

## Viv Ash Cuba Libre Invitational 2014

Another summer Sunday in Lima, grey skies lifting slothfully just in time for cricket. Players of every denomination drifting through the doors of LCFC to indulge their passion. Setting their bags down, perusing the pitch and going off to shake hands with friends they have known for more than a decade or with some they have met just the previous weekend. It's always the same. The hearty bonhomie they recognise from wherever they have played cricket before. A chance to forget, to anticipate, to relax, to enjoy. Just simply to be. But enough of the reverie, on with the report.

An annual fixture in the calendar is the Viv Ash Cuba Libre Invitational, another opportunity to get one's eye in before the serious business of competitive cricket kicks in. As so many players are involved these days it is a serious business trying to organise the cricket into a useful, meaningful, competitive practice. So it was decided to split the 30 odd arrivals into 3 teams, named Appleton, Bacardi and Cockspur. Originally it had been Cockburns but due to the alcohol not being rum related, the scorer, Juliet, decided to take it upon herself to change the name and she being from a rum making nation the organiser was not going to argue. A v B, B v C, and A v C would be the equation. The usual issue of the actual team not being the same as the team list obviously made for a slightly stressful beginning but some smudging of names and last minute adjustments made for 3 teams of 9 or 10 depending on the time of day.

First off Appleton played Bacardi, Bacardi winning the toss and scoring 75 runs with Roughton and Mahoney receiving arguable decisions (more on this later). Viv Ash, the trophy's namesake, was playing for Appleton and, despite his advanced age of 127 he was still able to bowl Sargent, middle stump and then, while walking back to his fielding position took the most casual of catches – incontrovertible proof that cricket can be played by one and all. I think extras was top scorer in this match. Appleton faltered atrociously in response after Farook's quick fire 23 and no one else really deserves mention.

What happened after though was really the news of the day. Two players questioned the umpire's decision after the game, saying the ball had gone from the bat to pad not vice versa. Thereupon the umpire marched off the premises, uttering imprecations against upstart pipsqueaks (or words to that effect – language modified for GA rating) who question umpire's decisions. Someone mentioned that this is always the case, the umpire is often not the happiest person on the pitch. So the day was official umpireless. The situation was resolved with the non-playing team provide two umpires and the scorers' father, Denis was pressed into action. A very correct square leg ump he was too, changing side with the change of left hand right hand bat, and at not too bad a canter either considering his dotage. At around the same time, Spry, who had just returned from the West Country, managed the amazing trick of falling off the spectator bench while keeping his beer intact, well done that man.

On with the cricket. Bacardi then posted 97 runs with Buesst and Mahoney both being retired out after scoring more than 25 runs: 25 and 29 respectively. Bobby and Diego de la Puente took some beating with 18 off their one over respectively. Jon 'Demeter' Heyman continues to impress with his slow, painfully accurate bowling (or should it be painfully slow, accurate bowling?) Somehow he manages to persuade the ball to go through a time distortion field after it pitches and many batsman's souls seemed to get sucked out of them as they lose their stumps. Empty shells appear pitchside minutes later. Cockspur were unable to reach that impressive score although James and Sonu did by reaching double figures. Bacardi had won the tournament with a game still to be played.

The final game was played between Appleton and Cockspur, Appleton scored 66, with Simon Parker the backbone of the batting with a solid 26, dropped twice on the way but carried on in an unhurried manner. Demeter came into his own again with 3 wickets for 20. Steve 'Hagrid' Hallett also fell victim to the Demeter who completed his soul-sucking with Jaggi, who managed to make a typical quickfire 16 before meeting his fate. Farook (3-7) Zulfi (1-10) and Jaggi (0-4) then bowled excellent spells, keeping Cockspur to a below par 55, though Bobby managed to make amends for his wayward ways with an authoritative 30.

Bacardi were awarded one of the many football trophies that clutter up the cricket hut for their reward and Chris Mahoney was awarded man of the day and had to drink from a filthy, cup/box as his reward.

What was learnt? Don't sit next to an alcoholic woman at a cricket match, you'll find yourself emigrating to Mexico. An umpire's patience is finite. Beer is drunk during and after the match.