

My Dear Friends,

What a great way to celebrate the 300th game of the two MVCC club greats. The day started poignantly with speeches from Sandro Carpocchi and Darren Spud Nagle in the club rooms with the 1st XI joining us. Sambo and Spud recounted the enormous off field contribution made by both men as well as some memories of past glories on the ground. It was great to see many past and current players as well as Odie's family and friends form a honour guard for their entrance to the field as well as a very special Odie poster made by his boys Luke and Max. Club greats Sandro and Mick Harvey returned to play with the MFS on this special day.

We fielded first. Appropriately Riverboat Joe bowled the first over and what a good one it was. We almost had the dream start with a lofted drive hit straight over Joe's head. Odie sprinted around from mid-on but his tap over to POK was missed. Odie made amends a short while later running out their best bat with a direct hit. 'Not on your arm Odie'. Joe's first spell was a very good one but without luck with catches going down. Normie who just made it onto the field due to his pasta duties opened from the other end and was a little rusty at first, which is understandable given his globetrotting exploits and close management of former MFS opening bowler Peter. In any event he soon got into stride and finished with 0 for 25 off his maximum of 7 overs and has some claim to being short changed a wicket or two given that 3 catches went down off his bowling. Two in a row from Sambo. POK replaced Joe and produced an absolute peach to remove their number 3 first ball. It pitched leg swung slightly to off and took the top of middle stump. Several of our batsmen conceded that it may have even trouble them. POK bowled with pace and accuracy to take 1 for 4 off 4. Juka came on first change and bowled 5 neat overs to take 1 for 11. His wicket was the first of Mick Harvey's 3 classy stumpings. Sniper bowled 3 overs for 10 runs. The ground fielding was first rate with Juka and a quite useful Sean O'Kane, on one leg, combining with Mick Harvey to add two more run outs to Odie's direct hit. Joe and Odie combined to finish off the innings and we got them all out for 108. Riverboat finally got some justice when the one legged Sean took and catch off his bowling. He was extremely unlucky not to finish with more wickets but 1 for 34 off his 7 was still great tribute for his 300th game. Mick Harvey was outstanding behind the stumps. Standing up to the stumps for all bowlers except Pete O'Kane and Normie. His 3 stumpings were text book but in no way easy and his work around the field was also incredible. The Skip did not put a foot wrong and set exactly the right tone in the field to honour our great Champs. Sambo, POK and SOK all took catches in the field.

Odie opened the batting with Mick Harvey and they put on 95 runs in quick time to bring us within the shadow of victory. Mick was surprisingly out for 61. His innings was a combination of classical solid defence and precise hitting. He finished with 8 fours and 2 sixes to cap off a great match. Normie came and went very quickly without troubling. Odie was back to his pomp and never looked in any trouble for his 36. He hit 4 fours and 1 six. He finished the game off in the 17th over clubbing Sydenham/Hillside's best bowler for 2 boundaries. In some ways it was a shame that we weren't chasing a few more because he had no trouble at all and looked set for a big score. It was fitting that Joey was at square leg so that they could leave the field victorious and arm in arm to the applause of their team mates, opponents, friends and family.

It was fantastic to be in the rooms for several drinks while Spud and Sambo grilled Joe and John with questions on their long and storied careers.

We have a bye now that Pascoe Vale Central have withdrawn from the comp. Let Patch know your availability for the next two weeks for other sides. The Patron would insist I remind you that we have the Christmas Party on Sunday 21 December with some talk of a T20 between the footballers and cricketers as entertainment.