

# St. Pius X College – Oakhill College

ISA Round 5: 23/11/2019

(Away)

*The 2<sup>nd</sup> XI made it five wins in succession on Saturday, when they beat Oakhill in a thrilling encounter. Notable mentions go to Nick Ward and Rory O’Connell for both picking up three wickets.*

The undefeated St Pius X 2<sup>nd</sup> XI travelled out to the Hills this weekend to play Oakhill’s 2nds, who hadn’t yet won a game this season. As we all know, however, cricket isn’t that simple, and Oakhill gave Pius a mighty scare that will make sure they remain on their toes from now on. Fortunately, the cream eventually rose to the top and SPX got their fifth straight win in a row, but not before almost being toppled by a resilient Oakhill outfit.

A soft, damp Oakhill pitch made for a match that would be dominated by the ball, and unfortunately SPX lost the toss and were forced in to bat first. Defying the odds, openers Jackson Carrall (13) and Joel Austin (23) gave the team a great start, leaving Pius at 0/42 after the first 11 overs. However, a batting collapse from the middle order that is usually so solid left SPX devastated at 6/59. Pockets of determined resistance from Ben O’Reilly (7), Brad Power (16) and Julian Hyde (11) meant that Pius limped to a defendable total of 100, but would be tested for the first time this season with their backs truly up against the wall.

Good teams can win with everything going their way, but only great teams win with everything against them. And so, SPX set out trying to put themselves into the second category by pulling off their best combined bowling and fielding performance of the season to date. Opening the bowling with Oscar MacDonald (1/19), Nick Ward (3/12) took the all-important first wicket just before lunch, and then took two more straight after the break to leave Oakhill reeling at 3/25 after the opening spell. Rory O’Connell (3/8), back in the 2nds after a three-game stint in the 1sts, came into the attack and further devastated the batsmen with a beautiful spell of classic pace bowling. The openers came back on at the end of the innings to clean up the Oakhill tail for 75, with Oscar eventually closing out the tense finish with a run out, completed by Nick at the bowler’s end, perfectly characterising the brilliant team performance that Pius produced in the field to put the pressure back onto Oakhill and eventually win the game with not many runs to play with.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> XI proved to be cool, calm and collective under pressure this week in a match that could only be summarised as “the Great Escape” of the season thus far. Put simply however, the SPX 2<sup>nd</sup> XI are now halfway through the season and still undefeated at 5 wins from 5 games, having now beaten every other team in the competition. They will now look ahead to the last game of 2019, away against the second-placed Central Coast Grammar, who will be sure to put up a fight on their own turf after being rolled for 59 two weeks ago at our very own Fortress Falls.

**Correspondent:** Nick Ward

**Scorers on the day:** Ms. Carla Austin & Mr. Nigel Ward

**Coach:** Mr. Matt Stearn

## SPX Black Results 23 November

The SPX BLK cricketing caravan headed to Narraweena last Saturday morning to take on the Collaroy Plateau team at Beverley Job Park. (I have no idea who Bev was or what she did to get such a beautiful park named in her honour!) Putting together consecutive wins has proved difficult for the SPX BLK team so far this season, we figured if the boys could get that first win up, then they are almost halfway there!

The overnight rain had left the outfield a little damp, but the morning sea breeze soon sorted that out. Josh Baker had the "C" next to his name this week and spun the twenty cent piece confidently, but the Collaroy captain called correctly and SPX were very happy to bowl in favourable conditions. The groundsman had prepared a good firm pitch, with an even covering of green grass on top. The outfield was a rather lush covering of "council couch" that was suffering from the emergence of broadleaf weeds and African black beetle.

Riley Meares took the new ball from the southern end while Baker did the heavy lifting from the tennis court side of the ground. It wasn't long before Meares snared the Collaroy opener, removing his middle stump with an unplayable delivery. Baker struck in the last over of a very good spell with Riley Collins taking a splendid catch to have them 2-26 after six overs. Max Lynn joined the attack and dried up the runs with an excellent spell while at the other end Connor Jory was back to his best. The sheer pace of Jory had the batsman fending an uncomfortable prod to the very safe hands of Ollie Freeman before cart wheeling the off stump out of the ground in his last over to give him 2-8 off 4 overs and have Collaroy 4-46 at drinks. The slow outfield made scoring difficult, but the bowling effort from the SPX boys was the best they have put together so far this season. Bowling good length on a very tight line, the batsman were struggling to hit square of the wicket. Late wickets to Rueben Boulos and Jayden Akouri left Collaroy at 6-117 after their 30 overs.

Lachlan Richmond joined Akouri at the top of the order and they put on a clinic for the first 70 balls. The running between wickets was faultless as they turned the strike over. Compulsory retirements after 35 balls, saw them both off for a rest on consecutive balls. Boulos and Freeman were now out in the centre, but very quickly we had boys scurrying to pad up as Boulos was out, followed by Collins off the very next ball. Baker survived the hat-trick ball, but Freeman fell just after drinks. 3-61 in the 17th over and Baker now had Lachlan Jercovic to keep him company in the middle. Jercovic's recent good form continued as he picked the gaps and kept the scoreboard ticking with a valuable 22 runs off just 22 balls. Meares soon found himself out in the middle playing some nice shots and scurrying through for valuable runs. Jercovic fell and the retired opener Akouri was back in the action. Richmond joined him after Meares was runout coming back for a desperate third run. 7-106 in the 27th over and Richmond played an effortless shot off his pads that soared into the crowd for six! The boys settled back into scoring ones and twos, passing the Collaroy total with three balls to spare.

A great effort by the whole team as they returned to their winning ways. Next weekend we are off to Forestville to take on a very handy Wakehurst side.

The round 11 clash between SPX RED and SPX BLK has unfortunately been moved to Warriewood as The Bottom Oval at Oxford Falls will be hosting U2 in their encore Sydney performance of The Joshua Tree tour! Tickets available at the school canteen from Thursday Dec 28th!

