**Match Report:**

Round 7

Panania/East Hills (Hunt) CC

2 Day match at Gordon Parker Reserve

**Lost by 4 wickets**

Lost the toss again!

After being sent in, Nico and Riz resumed their opening partnership. Looking solid at the start until the fifth over when Nico missed a straight one and lost his off-stump. An impressive knock from Aiden last match earned him a promotion to Number 3 in the absence of Asif, and he joined Riz. Unfortunately, though, he edged one to Gully on 3 and we were now 2 for 31 in the 8th.

Neil strode to the crease in hopes of settling in and putting together another partnership with Riz, but he only managed a boundary before chopping one onto leg stump. 3 for 38. Ethan replaced his father joining Riz sharing 8 further runs before was caught on the back leg bringing an LBW decision on 26. New recruit Max joined his junior teammate but the pair couldn’t add to the total with Ethan edging one to a smart one-handed catch from a stretching First Slip.

Atif only knows one way to bat, and while losing Max for 2 in his first appearance, brought some excitement to an otherwise dull batting display dispatching a quick-fire 25 that included 5 4’s, until he was bowled by their only other bowler bar the two openers. Ross had replaced Max and was only our third batsman to reach double-figures of 10 before also being bowled, leaving Wasim not out on 1, and our feeble total of 8 for 86 – batting two players short.

Bowling much earlier than hoped, and with Carl absent on a well earned ‘Schoolies’, Ethan took the first over with Atif elevated to second over. And Ethan struck first ball, getting us off to a great start with “Buckets” Ross back in his customary Point. Atif started a little less dominant than usual going for 21 off his first three overs. Meanwhile Ethan’s third brought two wickets: Atif removing their left-handed Number 3 with a catch at Mid-Off, and a great LBW shout very next ball saw their number 4 off for a duck. 3 for 26 and all of a sudden we were back in the game.

But then a 48 run partnership quickly put paid to any hope of an unlikely turnaround. Ethan had tired with a back complaint after his 4th over and so Max was thrown the ball. He struck in his third over taking his first (of hopefully many) Rangers and Senior wicket, removing their danger man with an in-swinging yorker that was uncannily Carl-like.

Riz and Ross shared 5 overs after Atif’s wicketless 7 over spell went for 40, neither, though, could snare a wicket. But Aiden replaced Max, and he took a wicket first ball of his first over with the help of the man he replaced; Max taking a skied chance at Mid-Off. 3 uneventful overs followed before stumps was called with PEH 6 for 144.

It rained most of the week leading up to Day 2. So much so, that the Association called off the round. As we had already lost the first innings of this match, the result was declared – a First Innings loss for Rangers. All other matches in the division were declared ‘Abandoned’.

It’s difficult to play short – whether bowling or batting. We need to ensure our squad is as strong as possible if we are to challenge this season. Our solid and dominating start has weakened, and we are at risk of missing the finals unless we can both recapture our early form, and field full teams consistently.