

The quickest 1st XI 'ton' ever...

In the last game of the 1988/89 season prior to the Christmas break (10th & 17th December) the batting performance by Simon Spaulding, must rate in Club history as the fastest century ever recorded by a Ferntree Gully 1st XI player. In a year when rain played havoc with the first half of the season (5 of the first 6 matches being drawn) a result was important for the 1st XI to even contemplate a finals berth. Unfortunately the first Saturday of the match against Belgrave was again washed out and the weather forecast for the last day of the game, now a one-day match, was also for threatening showers later in the afternoon.

Peter Collins captained the team. It also included future Club Coach - Lindsay Wulf, a young Jarrod Adem in his 1st XI debut, Norm Butters, Mario Catalano, John Franchi, Brad and Neil Geraghty, Kim Mastertoun and Alan Norton. Peter won the toss and after discussing the options with the team in desperate need of a win, decided that to claim victory they needed to be certain of bowling Belgrave out or completing a full innings against them. In order to do this, it meant, given the imposing weather conditions, declaring the Ferntree Gully innings closed before the compulsory closure at 34 overs occurred. What happened next, only a few were privileged to see!

Simon's batting performance of 166 from just 84 balls remains a highlight in the memory banks of his team mates and those few supporters who were there on the day, though much like the 1960/61 Tied Test match in Brisbane, those who 'recall' the events of the day have swollen to many more...

Simon and Lindsay opened the innings and Simon proceeded to tear the Belgrave attack apart hitting boundaries at will and despatching all the Belgrave bowlers to and over the boundary fence. The first 100 runs came up off just 16 overs with Lindsay's contribution 20 not out (including a top edged six) and Simon having made 78 not out (from 55 balls faced) with Extras being 4. To put Simon's effort into perspective, Lindsay was no slouch, having completed the 1987/88 season by scoring in excess of 900 runs as an opening batsman in the RDCA Chandler Shield and was obviously a batsman of high class himself (later proven throughout his career at Ferntree Gully).

The opening devastation continued and was finally stopped when the score stood at 154, Lindsay being caught for 33. Their partnership broke a 1st XI club record (from material available at the time) which had stood since 1960 when Barry Joyner and Bob DeCoite put on 149. Simon and Lindsay had been just six runs short of the record two weeks earlier when they put on 143 for the first wicket in a match against Knox (26/11/1988). After the loss of Lindsay for 33, Brad came and went for a 'duck' and then the carnage continued when Simon and Kim put on 72 for the 3rd wicket - Kim's contribution - 9.

Simon was finally dismissed for 166 in the 29th over when the score was 3/233 - he had faced just 84 balls. His progression from 78 not out when the opening century stand was brought up, to his century occurred quickly. When he was finally dismissed for 166, he had added a further 88 runs from only 29 balls faced since the century partnership with Lindsay had occurred! Kim and John Franchi batted on for a further 8 balls before Kim was bowled for 18. Peter Collins declared the innings at 4/249 from just 30.2 overs (182 balls) with John Franchi remaining 7 not out.

Simon scored at over 5½ runs an over on his own and his score was 71% of the runs scored off the bat for the entire innings. He hit 10 sixes, 19 fours, 1 three, 4 twos and 19 singles in a display of controlled hitting not matched by any senior player in the memory of club stalwarts Bob DeCoite, Wal Tew, Mick Kirkpatrick, Tony Goldsmith and Peter Clark - the latter two were in attendance on the day.

The team went onto win the game with Belgrave needing over seven runs an over from every over to even get close - being 4/119 at stumps with Norm Butters 2/62 off 15 Overs and Kim 1/33 off 12 Overs the wicket takers.