

ICC World Cricket League Division Five

Guernsey v Oman

Played at FB Fields, St Clement, Jersey

on Fri 27th May 2016

50 over match

Referee: DT Jukes

Umpires: IO Oyioko (Kenya), WPM van Liemt (Neth) AJ Neill (Ire)

Scorers: HAJ Mountford (G) IR Damarell (O)

Toss won by Oman who elected to field

Oman won by 2 wickets (with 82 balls remaining)

'Sarnians push favourites close in low-scoring game' by Rob Batiste

FOR half-an-hour at the FB Fields on Friday afternoon, a sporting miracle seemed it just might be on the cards. Unbeaten Oman had lost four wickets for just 14 and Guernsey, defending just 141, dreamt they could do the impossible and not only pull off a great win but steal a place in the final. But it was not to be, the miracle was a mirage and just after 5.30pm Guernsey were walking off, disappointed, but not too dispirited at pushing the tournament favourites so close. With an eye on the play-offs Guernsey made three changes, including resting the captain and handing the captaincy to Ben Ferbrache, with Matt Stokes dropping into the middle order the returning Tom Kimber went in at the top of the order alongside GH Smit.

Smit cut the second ball for four and having taken six from the first over, the left-arm spinner gave way to Munis Ansari for the second over from the running track end. Ansari, the slinger, had ripped Jersey apart and here he was frequently beating the bat of Smit in his first two overs, but the veteran opener will have felt better for the sweetly timed push off his legs, which brought him three off the final ball of the fifth over. Sadly, the good, feeling lasted one ball. Smit played a lame straight drive to the first ball of the next over from Ranpura and gave mid-on the simplest of catches. Newey replaced him and survived a huge shout for a catch behind first ball.

It seemed no more than over enthusiasm and perhaps gamesmanship, but anyway it did not work and the all-rounder escaped. At the other end Kimber was seeing little of the strike, but when Ansari pitched full on leg stump he clipped him

just above the out- stretched hand of the mid-wicket fielder for his first four. The second-wicket pair edged the score along to 23 by the end of the 10th and the scoring opportunities were few. But when Ansari dropped one short to test Kimber, the batsman pulled him hard between mid-wicket and mid-on for his second boundary in more than 45 minutes at the crease. The Omanis were making some plainly ridiculous appeals for leg before, but the second-wicket pair were content to play every ball in its merits and for the usually pugnacious Kimber, it was an impressive first hour, even though it had brought him just 15 runs and a sore hand, the result of being stuck on the glove by a crisp on drive by his partner that gave him little chance to avoid. The blow necessitated some painkilling spray and a chance to refocus, while at the other end the run- starved Newey collected his first boundary, via an edge which just avoided the diving wicket-keeper Khadye.

Drinks were taken at 38 for one after 17 and the Guernsey camp had every reason to feel satisfied with their first 70 minutes' work. The trick was now to build on the first third of the innings and not waste it. Sadly, it was. Newey, who had looked out of touch, hung out his bat to the seamer Mehmood and Khadye took an easy catch which brought in Stokes, Guernsey's leading scorer in the tournament. One run was added and Kimber called for a quick single and failed to beat the direct throw of an alert cover fielder, 41 for three.



Team celebration

Guernseysportsphotography

Stokes was soon given out lbw by umpire Van Liemt, despite getting a big stride into the left-arm spinner, and the Omanis continued to put pressure on the umpires by appealing for anything within six inches of the bat. Hooper was next to go, also lbw, failing to get forward or get his bat on the spinner's quick ball. At 48 for five in 23, a massive rebuilding job was needed. Ollie Nightingale had the

opportunity to repay the faith of the selectors and after his second-ball duck against Jersey, will have been relieved to get off the mark with a tucked single off his legs. Ferbrache was caught off a no-ball free-hit and, incredibly, after the two batsman had crossed,

Nightingale was caught in the same position by the same fielder. Nightingale was pinned before by the impressive spinner, but escaped thanks to a thin-edge onto the pads.

But it was now painfully slow going for the Greens, whose run rate was dropping by the over. The field had been brought in to tempt the batsmen into hitting over the top and it had all become a slow death for the under pressure Greens and the sixth-wicket pair of Ferbrache and Nightingale, playing only his second game of the week. The stand-in skipper was struggling, but he did manage one pleasant sweep for four. His 44-ball stay came to an end with a tame clipped on drive to mid on and Guernsey were six down with 79 on the board and 12 overs remaining. Nightingale was digging in, but Jason Martin was not going to die wondering and thumped Ali out of the ground for a straight six, followed by a clubbed four in the next over off Lalcheta. A straight driven six into the fencing and a deft guided wide of slip for two more.



Jason Martin smashes a six

Guernseysportsphotography

The 45th brought 10 off the over and Guernsey were up to 121 with the realistic hope of posting 150, a score that had seemed highly unlikely for most of the morning. Martin was underlining what could be achieved by self conviction and moving your feet and his brave little knock ended on 33 by failing to pick Ansari's cleverly disguised slower ball. With the tail eking a few, the Greens closed on 141.

Kimber, playing his final game in island colours before moving to Dubai, said there was more in the pitch than was apparent, and when Oman crumbled to 14 for four to the new-ball attack of Newey and Hutchinson, those words doubled in relevance.



Ollie Newey appeals

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Andy Hutchinson economical spell

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Oman lost a fifth wicket to an outstanding catch from Ferbrache with 39 on the board, but that was as good as it got for a while, as Kaleem and Lalcheta got the innings back on track with some generous help from part-time spinner Smit, who

was punished in his one costly over. The Greens kept plugging away and got some rewards, but the Omani tail belied that description and it got them over the finish line to preserve their unbeaten record which, judging by their reaction at the close, was something they were very pleased with.