

INSTITUTIONAL CRICKET

Many are unaware that behind the closed doors of Birmingham ART institutions, as show changeovers occur, a vibrant institutional cricket league is flourishing. Whilst the majority of ART lovers in Birmingham assume that when galleries are shut it is because they are installing a new show, the reality is very different. Institutions compete against one another in a fiercely competitive cricket league that involves heavy betting syndicates and occasional kidnappings.

MUCH NEEDED RELIEF

For many though, this brings much needed relief from the Institutional Rap War currently raging in Birmingham. Groups and organisations are able to put their differences aside as they enjoy the thrill of leather hitting willow. This cricketing year, as it draws to a close, is possibly one of the best we have seen in Birmingham for a long long time. The competition for top spot continued up until the final over of the season as Margaret Street grasped victory from the jaws of defeat, beating Eastside Projects off the penultimate ball of the match and season.

THRILLING ENCOUNTER

BAZ can now exclusively bring you the match report from this thrilling encounter as they were there watching the action take place at Eastside. The match began controversially before a ball had been bowled as Eastside Projects had not removed the tunnel from the Tatham & O'Sullivan show. The umpires consulted the law books and couldn't find anything that said tunnels aren't allowed on cricket pitches.

UNSETTLE MARGARET STREET

It was clearly a plan by Wade et al to unsettle Margaret Street. Eastside Projects won the toss and elected to Bat. Opening Batsman R Claxton and G Wade emerged from 'The Hut', both exchanging a few hostile words with opening bowler D Cheeseman on the way to the middle. Clearly buoyed at the sight of their unusual pitch, and well practiced in how to play cricket in a tunnel, they appeared full of confidence. Unfortunately for them, Margaret Street had pre-empted the Eastside plan.

THIRD YEAR TUNNEL PROJECT



A rarely seen sight: Wolverhampton Art Gallery during show changeover

Expecting something like this to happen, J Wigley had set a project for all third years to build an exact replica of the tunnel in the Margaret Street gallery space. Margaret Street then had the luxury of practicing in this for the last three weeks. D Cheeseman, master of reverse swing, had developed a surprise delivery which swung to such an extent that it went from one end of the tunnel to the next without touching the sides - swinging an astonishing 4 metres in the process. Reverse swing has always had a mystery attached to it, and this was no different. Opening batsman Wade and Claxton had no answer to the Cheeseman swing as both were dismissed for ducks in the first over.



Eastside openers Wade & Claxton both went for ducks

ENDLESS SUPPLY OF RUNS

Fortunately for Eastside, H Blackett and R Kirkham now strode to the crease, both undefeated in seven matches this year, and the tournaments leading run scorers with 487 runs - a real endless supply of runs. After seeing off the Cheeseman swing, they steadied the ship in a partnership of 59 before both been dismissed by a D. Burrows googly. J Langdon contributed with a quick 17, whilst number 11 E Rowe contributed later down the order with several delicate late cuts that tickled away for four. When she was dismissed - running herself out in a real moment of indecision - Eastside had accumulated 117 off their 20 overs. Margaret Street openers J Butler and G Sporton strode to the crease dressed in white, and immediately set about making inroads into the Eastside total.

SPLIT ALLEGIANCES

All was going well until Sporton, playing for both teams on account of his split allegiances, tried to do a little bit too much by trying to bowl at himself in bat. Quick although he is, he wasn't able to make it to his crease in time to defend his own delivery and he was bowled for 27. Butler quickly followed, running himself out. With the two big hitters gone, Margaret Street collapsed to 77 for 9 off 16 overs. J Masding and T Bloor both taking four wickets a piece with their deadly combination of right arm leg spin and left arm off spin. But then in strode S Rice, Margaret Street wicketkeeper and valuable contributor down the order. She was clearly in the mood as she and N Jones put on 37 for the last wicket. S Rice playing an elegant cover drive for four off the penultimate ball of the innings to secure the match and top spot for Margaret Street. Again, as throughout the season, S Rice and N Jones had rescued Margaret Street on more than one occasion with their defiant batting down the order.