Salix apparently bowling 34.19999980926524 overs in Islip's dig. It looks like a comedy invisible character crept in, a problem with SQL downloads into Excel from an Oracle database: =CLEAN is your friend.

Hats off to Crossbats with 369-5 in 40 overs against the Diu Community of Southall, winning by 264 runs. Avishek Dubey scored 147 (he would score 156 eight days later) and Adam Skinner 105, the pair adding 260. This stand beats anything in seen a Gents game (the three 200 stands are 239* by London Owls, 215 by Village XI and 212* by Gents *v.* St. Anne's Allstars, courtesy of Messrs. Kumar and Small. Dubey has scored 416 runs in four innings in 2024.

Not to be outdone, London Saints' 175-run win over Trafalgar was their highest margin of victory ever: Saints 216-6 (H. Rogers 105*), Trafalgar 41 (P. Rogers 7-10). Saints seem to be a rejuvenated club which is great to see. Dave Thomas didn't play but claimed MoM because he brought along the club kitbag and who are we to dispute that logic?

Crossbats v. Gentlemen of West London

Saturday 13 April, Marble Hill Park. Gents won toss. Sunny, 21C

Won by 5 wickets

Crossbats		Gentlemen of West London					
Dubey	c Raghavendra	b Kulasingam	62	*†Sudireddy	run out (Kitson)	6	
†Masini	c Pingili	b Krishna	63	Chatharaju	c and b Srikanth	12	
Snowball		b Kulasingam	5	Bhaja	not out	54	
McAlpine		b S. Patel	2	Raghavendra	c McAlpine	b A. Skinner	12
McSweeney		b S. Patel	0	Mandava	c Dubey	b McAlpine	12
Kitson		b Krishna	0	Pingili	c Masini	b McAlpine	0
*A. Skinner	c Sudireddy	b Krishna	1	Parvathaneni	not out	56	
Srikanth		b Krishna	4	S. Patel, Kulasingam, Jampala and Krishna dnb			
Gophal		b Krishna	12				
Deoras	not out		4				
Doshi		b Krishna	0				
Extras	w13 nb4 lb2		19	Extras	w11 nb4 b4 lb2	21	
Total	All out	35 overs	172	Total	5 wickets	30.2 overs	173
FoW: 104, 127, 145, 145, 145, 146, 146, 154, 172, 172				FoW: 13, 24, 48, 80, 80			
Bowling: Krishna 6-0-28-5, Parvathaneni 2-0-12-0, Bhaja 3-0-18-0, Chatharaju 3-1-14-0, Mandava 7-1-26-0, Jampala 4-0-21-0, Kulasingam 5-1-19-2, S. Patel 3-1-16-2, Pingili 2-1-16-1				Bowling: Srikanth 6.2-0-41-1, Gophal 7-0-29-0, A. Skinner 7-1-27-1, Deoras 3-0-18-0, McAlpine 3-0-16-2, Doshi 4-0-36-0			

Crossbats know the artificial pitch at Marble Hill Park intimately, as they should with 37 home games planned out of 61 for the season. They beat the Gents quite easily here in 2022 and 2023 and have a big squad, so any win here is most welcome. This double header weekend was a triumph for team secretary Nilesh Dubey who organised 16 players to honour it, six playing both days. Five Gents and three Crossbats returned from 2023. Mandava played only his second game and Jampala returned for his first game since 2016. Sunny Bhaja and Raghavendra debuted.

Gents won well on the warmest day ever to host this traditional opening fixture, anchorman Bhaja (54 not out, 62 balls, four fours) and Parvathaneni (56 not out, 42 balls, nine fours, one six) posting 93 off 75 to see the visitors home. Earlier Krishna had taken his first club five-for, all in his remarkable second spell of 3-0-9-5, some performance on the true new artificial.

English Heritage tend Marble Hill Park well. The groundsman had given the outfield a No.3 cut with no fade so the ball needed a bit of a bash to go to the boundary. Inserted, Crossbats put down a marker for the most lop-sided scorecard of the summer, slipping from 104-0 to 172 all out. Dubey provided the fireworks in the opening stand though Masini would narrowly outscore him.

Gents' hopes rose as Mandava bowled his spell of off-breaks through. Jampala supported him with an accurate spell and the run rate slowed. Kulasingam replaced him and after a Dubey six the assertive opener clipped to cover. The wily seamer soon bowled Snowball and mayhem beckoned. S. Patel and Pingili had productive spells as the final nine wickets tumbled in 8.4 overs. Krishna had had two four-wicket returns before, both in 2021. Here he produced a superb second spell, hitting the top of off stump three times, as the innings closed dead on 35 overs. To have taken 10-68 spoke volumes for the bowlers. The captain made some sound bowling changes, the ground-fielding was neat but the catching below par, something that would also afflict Crossbats.

Gents struggled at first. A brilliant diving stop and throw left the captain stranded and Chatharaju drove back a juggling caught and bowled. The middle order tried to dig in but it was soon 80-5, the neat Bhaja untroubled by it all. Parvathaneni survived two drops in his first over at the crease, to slip and mid-on but soon found his range, the bowlers and fielders powerless to stop him. The wind off the Thames became keen but batters and spectators were not dispirited as the runs flowed.

This superb stand saw the Gents home with 28 balls and five wickets in hand. Parvathaneni's fifty was his third for the Gents while Bhaja became the tenth Gent to score one on debut. Crossbats took their defeat in good part and the post-match socials were enjoyable. This was a promising start to 2024 and only the second win in six.

South Bank v. Gentlemen of West London

Saturday 14 April, Dulwich SC. Gents won toss. Cloudy, 14C

Lost by 8 runs

South Bank		Gentlemen of West London					
Thornton		b Gulati	8	Kumar	c Peak	b Faisal	6
†Peak		b Kulasingam	23	Krishna	c Wragg	b Murphy	9
Choudhary	c Kulasingam	b Kota	7	Gulati		b Murphy	0
Siddique (1)		b Kulasingam	0	Jampala	lbw	b Faisal	17
Wragg		b Jampala	7	*†Sudireddy	c Peak	b Murphy	1
*Mendelssohn	c Kulasingam	b Nagpal	8	Kota	c Peak	b Bridgett	5
Faisal	st Sudireddy	b Kota	5	Kulasingam		b Faisal	3
Murphy	c Gulati	b Chatharaju	26	Parvathaneni		b Siddique	47
Twinn	c Parvathaneni	b Chatharaju	9	Nagpal		b Bridgett	4
Bridgett	not out		2	Chatharaju		b Faisal	1
Siddique (2)		b Krishna	8	Dubey	not out		9
Extras	w10 nb4 b3		20	Extras	w7 b2 lb3		12
Total	All out	33.5 overs	123	Total	All out	29.3 overs	115
FoW: 31, 40, 40, 48, 60, 69, 77, 111, 114, 123				FoW: 15, 15, 19, 31, 39, 43, 67, 76, 77, 115			
Bowling: Dubey 4-0-8-0, Gulati 4-0-23-1, Kulasingam 4-2-7-2, Chatharaju 6-1-9-2, Nagpal 4-0-10-1, Kota 4-0-16-2, Parvathaneni 3-0-11-0, Jampala 3-0-25-1, Krishna 1.5-0-11-1				Bowling: Twinn 7-2-19-0, Murphy 7-1-16-3, Faisal 7-1-31-4, Bridgett 7-0-35-2, Mendelssohn 1-0-3-0, Siddique 0.3-0-6-1			



Worcester Park CC had sniffily declined this fixture, not wanting to play on an artificial, so Gents stepped in, their own game at Hook and Southborough having become victim of the weather for the second year running. Thus a convoy of cars made its way to leafy Dulwich with Kulasingam and Nagpal braving the trains and buses (and creditably being first on the ground). A close, attritional game resulted with Parvathaneni in the runs again, he and the resilient, calm Dubey adding 38 for the tenth wicket only to fall eight short. A bit more support up top and Gents would have won but South Bank had a strong attack intelligently deployed by Mendelssohn, who also impressed with the disposition of his fielders, especially given that they were only ten.

The captain inserted the hosts and though Peak clipped three early leg-side fours off Gulati the bowlers (nine of them) had the better of things on a lively track. Four batters were caught trying to break free and Sudireddy executed a smart stumping. Murphy and Twinn added 34, the highest of the innings, before Chatharaju had them both. He and Kulasingam were the pick of the bowlers. The players left the field when Murphy was out, there being no batsman to come in, but Siddique as lowest scorer was allowed to bat again. This always a confusing situation and really ought to have been agreed by the captains before the game. Better to lend a fielder in our view.

It was a relief to get inside the warm pavilion for tea and duly refreshed Gents set about their task. Kumar and Krishna did well against the impressive openers though scoring was tough. But one wicket brought two, three, four, five and six, Peak enjoying himself as three balls lifted and were edged into his safe gloves. A score of 43-6 was not what the captain had in mind, but Jampala and Parvathaneni brought order from chaos.

Jampala's downfall was quickly followed by two more and at 77-9 it looked all up. Parvathaneni was playing sensibly and in the wise Dubey he found the ideal partner. There was the odd scare but this was very good cricket by the Gents. The four main bowlers were seen off, Gents 106-9: Mendelssohn would have to introduce a fifth and sixth. The tension ramped up. Mendelssohn brought himself on – Parvathaneni was dropped by a diving 'keeper. On came Siddique. Parvathaneni blocked the first, hit a stupendous six off the second but was beaten by the third which crashed into his stumps. South Bank had won.

Within a few hours their secretary wrote saying they would like to renew. Fine by us.

Byfleet v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 21 April, Byfleet. Byfleet won toss. Cloudy, 12C

Won by 2 wickets

Byfleet		Gentlemen of West London	
O'Connor		b Gulati	9
Croall	c Dubey	b Chatharaju	17
Oxborough		b Chatharaju	0
Harrison		b Gulati	36
†Clough	c R. Patel	b Krishna	4
Coyne	c Sudireddy	b Dubey	40
Bandara	c Gulati	b R. Patel	4
*Deven	c and	b Kota	2
Dodwell		b Gulati	12
van Wijk	not out		0
Smith	lbw	b Nagpal	0
Extras	w3 b3 lb1		7
Total	All out	33.2 overs	131
FoW: 14, 23, 28, 32, 89, 103, 106, 129, 130, 131		FoW: 2, 40, 81, 81, 81, 92, 110, 110	
Bowling: Chatharaju 4-0-26-2, Gulati 5-0-9-3, Krishna 3-1-9-1, H. Patel 4-0-33-0, S. Patel 5-0-15-0, Dubey 4-0-20-1, R. Patel 4-0-7-1, Kota 3-0-6-1, Nagpal 1.2-0-2-1		Bowling: Bandara 5-0-20-0, Smith 3-0-17-1, Oxborough 7-2-19-1, Coyne 7-0-19-1, Deven 7-2-28-2, Harrison 5-0-24-2	

An exciting game packed with incident saw Gents emerge narrowly victorious as Sanjay and Raj Patel kept their heads. The visitors' deep batting proved decisive but neither side deserved to lose. On a cold, windy day both sides' fielding was remarkably good all afternoon with exemplary picking up, throwing and catching. It was difficult to recall a single error in ground-fielding and only one catch was dropped all day. Gents were made most welcome and it was a pleasure to renew the rivalry after a gap of two seasons, though this was a much-changed Byfleet side with only three returning from that 2021 meeting (the returning Gents numbered seven).

The opening over of the day was carted for 13 with two boundaries but wickets soon began to tumble, four in the first nine overs, Chatharaju, twice, Gulati and R. Patel successful, assisted by well-judged high catches by Dubey and R. Patel at deep mid-on and gully. Harrison, who faced 63 balls and the rangy Coyne then added 67 in 12 overs, the bowlers coming alike to them. It took a Dubey ripsnorter to out Coyne, the ball flashing into Sudireddy's safe gloves off the edge. Gulati struck twice in the only over of his second spell as once again the captain used nine bowlers as he did in the first two matches. Dodwell launched H. Patel for the only six of the innings. He had two spells but wicket No. 400 will have to wait. Coyne top-scored for Byfleet with a belligerent 40 off 42. The very good tea was taken with both sides reasonably satisfied.

Bandara had a huge shout for a caught behind off Chatharaju declined by umpire S. Patel in the first over but in the second the batter had to go, pinned leg-before. We now entered the only period of the afternoon when bat dominated ball, Parvathaneni and Kota, then Kota and Sudireddy, striking the bad ball, running hard and adding 38 and 41 to take Gents to 81-2 in the 23rd. Alas, the captain fell to a slip catch. Kota then gave Deven the charge and was stumped. The mayhem continued as Gents plummeted to 92-6, Gulati run out without facing, Krishna another lbw victim. The game had turned on its head and Byfleet smelt blood.

Nagpal and S. Patel batted with sense and style, 18 coming up for the seventh wicket. Nagpal even pulled a majestic six over mid-wicket but when he fell caught by a diving mid-off, to be followed three balls later by Dubey, the Gents were in jeopardy at 110-8 with 22 needed off 25. R. Patel's batting was transformed by his coaching sessions in August 2023, two fifties in his next two games providing a sound return on investment. Winter rust was nowhere to be seen and he batted very tidily with his composed namesake, victory coming up with exactly an over remaining. This was intelligent, adult cricket.

So ended the first match on grass of 2024. The effort made by the groundsman must be applauded. The strip was understandably green but played well and the outfield, though still damp, had had a good trim. All in all it was a most pleasant place to visit. Good luck to Byfleet for the season.

Gentlemen of West London v. Putney

Sunday 5 May, Dundonald RG. Gents won toss. Cloudy, 19C

Won by 6 wickets

Putney			Gentlemen of West London				
Paul		b S. Patel	14	Parvathaneni	c Paul	b Beeston	23
Harris		b S. Patel	0	Dubey	c Plimmer	b Taylor	28
Plimmer	c Sudireddy	b Kumar	11	Kota	not out		41
Bendre	st Sudireddy	b Kota	54	*†Sudireddy		b Boyle	12
Sadiq	lbw	b Kumar	0	R. Patel	run out (Hazell)		0
†Sorger	st Sudireddy	b H. Patel	10	Krishna	not out		1
Hazell	c Kumar	b Krishna	13	H. Patel, S. Patel, Chatharaju, Kumar and Puli dnb			
Beeston	not out		14				
Puntan	not out		3				
Bedson, Boyle and *Taylor	dnb						
Extras	w1 nb1 b1		3	Extras	w5 nb11 b2		18
Total	7 wickets	35 overs	122	Total	4 wickets	24.1 overs	123
FoW: 1, 23, 30, 30, 53, 78, 110				FoW: 45, 48, 106, 108			
Bowling: S. Patel 4-0-14-2, R. Patel 4-0-10-0, Kumar 4-1-5-2, Puli 3-0-9-0, H. Patel 5-0-19-1, Chatharaju 3-0-16-0, Krishna 4-0-11-1, Dubey 5-0-21-0, Kota 3-0-16-1				Bowling: Bedson 4-0-33-0, Beeston 4-1-14-1, Puntan 5-0-12-0, Taylor 4-0-28-1, Hazell 4-1-7-0, Boyle 3-0-26-1, Paul 0.1-0-1-0			

Gents won well on a day packed with incident. In having Sorger stumped, H. Patel took his 400th wicket and provided captain Sudireddy with his century of fielding dismissals. Nine bowlers were used once more, all bowled well and so assertive were the opening batters Parvathaneni and Dubey that after three overs of the reply the required run rate had been dragged down to under three, a task accomplished with relish by Kota and his partners.

S. Patel quickly became a one-man highlights reel by castling Harris for a golden and, having maimed Paul with a beamer, bowling him two overs later. Kumar joined in the fun with two in his second over and it was 30-4 off 10.3. The veteran Amogh Bendre then led a stout recovery, batting 26 overs for his 54 with sound support from the middle order. After H. Patel's moment for the ages further wickets fell to Krishna and Kota, Bendre victim of the second stumping of the dig. Kumar took a sharp low catch and matters closed at 122-7. Krishna might have had two but the ball hit the stumps without dislodging a bail.

The openers smashed 12, 13 and eight off the first three overs. Control was never relinquished after that with Kota and Sudireddy batting well though there would soon be dramatic action to entertain the fans. By this time a Putney supporter had arrived clad in motorcycling gear including goggles and helmet, perfect cricket-watching equipment. Naturally he asked to umpire. Deeming him friendly, the Gents permitted this though the suspicious scorer was all for notifying the security services.

Now our man was very well versed in Law 21.7 which was a shame for Putney as they immediately began to bowl a spate of moonballs and triple bouncers, all correctly called by our man. Sudireddy fell and R. Patel was run out, muttering darkly about fielders impeding his journey between the wickets.

At 122-4 Kota was bowled but he stood his ground, a first in Gents' history, claiming a double bounce no ball which was eventually granted after some brief handbags. Putney had fought hard but had scored perhaps 40 too few runs.

Name	Matches	O	M	R	W	Avg.	SR	Econ.
S. Patel	439	1,927.5	233	7,642	446	17.1	25.9	4.0
S. Snelling	248	1,620.0	297	4,780	401	11.9	24.2	3.0
H. Patel	295	1,349.2	104	6,557	400	16.4	20.2	4.9
D. Patel	199	928.5	69	3,880	235	16.5	23.7	4.2
M. Ashton	153	827.5	146	2,493	222	11.2	22.4	3.0

Left are the Gents' top five bowlers according to wickets taken which is not the only measure but is at least an objectively verifiable one.

Coming into this match, H. Patel had recent figures 15-0-134-1, a little nervy perhaps, though Gents did face some masterly batters late in 2023. Snelling is the most economical @ 2.95, leading Ashton with 3.01. Ashton leads Snelling on average, 11.2 to 11.9. It is on strike rate that young Hemin wins with a wicket every three overs and two balls. Hats off to them!

Gentlemen of West London v. Hounslow Hurricanes

Sunday 12 May, Dundonald RG. Gents won toss. Sunny, 15C

Won by 60 runs

Gentlemen of West London		Hounslow Hurricanes				
Parvathaneni	b Pandey	2	Chauhan	c R. Patel	b Gulati	0
Krishna	b Pandey	11	Dalvi		b Gulati	0
*†Sudireddy	b Pandey	0	†Saha	lbw	b Gulati	2
Gulati	c Khatri	39	Pandey	c Parvathaneni	b R. Patel	10
Chatharaju	b Sanghai	11	Sanghai		b Gulati	0
Puli	b Sanghai	0	*Asif		b Gulati	0
Kota	b Sanghai	0	Singh	c and	b Gulati	0
R. Patel	c Sanghai	18	Poojary	c Puli	b Nagpal	7
S. Patel	b Sanghai	13	Khatri	lbw	b R. Patel	3
Nagpal	c Sanghai	4	Galmani	c Gulati	b Puli	4
J. Patel	not out	0	Arora	not out		0
Extras	w2	2	Extras	w13 b1		14
Total	All out	24.2 overs	Total	All out	21.2 overs	40
FoW: 2, 10, 32, 63, 64, 64, 69, 87, 100, 100		FoW: 0, 1, 7, 12, 12, 13, 21, 33, 35, 40				
Bowling: Pandey 7-2-27-3, Khatri 4-0-25-0, Sanghai 7-0-28-4, Poojary 5-1-19-1, Galmani 1-0-1-1, Arora 0.2-0-0-1		Bowling: Krishna 7-5-3-0, Gulati 5-1-12-6, Nagpal 5-1-17-1, R. Patel 4-1-7-2, Puli 0.2-0-0-1				



An afternoon's cricket that stretched the bounds of imagination and belief saw an astonishing Gents' win after excellent bowling and fielding atoned for inconsistent batting. Vinitesh Gulati (left) top scored, took six wickets (the first such haul since Upender Sanga's 6-11 in 2016) and held two catches but there were heroic performances throughout the team that were not necessarily reflected in the statistics.

This was the first fixture in this rubber since 2018, Hurricanes easily winning both games that season and carrying a 4-1 advantage into this game. They remain a competitive, essentially fair side. There will be a return at Marble Hill Park on 14 September.

Gents won the toss and took first knock for the first time in 2024. Pandey shot out the top three, though Krishna showed adhesiveness. Gulati (39 off 34 balls) and Chatharaju (11 off 35) began the fightback before four wickets tumbled for six runs to Sanghai and Poojary, including Puli and Kota for ducks to set alongside Parvathaneni's and the captain's. It was 69-7 off 15.4. The tail, inspired by R. Patel, fought back to add 31 more but there were still 64 balls unbowled when the innings closed for the lowest score in 25 matches. The bowling, led by Pandey and Sanghai, was accurate and challenging but the shot selection was poor. Seven were bowled but the pitch, though low and slow, did not misbehave.

From the first ball of the second innings, when a huge appeal for caught behind off Krishna was declined, Gents were ablaze. Krishna and Gulati were superb, the ball frequently beating the bat, and when the ball was hit in the air, the fielders caught it with not a chance missed. Hemin Patel, sitting this one out but actively supporting beyond the boundary, described it as the best bowling partnership he had ever seen at the club. It's strange how in such circumstances the wickets tend not to be fairly distributed. In the 1956 Ashes Test at Old Trafford the match returns were: Jim Laker 68-27-90-19, Tony Lock 69-33-96-1.

The mayhem started with Gulati's first ball, Chauhan edging to gully, Dalvi following five balls later. Gulati then struck in his third, fourth (twice) and fifth overs and with Krishna unplayable Hurricanes were 13-6 off 9.1 overs. Pandey showed what could be done, his 13 off 48 balls the longest of the day but for the others it was a procession, Nagpal and R. Patel inducing two fine catches in the deep, Puli's a tumbling, juggling rebound effort at long-off and Parvathaneni's a masterly grab running from mid-off. Galmani fell crook after slipping while attempting a run but bravely hobbled back at nine down, terrific guts and determination. R. Patel finished things off and fittingly it was Gulati who took the catch. This writer can recall no better bowling and fielding performance by the Gents.

Though the scorecard was remarkable, no records were broken, except perhaps extras top-scoring and we'd need an army of interns to research that one. Gulati became the seventh Gent to take six wickets and five opponents have scored fewer than Hurricanes' 40 all out.

Top 10 Gents bowling returns

8-33	S. Snelling <i>v.</i> 12 Angry Men 1999
8-77	S. Snelling <i>v.</i> East Harrow Cheetahs 1996
7-31	S. Desai <i>v.</i> Cheltenham Allsorts 2012
7-44	M. Ashton <i>v.</i> Enterprise 1996
7-55	M. Ashton <i>v.</i> New Barbarian Weasels 1994
6-6	S. Snelling <i>v.</i> London Canaries 2001
6-8	P. Hill <i>v.</i> FC Chad 1996
6-11	U. Sanga <i>v.</i> Pak 2016
6-12	V. Gulati <i>v.</i> Hounslow Hurricanes 2024
6-15	M. Ashton <i>v.</i> East Harrow Cheetahs 1989

Lowest scores by opponents

17	Enterprise 1991
17	London Canaries 2001
29	Old Cubbonians 1993
30	Sloane Club 2008
32	Enterprise 1994
35	London Saints 2009
37	Enterprise 1997
40	Enville 2004
40	Hounslow Hurricanes 2024
41	London Saints 2008

It all happened in a moment but there was some confusion about the use of a runner after Galmani had sustained his injury. 'Not allowed,' said a Gent. This was incorrect. Everyone will remember when Nathan Lyon was refused a runner in the 2023 Ashes, even though he had sustained his calf injury during the match. This was because under the playing conditions for international cricket, runners have not been permitted since 1 October 2011. In all other cricket, they are. Therefore Hounslow Hurricanes could have insisted on a runner and appeared to be about to so when a man who had already batted entered the field of play with pads and bat. But Galmani was happy to continue. This is worth keeping an eye on: a runner is still allowed under Law 25.

Mankad

Here is the Middlesex County Cricket League's view: 'There has been a great deal of attention directed to the repositioning of the Law on running out the non-striker (Mankad). There is no substantive Law change, merely a clarification that the bowler is within his rights to run out the non-striker if the latter is backing up out of his crease. Nonetheless, we strongly hope there won't be a rash of these incidents; and in common with the international game and many other competitions, the umpires will only give the batter out if they believe there is a clear intention to effect the run out.' Get that? No, neither do we.

2024 averages

To nobody's surprise, early statistics are skewed in favour of the bowlers, with damp wickets and long grass in the outfield the norm. Look at the economy rates of the seamers!

Player (debut*)	M.	Inn.	NO	Runs	Avg.	Ct./St.	O	M	Runs	Wck.	Avg.	Econ.	SR.
Bhaja *	2	2	1	61	61.00	-	4	0	19	0	-	4.75	-
Chatharaju	7	6	1	52	8.67	1	28	3	107	7	14.86	3.71	24.00
Dubey	5	5	1	91	22.75	1	17	1	60	1	60.00	3.53	102.00
Gulati	5	5	-	89	17.80	4	23	2	61	10	6.10	2.65	13.80
Jampala	2	1	-	17	17.00	-	7	0	46	1	46.00	6.57	42.00
Joshi	2	1	-	0	0.00	1	1	1	0	1	0.00	0.00	6.00
Kota	6	6	1	135	27.00	3	12	0	49	4	12.25	4.08	18.00
Krishna	5	4	1	24	8.00	-	21.5	6	62	8	7.75	2.84	16.38
Kulasingam	2	1	-	3	3.00	2	9	3	26	4	6.50	2.89	13.50
Kumar	2	1	-	6	6.00	1	4	1	5	2	2.50	1.25	12.00
Nagpal	3	3	-	23	7.67	-	10.2	1	29	3	9.67	2.81	20.67
Parvathaneni	6	6	1	161	32.00	2	5	0	23	0	-	4.60	-
H. Patel	3	1	-	7	7.00	1	14	2	72	2	36.00	5.14	42.00
R. Patel	4	4	1	42	14.00	2	17	1	43	5	8.60	2.53	20.40
S. Patel	6	4	1	60	20.00	1	20	4	55	9	6.11	2.75	13.33
Puli	4	3	-	25	8.33	6	3.2	0	9	1	9.00	2.70	20.00
Sudireddy	5	5	-	36	7.20	3/3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

One match only: A. Ahmed 1/1/1/44, Mandava 1/1/-/12, 7-1-26-0, Osman * 1/1/1/3, 6-2-9-2, J. Patel 1/1/1/0, Pingili 1/1/-/0, 2-1-16-1(1 ct.), Raghavendra * 1/1/-/12 (1 ct.), Ratnapuri * 1/1/1/2, 5-1-13-2, Singh * 1/1/-/9, 5-2-15-2

HS for: 194 *v.* Northfields

HS against: 172 by Crossbats

50s for: 56* Parvathaneni *v.* Crossbats, 54* Bhaja *v.* Crossbats

50s against: 63 Masini (Crossbats), 62 Dubey (Crossbats), 54 Bendre (Putney)

4-wickets for: 6-12 Gulati *v.* Hounslow Hurricanes, 5-28 Krishna *v.* Crossbats

4-wickets against: 4-28 Sanghai (Hounslow Hurricanes)

Sixes (12): Parvathaneni 5, Kota 4, Gulati, Nagpal, Puli 1, **Run outs of opponents (1):** Bhaja 1

Northfields v. Gentlemen of West London

Sunday 19 May, Durston House. Gents won toss. Sunny, 22C

Won by 134 runs

Gentlemen of West London		Northfields					
*Dubey		b David Redhead	37	†Derrick Redhead	lbw	b S. Patel	10
Parvathaneni	c Z. Rahim	b Abz	11	Baldeo	lbw	b Chatharaju	5
Gulati		b Z. Rahim	21	Rahim Sr.		b S. Patel	1
Kota	c and	b Kent	43	*David Redhead	c Puli	b S. Patel	9
Bhaja	c Derr. Redhead	b Z. Rahim	7	Aman	c Kota	b Chatharaju	0
†Puli		b Abz	21	Z. Rahim	run out (Bhaja)		21
*S. Patel		b Sharif	8	Jaz		b Singh	1
Chatharaju		b I. Rahim	20	Kent		b Singh	0
Joshi	c Aman	b I. Rahim	0	Abz	c Kota	b Ratnapuri	0
Singh		b Kent	9	I. Rahim	not out		8
Ratnapuri	not out		2	Sharif		b Ratnapuri	0
Extras	w8 nb3 b3 lb1		15	Extras	nb4 b1		5
Total	All out	37.1 overs	194	Total	All out	28 overs	60
FoW: 22, 75, 80, 91, 126, 150, 175, 183, 186, 194				FoW: 16, 18, 26, 27, 29, 33, 33, 34, 60, 60			
Bowling: Sharif 6-0-21-1, Abz 8-1-38-2, David Redhead 4-0-13-1, Kent 5-1-0-30-2, Z. Rahim 3-0-16-2, Jaz 6-0-36-0, I. Rahim 5-0-36-2				Bowling: Chatharaju 8-1-24-2, Gulati 5-1-4-0, S. Patel 4-2-2-3, Singh 5-2-15-2, Ratnapuri 5-1-13-2, Bhaja 1-0-1-0			

After a workmanlike innings with runs shared throughout the order, Gents again skittled their opponents, Sanjay Patel producing a remarkable spell of bowling in which he dismissed both Redheads. After he and the incisive Ranjith Chatharaju had torn through the top five, the end came quickly with two wickets each for debutants Bablpreet Singh and Murali Ratnapuri, two of five changes from the previous week.

Gents won the toss on a warm day and had first use of a green-tinged wicket. Parvathaneni cut to a juggling gully on 22 before Dubey and Gulati posted the highest stand of the day, 53 in nine overs. Three wickets then fell quickly but Kota held firm and went on to score 43 off 47, surviving one tough chance when he was 13. He fell to a contorted, one-handed caught and bowled by Kent who had recovered well from his first over, savaged by Gulati for 15. Puli caught the eye and drove a monstrous straight six onto a Swyncombe Avenue roof. Chatharaju made his highest score of the season: there's plenty more to come from him. The full allocation of 40 overs was not used and 194 was perhaps slightly below par for this small ground so full credit must be given to the varied attack used by Northfields. The teenage Rahim brothers Zohaib (seam) and 12-year-old Ilyas (leg spin) deserved their four wickets.

Though Derrick Redhead hit a sumptuous early four down the ground, such was the control exerted by Chatharaju and Gulati that Northfields openers progressed very cautiously to 16-10 off 10. This was to prove their longest partnership on a day that unravelled for them almost immediately. Chatharaju started the mayhem by pinning Baldeo. S. Patel bowled Rahim Sr. with his third ball and followed up by carding two wicket maidens that saw Derrick lbw and brother David caught at the wicket off a ball that exploded. By this time Chatharaju, who would bowl his full spell straight through (see Note), had got his second, Aman slicing to gully Kota, his 50th catch. Northfields' Afghani contingent had been expressing vociferous opinions in Pashto about the run rate and when they got to the crease spectators were perhaps unlikely to witness an hour's worth of studious forward-defensives and classy leave-alones.

Singh came on and bowled Jaz and Kent in his second over. Abz holed out to long-on off Ratnapuri before the Rahim teenagers got their heads down, 26 coming up in 49 balls. It took a run out to separate them before Sharif, who Northfields believed had gone home but had merely gone to the shops for the third time (no criticism implied – he had kept the scorer in apples, bananas and crisps all afternoon), returned, hurriedly donned his pads, and swiped across the line first ball. Sixty all out was unfortunate for Northfields but they will come again. For the Gents, the bowlers have struck a golden seam so enjoy it while it lasts. Dubey, whose energy and tenacity in raising XI with many members absent was greatly appreciated (the 2024 roster in now 23), and S. Patel shared captaincy duties and involved everyone. We hope to welcome the guest players again.

Note: this is not the rarity the scorer believed at the time. H. Patel and N. Patel bowled all eight through in Gents v. Clapham In in August 2023, though they did not open the bowling.

Gentlemen of West London v. Hook and Southborough

Sunday 26 May, Wycombe House. Gents won toss. Showery, 19C

Won by 56 runs

Gentlemen of West London		Hook and Southborough				
Dubey	run out (Isaacson)	17	Milton	c Puli	b S. Patel	5
*R. Patel	c Tobias		McFarlane	c Puli	b Osman	22
Gulati		b David Moseley	12		b S. Patel	2
Kota	c Milton	b Solomon	29	†Ilyas	c H. Patel	10
Chatharaju	c Collen	b Lorberg	15	McInnes	b Kota	2
†Puli	c Tobias	b Solomon	8	Isaacson	c Puli	21
A. Ahmed	not out	b Lorberg	4	Tobias	c S. Patel	5
S. Patel			44	*Collen	c Chatharaju	19
H. Patel		b McFarlane	19	Solomon	c Puli	13
Osman	not out	b David Moseley	7	Dave Moseley		0
Joshi	dnb		3	Dylan Moseley		0
Extras	w7 nb1 b2		10	Lorberg	not out	13
Total	8 wickets	35 overs	168	Extras	w1 nb6 b6	112
FoW:	27, 35, 72, 78, 90, 91, 121, 160			Total	All out	35 overs
Bowling:	David Moseley 7-0-36-2, Dylan Moseley 7-0-49-0, Solomon 6-1-18-2, Lorberg 7-0-29-2, McFarlane 6-1-22-1, Milton 2-0-12-0			FoW:	11, 21, 40, 43, 60, 72, 86, 105, 112, 112	
				Bowling:	Gulati 4-0-13-0, S. Patel 4-1-8-2, Chatharaju 4-0-15-1, Osman 6-2-9-2, H. Patel 5-2-2-20-1, Kota 2-0-11-1, Dubey 4-1-11-0, R. Patel 5-0-19-2, Joshi 1-1-0-1	

The winning run continued on a blustery day against friendly opponents who accepted the fixture after a frustrating slew of cancellations and refusals which started when Hampstead bailed. It was good to see H&S again after the last two planned visits to them were rained off. They were founded in 1870 and have played every year since. They had a father and son opening the bowling and in spinner Lorberg the possessor of the best beard ever grown. Nineteen-year-old paceman Adnan Osman from Wycombe House 3s debuted and was awarded the match ball by Raj Patel, who successfully captained his first game. Gents thus finished May with a 6-1 record. This was the first win here in four attempts.

Having won the toss, Gents maintained a good scoring rate but lost wickets regularly, in the main to sound catching though Dubey was unfortunately run out when his bat rebelliously stuck in the spongy turf as he tried to make his ground. Gulati looked very good but was bowled by a pearler. Kota slapped a full-toss to cover. Ahmed took control from 91-6 off 21 with solid support from the senior Patels and Osman, H. Patel driving a powerful four over mid-wicket that he was not slow in lobbying for shot of the day. The gentle giant hit six fours, mostly down the ground. The total was par on a sticky wicket with a damp outfield.

The weather, never settled, began to decline and sympathy has to be offered to H&S having to face Osman's rockets in the gloaming, not that they complained. Rain radar sites were consulted, each contradicting the other as usual. S. Patel is a bowler reborn in 2024 and he struck in his second and fourth overs, Milton nicking off and Ilyas driving low to cover. Seven bowlers took a wicket, Joshi to close out the game with his first scalp on the final possible ball. The catching was efficient, only one being dropped. Puli took four and S. Patel, fielding closer than usual, his first since 2022.

H&S made a good fist of it but couldn't find a big couple of overs to bring the required rate back within scope after only eight runs had been procured in eight overs in the middle of the innings. McFarlane, Tobias and Solomon would score very quickly on a faster track. Captain Sudireddy's 2024 tactic of using nine bowlers, never allowing the batters to settle, was reinstated in full vigour after its suspension against Hounslow Hurricanes and Northfields.

Credit goes to Messrs. Ahmed, Shaikh, Hamzah Khan and his brother Khizer for getting the game on, including a Saturday midnight dash to cover the wicket. The day went well. The feeling during the enjoyable post-match socials was that this should become a home and away for 2025. H&S were good company and efficiently organised, their secretary Simon Wilkins being a pleasure to deal with. Ravi Inkollu now lives in Uxbridge and pitched up to support. Though he played only 43 matches, the last in 2012, his reputation is legendary. He got on the field in both digs as substitute fielder after two H&S players were delayed in the first innings and H. Patel had fallen strategically lame in the second.