



### **Fonthill Bishop v CCC – Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> August, 2017**

Rain could not dampen Chilmark's charge to another late season victory on Sunday, with local rivals Fonthill the latest victims.

With showers forecast to arrive around 6pm, the two captains decided to reduce the over allocation to 25 per team, with the tea break taken at the conclusion of the match. This meant that if the rain came early, batting first would be an advantage. Luckily Chilmark captain for the day Brand King won the toss.

Jack Stearman and James 'Rocket' Stevenson opened the batting at Fonthill's picturesque ground, making a cautious start in the overcast conditions. Early runs for Rocket came through a drive for two to deep point, however his innings was curtailed shortly afterwards, as he was trapped in front without adding to his score.

You get rid of one Stevenson though, you have to deal with another. Rocket's son Mac (Rifle?) came to the crease and looked as though he wasn't sure he should be there. But it was a perfect ruse, as after getting off the mark with a single, he then cleared the long on fence with a powerful drive that belied his size. It was the beginning of a watershed innings for the youngster.

At the other end Stearman was busy building his usual steady innings, collecting twos all around the wicket. However when he reached double figures he chased the spinner down the pitch, missed, and was stumped by a wicketkeeper who would go on to miss at least three similar chances throughout the rest of the innings.

Chilmark were 29-2 in the sixth over and in need of a steadying partnership. The skipper, King, was the perfect man for the job. Getting off the mark with a drive to the cover fence, followed shortly after by a six over long on, King insured the runs started to flow for Chilmark. However he wasn't alone in that regard. Mac Stevenson was more than holding up his end, knocking the ball sweetly into gaps around the field and taking singles at will. Chilmark's total climbed steadily.

After 13 overs Chilmark were 72-2. King and Stevenson were humming along now, frustrating Fonthill relentlessly as they dropped the ball into gaps and took cheeky singles, confident they could reach the other end before the fielders got the throw in. Combined with a couple more sixes over mid-wicket for King, the total climbed over 100 in the 18<sup>th</sup> over.

With the over allocation looming the pair started to swing the bat more. Stevenson found the boundary at long on, moving his total closer to a half century, while King registered his with a firm drive down the ground for four. Shortly after the skipper's innings came to an end though, not picking a slower ball and losing his middle stump. His partnership with Stevenson had been worth 101 and put Chilmark in the driving seat.

Darren Lee joined the youngster and got his innings under way by smashing a drive directly at a fielder, who let the ball burst through his hands and hit him on the head. Lee took a single. When Stevenson pulled a ball to the square leg boundary for four, he was just one run short of his half century. Time was running out though. Lee swung hard but kept picking out fielders, as he notched a couple of singles, before Mac Stevenson got on strike with just a couple of balls remaining in the innings. From the first of them he turned the ball behind square on the offside and set off. The throw came in but the youngster made his ground comfortably, and in so doing brought up his first half century for the club - an innings of determined concentration, swift running, and confident stroke play, and one that put Chilmark in a near unbeatable position.

With 149 runs to defend on a ground where boundaries were hard to come by, Chilmark felt confident as they took the field. Angus Steele got things underway, putting the ball in difficult positions for Fonthill's opening batsmen as he cranked up his speed. In a roundabout way Steele suffers for being as good as he is - he usually opens the bowling to the opposition's best batsmen while they're at their most defensive. Consequently he doesn't get the wickets he deserves, as anything outside the off stump is left alone, while straight deliveries are blocked. That was the story this Sunday as Fonthill's batsmen hedged their bets against a bowler that they knew they couldn't dominate. None-the-less Steele's five over spell cost just 16 runs and made the task much easier for the rest of Chilmark's attack.

From the Pavilion End Windmill Will Thompson bounded in with his idiosyncratic action. Armed with brand new sunglasses and trademark enthusiasm, he was belted to the boundary for his efforts. However he came back strongly and was unlucky not to get a wicket with some deft deliveries on middle stump.

'Rocket' Stevenson took over from Windmill after three overs and quickly put paid to any thoughts Fonthill had of belting their way to a quick victory, as he and Steele put the brakes on the scoring. The hosts made it to 50 in the tenth over before Rocket struck, a sharp delivery beating bat and pad and knocking back middle stump.

Ben Fowles then took over from Steele and surprised everyone by revealing he is actually an off spinner. He looked moments away from taking a wicket when the rain came and the players scampered to get the covers on.

With the forecast looking grim the decision was made to have tea and a pint and generally give the appearance that we might wait to see if the weather would clear. One pint became two as white clothes were swapped for civvies and plans made for departure. On the deck of the pavilion,

scanning one horizon and then the other, Ben Fowles asked from where the rain was coming. Darren Lee finished his pint, wiped his lip and advised somberly that 'it was coming from the sky'.

Then, quite unexpectedly, the rain began to ease. Despite the forecast it was quickly decided the game should start up again, and so pints were finished, sandwiches scoffed and whites donned, and before long 13 players were ready to resume play.

The effect of the rain was immediately obvious. The ball skidded on the pitch and the outfield was slow and slippery. It was mostly to Chilmark's advantage; however Darren's Mate Gareth wasn't thinking so when he charged in to field a ball at mid-wicket, found himself about to overrun it, tried to stop, but instead launched into a Superman-esque dive that ended a good six years past the ball.

Rocket struck first, busting through another shaky defence from a Fonthill batsman to knock back his stumps. Then Fowles chimed in with a delivery that the batsman played across the line to, missed, and found his stumps broken. Fonthill were struggling at 74-3 in the 17<sup>th</sup> over.

Rocket's miserly spell ended having conceded just 11 runs in five overs; Jack Stearman then took up the cause from the pavilion end and found his spin the focus of a hopeful attack by Fonthill's batsmen. He quickly saw the error of his ways and changed his technique to that of medium pace. The runs swiftly dried up.

When Fowles struck for a second time, trapping Fonthill's number four bat in front, the hosts were in dire straits. Darren's Mate Gareth then joined the attack and bowled a maiden over, all but ruling out a Fonthill victory. With five overs to go they needed 66 runs to win. However his second went for 16 runs as a last-ditch attempt was made by the hosts.

Stearman remained tight though and by the time the 25<sup>th</sup> overcame Fonthill were still 47 runs short. The stage was set for Windmill Will Thompson to return to the fray. With an attacking batsman at the crease he was dispatched for a couple of boundaries, however a single brought the other batsman on strike. Windmill had his man in his sunglasses sights. He first tempted him with a ball just wide of off stump, then a slow yorker, before the killer ball, just short of a length, that the batsman tried to hit out of the park. Windmill had just enough play on the ball to swing past the edge and knock back the middle peg. It was Thompson's first wicket for the club. A few deliveries later the game was done and Chilmark had registered their fifth win in a row.

**Chilmark CC 149-3 (B King 64; M Stevenson 50 not out) defeated Fonthill Park CC 120-5 (J Stevenson 2-11; B Fowles 2-14)**