



ST PIUS X COLLEGE CRICKET CLUB

1st XI - Semi-Final at St Stanislaus', Bathurst ***SPX 9/194 defeated St Stanislaus' College 10/156***

After sneaking into 3rd place on the ladder following a double bonus point win last weekend against Blue Mountains Grammar, Saturday saw the 1st XI travel to Bathurst for a semi-final against the 2nd place St Stanislaus' College. The Bathurst college has always proven a tough opponent, with the last win by an SPX 1st XI at Bathurst coming back in 2016, and the most recent defeat being a 131 run thumping only 4 weeks ago!



Nevertheless, the boys were determined to put in a big effort, and the day started well when captain Stuart Dingley called correctly at the toss and elected to bat, despite their being some concern that the pitch seemed to harbour some demons.



Joe Colgan - 44



Adam Greenwood - 36

Adam Greenwood and ISA representative Joe Colgan opened the batting and built a steady foundation for SPX, making their way to 49 without loss at the drinks break, and extending the score to 72, the highest opening partnership of the season.



However, after Joe was well caught at short mid wicket from a low pull shot, Stuart Dingley received a tough LBW decision. That brought Charlie Sharp to the crease, and the St Stanislaus' boys were keen to apply the pressure for the hat trick ball.



Charlie survived, but the following over was undone by another tough LBW decision, and when the ball skidded through Adam Greenwood's guard, SPX had stumbled to 4 for 86. With St Stanislaus' confidence riding high, Laurence Sheehan and Tyson McCallum set about digging in to rebuild the innings.



Laurence Sheehan - 32



Tyson McCallum - 20

While Laurence and Tyson kept the bowling attack at bay, St Stanislaus' managed to dry up the runs, and by the second drinks break, SPX was yet to crack the 100 mark. The pitch was also starting to play a part, with some balls rearing up sharply, and others sliding through low.



The pep talk from the coaches at the drinks break had the desired effect, and the boys started to push the run rate. The loss of Tyson brought Liam Chang to the crease, and that's when the accelerator hit the floor, with Liam despatching numerous balls to and over the boundary.





Able assisted by Logan Nicey and Duncan Dingley, and along with some scampering runs by the tail enders, SPX struck 45 runs from the last four overs, pushing the total to 9/194.



Heading into the lunch break, the boys would have been pleased with the total, but aware that they were going to have to bowl well to restrict a St Stanislaus' team that had piled 287 runs on SPX only four weeks ago. While bowling plans were put in place, the parents were treated to some country hospitality from the locals, enjoying a BBQ lunch on the lawn beside the main building.



Liam Chang - 2/42



Liam Chang and James Power opened the bowling, and backed up by their fielders, managed to keep the run rate in the early overs low.



Liam got the first breakthrough, with a sharp catch taken by Tyson behind the stumps. This was followed immediately by a first-baller for the No.3 batsman, and St Stanislaus' was reeling at 2 for 14.

The SPX boys were starting to sniff an upset. An animated Captain Dingley was keeping everyone on their toes and constantly reinforcing the bowling plan. There was still a long way to go, however, as St Stanislaus' had plenty of batting to come and the competition's leading run scorer, C.Brien was at the crease.





The planning paid off. Duncan Dingley had Brien caught at mid-off by Charlie Sharp (steady under a floating high ball). St Stanislaus' were 3 for 24, and starting to feel the pressure of runs on the board in a final.

St Stanislaus' started to rebuild slowly, but an inspired bowling change to bring on Joe Colgan proved successful as two more quick wickets fell leaving the hosts at 5 for 55.



With his usual tight bowling line, James Power managed to snare a valuable middle-order wicket, Liam Chang taking the catch at backward point, but St Stanislaus' continued to progress steadily. Big hitter J.Goodsell was at the crease and was comfortably despatching the ball over the boundary with worrying regularity. At 6 for 136, the game seemed to be slipping from SPX's grasp.

James Power - 1/26

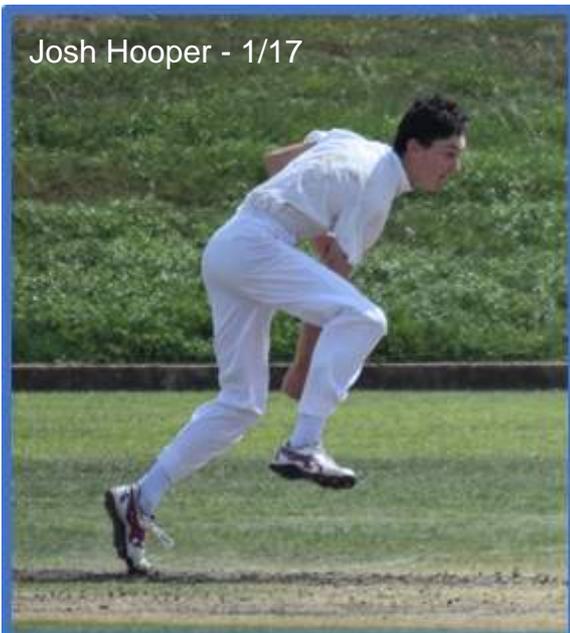


The final drinks break gave the coaches a last chance to provide one final round of encouragement. Josh Hooper returned for his second spell. The SPX fielders were spread, but gamely chasing down every ball to restrict the boundaries.



Josh Hooper - 1/17

Persistence was rewarded, when Josh Hooper rattled the stumps and the 7th wicket for St Stanislaus' was down.





However, Goodsell was still striking hard, and the with ball skimming past the stumps on a number of occasions from both bowler and fielder, the spectators were starting to wonder if this was going to be a day for the Bathurst boys.



With 12 overs remaining, St Stanislaus' only needed 52 runs with 3 wickets in hand. Captain Dingley was ringing the bowling changes and brought back Joe Colgan and Liam Kinna for their second spells.



The tension was also building off the field. The text messages to SPX supporters back in Sydney were starting to fly, Mr Rodgers sought the calm surrounds of the far grandstand, while Mr Reay could barely watch - let alone stand!



When Liam Kinna had one of the batsmen caught by Joe Colgan at mid-on, it was 8 wickets down, however Goodsell had moved past 50, the only half-century of the day, and it was still anyone's game.



Joe Colgan finally drew a false shot from Goodsell, and an edge flew quickly to Liam Chang at short third man, who sprung forward to grasp the ball just before it hit the deck. The SPX fielders had not grassed a chance all day, and a fine fighting innings from Goodsell had come to an end.



38 runs short, and with the last two St Stanislaus' batsmen at the crease, SPX knew they were close. When Liam Kinna struck the No.11 batsman on the pad with a ball that was only missing middle stump if it went under, the umpire's arm was raised, and the semi-final was won!



A great effort from all the boys, who now meet Oakhill College in a surprise home Grand Final at Oxford Falls next weekend!