

Steep 1st XI v Compton and Chandlers Ford

Steep's winning run stretched to 7 games with a comfortable victory underpinned by a fine all round performance from Steep skipper John Smith and solid batting from the Steep top order.

A gale force wind met Steep at the open Compton ground although the covered pitch looked in good condition. The skipper did his first job in predictable fashion and lost the toss meaning Steep would bat first.

Openers John Hegan and Dale Collins started well despite Collins suffering from a mystery virus. They formed a formidable 80 run partnership before Collins was bowled by a shooter for 42. Dean Knight joined Hegan and continued in the fine form he has shown all season as these two took the score past 150 only for Hegan to perish 1 run short of a well-deserved 50.

The Steep middle order of Sean Noble, makeshift number 5 Graham Hughes and Ally Bone all came and went, leaving the skipper to marshal the final overs, not before Knight had completed a swashbuckling 50. This he did to great effect with support from Tom Callingham and Mike Bugh to see a target of 222 for the win.

After a meagre tea, the Steep side were hungry for quick wickets. However, they had to show patience as the Compton openers started steadily. Mike Murray finally struck when Read was caught by that man Smith and the game was on.

The key stage of the match occurred when Smith and Murray were in tandem. In a four over spell 4 wickets fell, including that of key man Selwyn, caught behind off Murray's last over.

The game was effectively over by the 30th over as Compton lurched to 76 for 7, Smith completing his first 5 wicket haul of the season. However, as with previous games, Steep lacked the killer blow and Compton were allowed to get to 150 for 9 at the end of the innings; probably 50 more than they should have got.

Stiffer challenges lay ahead for the Harrowmen as they play fourth place Dinton next week followed by unbeaten Steeple Langford the week after. Their championship credentials will be clear to see after these games.