

Back to back Defeats for the First Eleven

Tuesday, 12 May 2015

This weekend the 1st XI suffered consecutive defeats in the league at the Hands of Elton and Werneth. Saturday's defeat was perhaps the most disappointing as the firsts had beaten Elton in the first game of the season.

On Saturday, after electing to bat first, Middleton struggled to build a total as wickets continued to fall. The conditions were overcast and with the heavy rain from the night before these were not the easiest batting conditions. This said Elton bowled well with some good slow bowling which suited the wicket which turned a great deal. The truth is that Middleton never really got out of the blocks and there were few batting performances to note as Middleton were all out for 99.

After some contemplation over tea it was clear that the Moonrakers had nothing to lose and had to strike early to have any chance of salvaging a win from this game. With Kemm's impressive performances with the ball in recent weeks, he began Middleton's bowling innings and removed the first three Elton batsmen for 55. In at number 4 was the Elton professional Mahlangu. As he came to the crease there was very much a feeling that this game was in the balance. However Middleton were soon given a renewed sense of hope that maybe they could pull off an unexpected win as the middle order was exposed when Mahlangu returned to the pavilion for a duck for the second time against Middleton.

Kemm was ripping through the visitors and a few dared to believe that he could single handily take all the wickets. As Kemm continued to send batsmen after batsmen back the runs also began to creep up and as the ninth wicket fell for 98 the visitors only needed 2 runs to win. This was achieved by Elton's last batsmen who swept Kemm for a four which was harsh as he had taken all but one of the Elton wickets and gained Middleton one bowling point.

The following day the firsts welcomed relegated Werneth to Towncroft. But again a lack of application with the bat resulted in a five point defeat for the home team.

Whilst the Moonrakers have to make improvements in the field and with the bat, Werneth's deputy professional Rehan Rafiq delivered an outstanding performance with the bat scoring 136 and took 7 wickets.

With Werneth batting first Rafiq helped his team to a total of 212. This was a good score on what was clearly a difficult pitch to score quickly on. Dropped catches again cost Middleton as Werneth finished their batting innings for the loss of just five wickets.

For the second time in a week Middleton professional Kemm made a half century and was one of the few batsmen for the home team whom really got himself in. However, after looking set, he miss judged a delivery from Rafiq and no sooner had he celebrated his fifty, than he returned to the pavilion with 51 to his name.

In reply to Werneth's 212 Middleton totalled 157 which demonstrates the importance of Rafiq's innings which took the game away from the home side. Six Middleton Wickets fell for single figures which demonstrated the

lack of depth in the batting order. This said, this is a young Middleton team this year that will have to learn the hard way at times this season in order to make sustained progress.