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Venue: Away Format: 20/20

Result: Won

by 4 wickets

<u>Batsmen</u>	<u>How Out</u>	<u>Sixes</u>	<u>Total</u>
1 A. Beavan	Bowled	0	3
2 D. Penhallurick	Bowled	0	0
3 J. Duckitt	Not Out	0	30
4 H. Stoneman	LBW	0	4
5 J. Ponsford	Caught	0	11
6 R. Stephenson	Not Out	0	30
7 M. Abi	Bowled	0	2
8 J. Asplet	Bowled	0	0
9 W. Wyatt	Bowled	0	0
10 N.H.R. Wyatt	Not Out	0	2
11 K.H. Whiter		0	0
	Subtotal		82
	Byes		3
	Leg Byes		1
	Wides		16
	No Balls		3
	Grand Total		105

for 7 wickets

<u>Bowler</u>	<u>Overs</u>	<u>Mdns</u>	<u>Runs</u>	<u>Wkts</u>	<u>Av.</u>	<u>Econ.</u>	<u>S.R.</u>
1 N.H.R. Wyatt	4	0	13	2	6.50	3.25	12.00
2 K.H. Whiter	4	1	13	3	4.33	3.25	8.00
3 W. Wyatt	2	0	14	0	0.00	7.00	0.00
4 J. Asplet	4	0	30	0	0.00	7.50	0.00
5 J. Ponsford	4	0	18	1	18.00	4.50	24.00
6 R. Stephenson	2	0	11	1	11.00	5.50	12.00
	Subtotal		99				
	Byes		3				
	Leg Byes		3				
	Grand Total		105				

for 7 wickets

<u>Fielder</u>	<u>Catches</u>
R. Stephenson	1
N.H.R. Wyatt	1

This time of season is challenging. Some teams still don't know which division they'll be playing in next year and could potentially make it to Wembley for a winner takes all play off final. Others have already published their retained lists and said goodbye to old friends like Gavan Holohan. Thoughts turn to next year and a squad rebuild. Which way will it go? One the one hand do we get a Ruben Rodrigues, on the other a Keke Simmonds? Technical Director Walter looked at the data, considered pre-season games, and decided to open the Isis cheque book. The squad for OUP away was riddled with internationals old and new. Bevan (Aus, 18 tests, 232 ODIs), Stoneman (Eng, 11 tests), Ponsford (Aus, 29 tests), Duckitt (Eng, 20 tests, 11 ODIs), Wyatt (Eng Wtests 2, WODIs 108), and Wyatt junior (Eng 40 tests). Some concerns were aired pre game by the sceptical travelling fans in the local pubs. Isn't Bill Ponsford dead? Bob Wyatt hasn't scored a run for years. Has Ben Duckitt recovered after the IPL? And given the long trip to North Oxford would we lack energy with players still being 'on the bus'.

To the match. OUP politely declined the offer of a five day test and suggested some whizz bang fangled shorter formats. After extended negotiations it was decided to play 20 overs a side and accept we'd finish in the dark. This made the toss crucial. Of course it was lost and the unlucky coin was immediately thrown into the baying crowd. All the game model planning was now redundant and a radical rethink was required. To everyone's surprise Isis set up in a 4-3-3 formation. With some players still being literally on the bus skipper Stephenson had to be radical. Throwing caution to the wind he opened the bowling with the untested pairing of Wyatt and Whiter. Despite their lack of experience these two set about their task. Bowling physically demanding four over spells the shock and awe tactics were remarkably effective. Whiter was magnificent returning figures of 3 for 13 off 4 overs, Wyatt only slightly less remarkable with 2 for 12. After that OUP began to get to grips with the inverted full backs and began to win a few more second balls. Asplet was harshly treated and it was left to Wyatt junior and Ponsford to restrict the score to 103. Having won the game once could Isis win it again despite the demoralising set back?

So called experts on social media were in a frenzy when three early wickets fell. Stoneman, Bevan, and Penhallurick all showing effects of the intensive pre-season schedule. Dissenting voices grew louder. 'Sack the board'. 'Another relegation battle awaits'. 'The recruitment's all wrong, again'. After some steady rebuilding by Ponsford, and hostile bowling which nearly ended James Duckett's innings and hopes of having a family a new tune could be heard. What's that coming over the hill is it a monster? IS IT A MONSTER. James revealed the monster we'd seen in pre season nets and turned the game. When he retired on 30 all that was needed was 4 an over. The finishers coming off the bench coolly deployed game management and despite taking the ball to the corner flag often saw the game out. A three wicket victory sealed with a couple of overs to spare. In conclusion a good early season run out. Lots of energy and promise. But questions still remain. How will this team fair on a cold Tuesday night in Marston? Time will tell.

(Rich Stephenson)