

NVCC Match Report – 20th May 2012

"And so it will come to pass that on the Twentieth dawn of the Fifth month of the Twelfth year of the Second Millennium of Our Lord, a Cricket Club will be born among Sacred Grapes in the land where the Grizzly Bear roams. So brilliant will be the display on this birth day that even the Sun, in the heavens above, will so be in awe that it will hide itself behind the Moon." Ancient prophecy from the book of TendulkBradman.

A great opening day for the Napa Valley Cricket Club. On a stunning Sunday morning at a touch after 10:30am the first official ball of the Napa Valley Cricket Club was bowled by Martin Mackenzie to Rob Bolch. Prior to that, players and the first stream of spectators started to arrive for our first game. The ground was in stunning condition; thanks to a lot of work by Head Grounds man Bolch & his band of merry men who had given up a couple of weekends preparing for this day. Australia/American All-stars Captain Phil Bourke tossed the Silver Dollar and Rest of the World Captain Amritpal Bathal called "heads"; the eagle (tails) came up and Bourke chose to bat.

In a tactic to kick-start the inning and put the fielding side onto the back foot, Bourke chose to send in Thatcher to bat with Bolch and the move paid off; Thatcher quickly started dispatching the ball around the paddock with his baseball style, with the normally dangerous Mackenzie somewhat off his game. Thatcher quickly raced to 14, and the team to 24, before being bowled by Ojha, and had set the team up for a fast run rate. Bourke came in at first drop and he & Bolch, the regular opening pair, continued on their history of strong partnerships from last year with another 50+ run partnership, their 56 run stand, in just 34 balls, the largest of the day, steering the AAAs to 80 runs before Bolch's leg stump was bent back by Healy the Younger. During this time, Bourke took a particular liking to Healy's bowling, dispatching him for three fours in one over and then two sixes in the next. However Healy had the last word bowling Bourke shortly afterwards.

By this time, though, a strong foundation to the AAA inning had been laid as they stood at 3 for 104 at the end of just 10 over's. Wood had entered the bowling and his flighted spinners, along with the loss of Bourke & Bolch in a relatively short space of time, slowed the scoring. Cahill & Curwood set about getting the scoring ticking over; taking the score along to 119 before Wood tore the heart out of the AAA middle order in the 15th over; taking three wickets in five balls. First to go was Cahill, caught by van Staden for 7 and then had Curwood caught by Mackenzie three balls later for 15. Watters came out and immediately attacked; hitting a solid, hard, low ball first up that flew back at Wood who put his body, and face, in front of the ball, catching it in his body after it ricocheted off his chin, dismissing Watters for a golden duck. Facing a hat-trick, the new batsman Carson attacked the next ball and was rewarded with a single. From 3 for 119 at 14 over's, the AAAs were now teetering at 6 for 120 after 15.

The ROWs had their tails up at this stage and sniffed a possible collapse, but Burton with good support from Carson, both "mature rookies" at the club, steadied the ship adding 25 in 26 balls before Burton was left short of his crease following a good return from Younger Healy. Another mature rookie, and possibly the find of the game, Mick Anderson came to the crease and started caressing the ball around the field. The AAAs reached 150 in the 21st over before the ROW captain Bathal struck removing Carson. This brought Montroy, a cricketing virgin, to the crease and he gallantly lasted 10 balls before falling to Cleland. The AAAs ended up at 172 after their 25 over's, with the ROWs ruing a couple of missed chances - a slips catch put down when Bolch was on less than a handful, and a high ball from Bourke that just caught (and broke) a finger tip when he was new to the crease.

After an enjoyable lunch, provided by chef Gold, with passing assistance from kitchen hand Jones, the ROWs took to the field in their endeavor to chase down 172 and claim the inaugural World Series Championship cup. Openers Nancarrow and van Staden provided a solid opening, although were a little slow getting the run rate moving, in large part due to some solid bowling by Cahill, ably supported by Curwood. The openers put on 19 in 27 balls before van Staden fell victim to a superb ball from Cahill which just caught the very top of the bails. In a courageous move the ROWs sent out Healy the Younger at first drop and he valiantly defended his wicket before his middle stump was sent cart wheeling down the ground by Irwin, who had made it to the ground after his appearance as Super Mario at Bay to

Breakers earlier in the morning. In the meantime Nancarrow, after playing himself in, was caught well at long off by Cahill off Bolch. With these dismissals the ROWs were 3 for 30 in the eight over. Captain Bathal was at the crease and when joined by Mackenzie worked to restore order. With Bolch bowling tightly, they put on 54 for the fourth wicket, the second best partnership of the day. Bathal attacked with Mackenzie in support before Bathal caught a leading edge resulting to a high ball was well caught by Carson at mid-on off Bolch. Mackenzie continued to push along, joined by Ojha. About this time the AAA 'keeper, Anderson, keeping up to Watters, copped a nasty ball to the eye and was forced to leave the ground. In good news, although one hand was required to keep ice on the eye, the other was still free to hold a beer.

Short a player, the ROWs, either magnanimously or naively (a matter of debate), sent out their best fielder, Healy the Younger, to sub. Curwood removed the game's top scorer Mackenzie with a well pitched ball that took out off stump ending a threatening 37 run partnership with Ojha. This was quickly followed by a return from substitute fielder Healy to fill-in 'keeper Bourke that saw Ojha with his bat in the air and short of the crease. ROW was now struggling at 6 for 122 after almost 20 over's. Healy the Elder joined Adhye however the AAAs were able to return the dangerous Cahill to the attack and he was able to close down the scoring, effectively snuffing out the challenge. The ROWs battled on gamely before Cahill got through the defenses of Wood, then Thatcher took out the middle stump of arch-rival Healy, leaving Carson to take the final wicket, trapping Cleland plumb in front with Buckley left stranded at the bowlers end with a few balls left. After a great contest, the AAAs celebrated victory in the initial Napa Valley Cricket Club World Series Championship with a score of 172 to the ROWs 152.

Best players for the day:

AAA:

Batting: Bourke - 39 of 27 balls, Bolch - 24 of 26 and Burton - 21 off 14.

Bowling: Cahill for 2 for 17 off 5 (plus a catch), Bolch for 2 for 24

ROW:

Batting: Mackenzie - 41 off 37, Bathal 26 off 24

Bowling: Wood - 3 for 21 off 5, Younger Healy 2 for 53 plus 2 run outs (and 2 run outs as sub for the AAAs).

In closing a few big callouts:

As above, the ground crew for preparing a ground that would have the MCG curators green with envy. "Junior" Gold, and his support crew of Jonesy and bevy of beauties, for putting on a superb lunch. Matt Wood & Mick Anderson for literally putting their heads on the line - Wood copping a return hit from Watters to the chin and Anderson copping a nasty rising ball bowled by Watters to the eye. There is a clear link here that doesn't need expanding on.....

Tim Irwin for running as Super Mario in San Francisco and getting all the way to Calistoga for the afternoon session

Head curator Bolch & his crew (Mackenzie, Healy, Ojha, Curwood, Cahill, Stern and others I can't think of after a couple of glasses of wine) for presenting the ground in perfect condition.