

Match Report

Isle Sur Tarn vs Toulouse CC 5th August 2007

Never let it be said that Toulouse CC doesn't like a challenge. It was with this in mind that the team ventured north of Toulouse, on the hottest cricketing day of the season to date, to take on the mighty Tarn for the third time this year (so far!), or was it just to sup beer from their A1 beer shack and to talk of boozy nights and rugby with the top barman/physio with the tash like well kept orangutans armpit?

The weather was set fair, with a light southerly breeze, which took nothing away from the forty degree temperatures which awaited the players for this 35 over friendly. A fixture arranged before we knew how good they were this season and that we would be meeting them just three short weeks later in the prestigious Siddall's Cup final.

So it was time for the mind games to start. Holidays had restricted availability for both sides, and the "friendly" billing allowed the injection of some new talent. TCC fielded their latest signing from Bangalore Sach "I'm still quick even on one leg" etc etc... and Two Fags' mate "Sledger" Thomas, nothing to do with tobogganing it would later transpire. For their part, Tarn fielded their regular crop of eager talent with the addition of alternating hobbits (or possibly youngsters from their youth programme) fielding at positions most favoured by our better batsmen.

The toss was won by our by most regular tosser skippy and he elected to bat, no doubt calculating a melting wicket, later in the day, would provide some interesting movement for our seam attack. Our two opening gladiators were called forward, with Two Fags and Mat "Cheddar sucks" Raboisson (still not clear if it's the cheese or the west country town he dislikes), strode out into the heat haze. The TCC innings started slowly, punctuated in the third over with a "rarebit" of bowling, to dismiss Mat for a canard gratinee. Needless to say he was cheesed off. Two Fags meanwhile was slowly adding runs, although with boundaries proving elusive scoring was pedestrian, literally. After being dropped at square leg, off a shot that would probably have continued to the boundary for six, his inning was concluded for 9, caught Arshaq, searching for that elusive boundary.

This brought the Wardle brothers to the crease and Dave "pram projectile" Rice in as one of our umpires. Tony "hamstrung" W, the older of the brothers by 20 minutes, took over were TF had left off, looking promising, but just not finding the middle of the bat. After seemingly indicating he was "in" with a cracking four, a half appeal soon after saw Ricey crisply raise a digit, the Tipster was no more for 7. Well done Dave for calling it as you see it! That's all you can do, no matter what everyone else say's.....or does..... in your box.

Young Wardle meanwhile was showing true staying power, this time not hindered by tactical spectators, the score book tells it all, 111111111112212244314, a solid start, big finish. RW finally caught for 36, after one of the seasons most hard worked for totals. Whilst Wardle the Younger toiled, new boy Thomas and "the Big Cat" came and went unnoticed, adding one between them. Nick "tour/kit manager" Brooks was next to come and go for three. The author thought "beefy" or "must be a Foot and Mouth" these days, had been given LBW by one of our neutral umpires (Tony), a second such impartial, decision in the match, the book however says "bowled".....?

A fifth batting partner joined the Wardle youth, this time Dickie Rice. Freshly returned from Mumbai, laden with cricket paraphernalia. This was soon to return to the pavilion unsullied, after what appears to have been a Hamilton vs Alonso moment between Dave and his new bat. According to our aspiring slack Eddy, he instructed the bat to hit the ball along the ground, it meanwhile won the argument and skied one to extra cover, out caught for naught. Can't wait for the next game to see how this relationship develops.

The skipper was the last to join Young 'un Wardle, and was soon swinging the willow and calling for Kamikaze singles, benefiting in part from some friendly bowling to help our score a little (which at one point looked unlikely to get beyond 70!) Skippy meanwhile was doing his bit for team moral, forcing a search of the bar after striking a ball to deep mid beer dispenser for six.

Sachin joined the Bunster at the wicket late on and spanked his first shot across the longest boundary on the ground for six, this, it must be said not off one of the buffet bowlers, a good start. The skipper clearly down wind of a government lab, got a bit carried away and tried another mighty whack, only to be bowled for 48, just short of what would have been a well earned half century. Sachin meanwhile, ran out of partners and finished on a tantalizing 11 not out. Toulouse had managed 140 from 32 and a bit overs.

A fine tea, with excellent cake, quiche and sarnies was inevitably followed by the Tarn innings. This even after we offered a draw, then in desperation a concession just to avoid having to field in the furnace like late afternoon.

The Toulouse players took the pitch with one, the unfortunate Mat, having to seek shelter after being overcooked and becoming a bit weak at the truckles. Fortunately he was soon able to return to the field after one of the skippers horse pills, a lie down under the trees where one of the Tarn players tried to hit him with the ball, and a chat with the wily barman.

Tarn cunningly confused the bowling options with their opening partnership of Bilbo Johnston (sorry don't know your real first name) and Arshad. The Skipper was forced give the new ball to the Sledge and Jack "the lad" Brooks. Jack soon took after his Dad (not all that boozy loud stuff...yet) and took his first wicket in his second over. A diminutive success, but a good start. Come on Jack seeing those sticks fold must be better than the old computer! The beef kept it in the family with a wicket in his first over (a wicket maiden),

bowling Tarns other opener with one that came back. Another wicket fell on smart fielding by Skippy, pouncing and running out a dangerous looking Arshad for 8. Things were looking hopeful on a constant trickle of wickets.

Sachin came on to bowl his first spell for the Toulousains and was soon in the action. Ashu another dangerous bat, survived a very strong appeal for LBW with his score on nothing. Sadly for the lavender mob he was later to go on to score an unbeaten 50. Where was Dave when you needed him.

The fielding was as ever manful, with Nick for example getting everything in the way of a bouncing ball heading for the mid on boundary. Fortunately for him the ball didn't strike any essential organs before taking him off his feet, Baldrick like, by some miracle his wi!*y got in the way.

Things were starting to look ominous and not even discussions between slips and batsmen (top sledging Jason!) could dislodge the Tarn boys. The skipper called for Sach as a last throw of the dice. Worryingly, an attack a cramp almost ended his second spell before another delivery could be made. However, if the A380 wiring harness couldn't floor him, then lactic acid, anaerobic respiration and an oxygen debt wasn't going to either.

Sach got his reward taking Zeeshan (sorry that's what it says in the book) LBW for 31. Sach also gets the prize for the best attempted run out of the batsman at the non-strikers end, taking everybody by surprise by Ringed Plover like feigning re-injury, only to twirl and remove the bails in front of an unsympathetic umpire, good fun and it at least woke everybody up! Ricey bowled a decent spell with mixed success at times, not helped by the umpire destroying his sunglasses. Ricey, was it you who Ashu hit over the stand for 6?

Tarn soon finished the game, winning by 5 wickets and were none the wiser that they had fallen into our cleverly worked trap to lull them into a false sense of security before the final. Just to let you know boys my cousin Kevin P says he's ok for the final and Flints says he can't wait, just have to register them with France cricket.....!

It only leaves me to recount the bizarre goings on after the match. It was hot and there were showers, but when a discussion started with a fully clothed official from Tarn and two stark bollock naked, hand on hips, members of Toulouse about the return of our flicx pitch*, its was definitely time to get a beer from the beer shack!!!!

*see Nick's email 6/8