



Fonthill Bishop v Chilmark – Wednesday 3rd May, 2017

Chilmark made it three wins from three games on Wednesday evening, winning an exciting T2018 match that wasn't decided until the final ball of the last over.

Under grey skies and in chilly conditions the two old rivals took to Fonthill Park's ground before all the players had even arrived, such was the urgency to get the game completed before the gloomy conditions worsened. Having won the toss, Chilmark captain for the day Brand King opted to bat first, hoping to make the most of what would be the brightest conditions. It may have been a wise choice for the team, but on a personal level it backfired, as the skipper was back in the pavilion in the second over, bowled for two.

His much maligned opening partner, Ben Fowles, was on a mission to restore some credibility to his reputation, and after seeing his skipper go cheaply, took it upon himself to dig in and get a score. A boundary through cover was a good start.

Joining him at the crease was pinch hitter Brett Allen, sent in early with strict instructions to swing readily at anything that looks moreish. Allen barely needed the advice, as he sent his third ball over the long on fence for six. Unfortunately that was as good as it got for Allen as he was bowled shortly afterwards for eight.

In at four was James 'Rocket' Stevenson, turning out for his first game of the season. He took a couple of balls to get his eye in, before clearing the mid-wicket fence. With Fowles growing in confidence and finding the boundary with some deft cut shots, it looked as though a healthy partnership might grow. However just as the shoots cleared the soil, Stevenson missed a quick one and was on his way for seven.

Dave Ulliyot entered the fray at five, donning his pads for the first time this season also. There was little time to clear the cobwebs though, as Chilmark were struggling at 27-3 after five overs; with the game shortened to 18 overs aside, quick runs were of the essence. Thankfully Ulliyot was able to turn the strike over and allow Fowles to continue to blossom his innings, as the pair put on a crucial 25 run partnership. A boundary to Ulliyot, clipped neatly onto his leg and away to the fence, was the climax of his innings though, as he was adjudged LBW the next ball.

Wickets then fell quickly. Jason Stearman had driven all the way from London for the game (and was returning straight after) yet his stay at the crease lasted two deliveries before being bowled for a duck; Darren Lee survived twice as long and yielded two runs, before he was caught at point, and

then Ricky Corbin gave up a catch to end his brief innings on one. From a reasonable position Chilmark had crashed to 55-7 in the 11th over.

All was not lost while Ben Fowles was still at the crease though. Seeing the ball with vivid clarity through his maths teacher specs, and benefitting from some batting wisdom passed on from Club Chairman and Obi Wan like coach Carl Jacobs, Fowles was busy making his teammates look ordinary. When Max Allen joined him at the crease Chilmark suddenly appeared to be back in with a chance of posting a reasonable total. The youngster confidently danced down the pitch to meet the ball, lifting it into gaps in the field and pushing his robust partner to turn for two. Fowles obliged, but took a moment to compose himself afterwards. Then he tried to mimic young Allen and was out stumped for 33. It was a welcome return to form for Frog Lane's sixth best cricketer though, his innings would be Chilmark's highest and go a long way to securing the victory.

Carl Jacobs demonstrated how a coach is more about his words than his actions; his eight ball stay at the crease profited the team four streaky runs, but was more valuable in terms of supporting Allen, who continued to bat like someone who knew how to.

When Jacobs was fired out LBW by umpire Pete Corbin, Paul Butler came in as Chilmark's last man. Max Allen saw this as his excuse to swing for the heavens. Luckily for him back on Earth Fonthill's fielders were mortal and his skied shots managed to avoid their clutches. With Butler scrambling a couple of singles and Allen reciprocating with a little more panache, Chilmark managed to see out their allotted 18 overs with a fighting total of 107-9.

Captain King appeared to be showing the effects of the cold on his antipodean brain, as he decided to open the bowling with Carl Jacobs from the pavilion end. But Jacobs, possibly still smarting from his write up in the Village Voice, barely looked out of place, as he placed the ball gently on the pitch and asked the batsmen to do their worst. He conceded seven from his first over but followed it up with a thrifty three runs from his second, and should have had a wicket too, when a skied catch popped out of Max Allen's hands at deep mid-wicket. With Paul Butler keeping the pressure on from the other end, Chilmark found they were off to a good start, restricting Fonthill to 18-0 off the first four overs.

Then Jacobs bowled again and Fonthill were 31-0 off five.

Luckily Butler was on hand to rescue the situation as he snuck through the opener's defence and rattled his stumps. With his three over spell registering figures of 10-1, Butler had given Chilmark the early ascendancy.

With the sun hidden behind thick clouds threatening the horizon, King needed to get his fast bowlers on before the gloom made their pace dangerous. Consequently Stevenson took over from Jacobs at the Pavilion end, while Brett Allen took the reigns at the other. Thus began the most crucial and match winning period of bowling for Chilmark. Between the pair just 37 runs came from the next eight overs, with four wickets falling, all of them bowled. Stevenson took three of those wickets,

including two in a double wicket maiden to complete his spell. It put Fonthill fully on the back foot at 69-5. But with four overs still to go the low target of 108 was still very much within range.

King threw the ball to warhorse Darren Lee to undertake the challenging task of restricting Fonthill's desperate batsmen in the final few overs from the Pavilion end, while opting to bowl himself from the other. Needing ten an over, Fonthill's batsmen took nine from Lee's first, then just four from King. Suddenly Chilmark were looking very well placed to take victory All that was needed was a solid over from Lee to put the game beyond reach of the hosts. His first ball went to Corbin on the point boundary, who got it back in swiftly to restrict the batsmen to a single. Two runs came from the next ball, before another single. It was good, tight bowling from Lee, as Fonthill's batsmen grew frustrated at their inability to get a big piece of bat on the ball. With just three more runs coming from the over Lee had played his role perfectly. It now came down to King to not concede the 20 runs Fonthill needed to register an unlikely victory.

With his fielders dotted around the boundary and only a spritely Jacobs in close, King began the final over knowing he just needed to not be rubbish to get the win. His first ball was clobbered straight down the ground. Thankfully Butler was stationed in its way and took it on the first bounce, saving three runs. The second ball was a replay of the first. Chilmark players were beginning to feel comfortable. Then the Fonthill batsman got hold of one and sent the ball sailing over Butler's head for six. 12 runs were now needed off the last three balls.

Sensing the batsmen were getting a taste of his pace, King decided to toss in a slower ball. The ploy worked, as a miscue dribbled wide of Jacobs on the offside and only a single was scored. 11 runs needed off two. Needing to not get hit for six, King was hit for four, the ball an orange blur across the grey/green between Fowles and Butler on the long on boundary.

Barring an illegal delivery, Chilmark could not lose the game. It could still be tied with a six though and Fonthill's most aggressive batsman was on strike. King mulled his options and then decided to risk another slower ball. The batsman opened up his stance, swung hard, and miscued it along the ground. Fowles cleaned up at long on as Chilmark recorded a five-run victory.

Chilmark 107-9 (B Fowles 33; M Allen 18) defeated Fonthill Park 102-5 (J Stevenson 3-18; P Butler 1-10)