

30th July 2011

Norfolk Alliance Premier League

Diss CC Vs Fakenham CC

In amazing scenes at the Rectory Meadow, a match that will live long in the memory of all those that were lucky enough to attend, Diss beat Fakenham by 22 runs in an enthralling, highly entertaining spectacle.

Fakenham went into the match with a 100% win record, and seemingly sailing back to the East Anglian Premier League from which they came.

Diss' worries were compounded when Simon Cooper lost the toss, and was asked to bat first under overcast conditions. James Wilby and Ben Spinks started watchfully, carefully trying to negate the swing of Rudi Hillerman, and Burton, but Wilby was eventually undone after many a play and miss as he presented Burton his first and only wicket for five. Simon Cooper strode to the wicket with intent, and looked to punish any loose bowling, and along with Spinks pushed the score along steadily until he edged behind off the wily Slegg for 13. David Tooke was next in with a point to prove, and with young Spinks the left handed pair put on over fifty for the third wicket, both giving the usually economical Fakenham attack something to think about. Spinks eventually fell for a cultured and hugely mature 45, which unfortunately for Diss was the start of a mini collapse as Rob Tooke (5) was closely followed back to the pavilion by brother David for a patient 33, all falling after the introduction of spin. With their backs against the wall Chris Cooper and Will Dawson enjoyed Diss' second fifty run partnership of the innings. With Dawson (7) very much taking the back seat, rotating the strike and running well, Chris Cooper blitzed a sparkling run-a-ball 45 to put Diss right back into contention, in an innings that contained three huge sixes. In the penultimate over of Diss' innings there was still time for yet another massive momentum shift as the South African, Hillerman, dismissed Cooper, Dawson and Williamson in consecutive balls to complete a devastating hat trick. With an over remaining, young Kieran Pask and James Shepherd were left to drag Diss' score up to a respectable 170 for eight.

With a hugely depleted bowling attack due to injury and absence Diss knew they had a highly improbable task on their hands against such a formidable Fakenham batting line-up. Opening with swing in the shape of James Shepherd and the spin of Mark Williamson from the other end, the pair got Diss off to a fantastic first twelve overs as the Fakenham duo of Harvey (2) and Monahan (4) perished with hardly a run on the board. Williamson, now one of the most feared off-spinners in the league, was showing unrelenting control, as Shepherd was showing all the qualities that an opening swing bowler should do with the new ball. By the half way stage in Fakenham's innings the Gray brothers had recovered the situation slightly moving the score onto fifty, but the required rate had soared to just under five runs an over. By this stage Rob Tooke and Chris Cooper had replaced the openers and they too were showing impeccable consistency. Diss were continuing to create huge pressure added by their athletic and fully committed fielding, and the pressure took its toll as the Gray brothers were sent

packing either side of J. Brown's dismissal with Tooke picking up two wickets and Williamson adding one to his previous scalp.

With Fakenham in no mood to lose their winning record the highly dangerous Hillerman entered the fray, and with the rate now up to a run a ball with fifteen overs to go the game was still very much in the balance. The game started to swing back into the favour of the league leaders as Hillerman along with Pipkin pushed Fakenham to within forty runs of victory with six overs remaining. With an ever-increasing partisan crowd baying for more wickets Diss duly obliged as Tooke got one to sneak past the on-rushing Pipkin, who was smartly stumped by Tom Weal. With Diss sensing a historical victory, Chris Cooper struck a huge blow for the home side as he bowled Hillerman with Fakenham needing just over thirty for victory. With Fakenham still going for the victory, Shepherd returned under huge pressure, but thanks to a moment of pure inspiration from Rob Tooke, Diss were soon celebrating, as he pulled off the most remarkable of diving one handed catches to dismiss Moy and prevent a guaranteed six. Two balls later it was Will Dawson's turn to bucket a far easier chance; Diss now stood one wicket away from victory. Incredibly Slegg was still swinging from the hip, and sent Cooper soaring over the ropes for six, but Diss' moment came in the following over as Kieran Pask produced a devastating throw over the top of the stumps to run out Burton and send Diss and the sizable crowd into delirium.

After such a performance the man of the match award could have gone to all eleven players but for his bowling and astonishing catch Rob Tooke once again came out on top.

Diss CC 170 for eight (Ben Spinks 45, Chris Cooper 45) beat Fakenham 148 all out (James Shepherd 3 for 24, Rob Tooke 3 for 34) by 22 runs.