

We played Unley High School on our Leroy pitch as the First XI was scheduled to play at the same time as our game on the turf wicket. After last week's narrow loss, we were looking forward to continuing our good form on a perfect Saturday morning for cricket – 25C with a slight northerly breeze. At 8am, Unley had just 6 players present, so we decided to allow them to bat to give their players more time to arrive. Riley Hutt agreed to captain the team, and James Roissetter organised the fielding warm up as our coach, Lachlan Pedersen was playing with the First XI.

By the time we started to bowl, two more Unley High players had arrived. Harrison Zeuner opened the bowling, and he chose to bowl from the southern end into the slight northerly breeze. Like always, he generated great pace and moved the ball in the air giving the batsman no choice but to defend. Riley then came into the attack, and he struck gold with his first ball. It moved off the pitch up into the batsman's body, cramping him and caused him to meekly defend and hit the ball up in the air, which Riley pounced on and took a great catch. This was the start we were looking for – tight bowling and an early wicket.

Both Harrison and Riley continued to bowl an excellent line and length swinging the ball through the air and getting the occasional movement off the pitch, which tied down their batsmen who were getting some great defensive batting practice. Harrison finished with 0/3 from 2 overs and Riley's figures were 1/2 from 2 overs. James and Connor Rzemieniuk took over the bowling duties and continued to deliver an excellent display of tight precision bowling, pitching the ball up to the batsmen and giving them no opportunities to score runs. James conceded just 2 runs from his 2 overs, and Connor 7 runs from his 2 overs. Unley's score after 8 overs was 1/15 and they rotated their batsmen.

Maneet Gopinathan joined the bowling attack and after 3 dot balls on the perfect length, he once again weaved his magic to clean bowl their batsman for a duck. Another great breakthrough. Luke Di Manno then began his bowling spell, and once he changed to his run up to bowl around the wicket, he delivered some very well-placed deliveries, with his second over conceding just one scoring shot. On the second ball of Maneet's next over, he once again sent the bails flying with a magnificent delivery that completely deceived the Unley batsman and he snared another clean bowled wicket. Maneet finished his spell with the incredible figures of 2/3 from 2 overs.

It was time for a short drink break. After 12 overs, Unley was 3/27 and Kaelen Venour, who had kept behind the wickets with eagle eyes and accurate glovework swapped his duties with Jonathon Bunyon.

Sameer Amiri and Harley Nagle formed the next wave of our bowling attack and they both delivered a very tight first over, bowling at the stumps and giving the batsmen very little opportunity to score easy runs. Then, like it was meant to be, they both snared a wicket in their second over. Sameer fooled the Unley batsman with a great delivery aimed directly at the stumps, which caused the batsman to walk in front of his wicket as the ball wrapped his pads. The boys shouted for LBW and after a moment's deliberation, the batter was given out as he was plumb in front. So plumb in fact that jam could have been made! In his second over, Harley conceded a single then delivered a ripper of a ball that mesmerized the batsman and bent back his middle and off-stumps to deliver us another wicket. Unley was 5/43 after 16 overs.

Into the bowling attack came Hemanth Saravanan and Luke Tsavdaridis and they continued to apply pressure to both batsmen, with Hemanth and Luke both conceding just 9 runs in 2 overs. Luke, however, made a great breakthrough by dismissing their opening batsman, who had returned to the

crease from being rotated early in the innings. Luke bowled a ball just short of a length outside the off stump which lured the batsman into driving the ball up in the air into the ever-so-safe hands of Riley who completed the catch. We were one wicket away from closing their innings.

Connor did a great job at first slip, nearly catching the impossible catch and almost plucking another one out from the air that flew high above him. Jonathan saved a certain 4 runs by gloving a ball that was edged outside the batsman's off stump. Riley bowled another tight over then on the first ball of Harley's next over, the batsmen tried to sneak a single. They got confused and the return to Jonathon Bunyon behind the stumps enabled him to easily run the batsman out and Unley's inning closed at 7/66 from just over 21 overs. The boys were pumped as they could sense a victory might be possible.

Our inning began with James and Riley at the crease with Unley choosing to bowl from the southern end like we did. Riley took strike and defended the opening few balls with vigor. In the second over, after watching a couple of balls, James smacked a square cut off the middle of his bat that went through the Gully to the boundary. Then, off the last ball of the next over, he struck another late cut to the boundary, this time going through 3rd slip. Two fours in the first three overs hadn't been on the menu all year, so it looked like we were in for a feast!

Riley and James settled in to form a brutal partnership, running dozens of quick singles peppered with the occasional boundary whenever a loose ball presented itself. It was a master class of batting on a concrete pitch by both batsmen, who were rarely troubled by the Unley bowlers. The batting conditions were perfect with James and Riley relishing the opportunity to build a good score.

In the field were three of our players, who were keen to make up the deficit of players for Unley – Luke Tsavdaridis, Jonathan and Luke DiManno. They fielded in the spirit of the game, and all made several good saves for Unley.

At our drinks break, the score was tied – we were 0/66 after 12 overs. Our best start ever thanks to the outstanding batting by James and Riley who had accelerated the scoring with some fine hits to the boundary. Ten runs after the break, Riley's innings ended as the ball clipped the top of his stumps leaving him with a very good score of 25 runs. Hemanth joined James at the crease and after facing several balls, he hit 6 well-placed singles before unleashing three huge hits to the boundary in one over. Hemanth provided James with great support as James continued to pummel the bowlers, scoring runs all around the ground. Our score was 1/83 after 15 overs.

In the next over, James faced a ball that was going down his leg-side and in attempting to hit a leg glance, the ball snicked the inside of his bat and flew up high to the wicket keeper to present him with a straight-forward catch. James' innings of 45 runs was his best this year and he was given a wonderful applause as he walked back for a well-earned rest. Maneet came to the crease and immediately hit two runs, timing and placing the ball very well in between the fielders. After another single, Maneet hit the ball straight to Luke Tsavdaridis, at Covers, who took the catch – Luke did the right thing, but no doubt felt strange having dismissed his teammate!

Harrison joined Hemanth at the crease and on the first ball he faced, he smashed the ball to the boundary. The Unley bowlers seemed to drop their heads upon seeing the ease with which Harrison dispatched the ball, especially as they had captured 3 wickets in 5 overs. Three balls later Harrison launched a huge hit that cleared the Long Off boundary for a massive 6 runs. The onslaught of runs continued, as Harrison hit 4 more boundaries over the next few overs, together with several well-placed singles by him and Hemanth. After 23 overs, we were 3/136.

During this run feast, our fielders saved many runs for Unley, with Jonathan doing a sliding save near the Long On boundary and Luke T having an athletic work out at Mid On as balls flew around him – one going over his head and just out of the reach of his fingers. Luke D chopped off a few boundaries as he fielded behind the stumps.

In the next over, Hemanth's bails were dislodged, and he was out for 20 runs – a very impressive score with only 8 dot balls faced. Sameer joined Harrison at the crease with less than 2 overs in our innings remaining. He was so keen to get on strike and hit some runs. He finally got his chance to hit a single through Covers, then a few balls later, hit 2 more runs. You could see his smile through his helmet!

After 25 overs, our score was 4/153 with Harrison finishing on 34 runs and Sameer on 3.

This was our first win for the year and thoroughly deserved by a very strong performance by all our players. Well done and congratulations.

P.S. Another first was the perfect balancing of the score book by Alison Hutt.