

Phoenix at Railway 06/08/11

To the casual observer it might have seemed that your correspondent had passed up an opportunity to meet Leonard Cohen in favour of the chance to score for Nepal U19s. However, to be precise Deirdre Fahy accepted the responsibility to score with Mark Leonard of Pembroke and Andrew Fox made his debut as 1st XI scorer to work with Judy Cohen of Railway Union. The mixed results these fixtures produced tended to support the view that Phoenix at their best are a match for any team but they are not at their best often enough to build a run of wins. With Coach Bray on Ireland U19 duty, Jonathan Wardell temporarily outside the jurisdiction and Thomas Anders unavailable the side to play at Park Avenue was: Captain Dickeson, Ted Williamson, Rory Flanagan, Ryan Gallagher, Conor Kelly, David Langford-Smith, wicketkeeper batsman Desmond O'Leary, Amit Battan, Osama Khan, Asim Nazir, Sadaf Raza. Phoenix lost the toss and were inserted.

A heavy shower delayed the start of play and the umpires (Leinster heavyweight Nigel Parnell and Alan Milburn guesting from Bristol) decided to use the half hour leeway immediately and see how the weather developed. Williamson survived a strong appeal on the first ball with Parnell deciding that it was a good shout but not a great one. The Corkman was still chiding your correspondent for the reference to his dismissal at Merrion on 02/07 but as his partnership with Flanagan developed there were early signs that Phoenix would put up more of a fight than they had in the home game just a few days previously. Despite a second rain delay of 40 minutes which saw the match reduced to 45 overs per side the pair carried on seemingly unperturbed and after 10 overs Phoenix were 40 without loss. Unfortunately the introduction of Tariq and Johnston to the home attack brought more menace for the batsmen as Tariq took out the top order getting Williamson caught by Fisher for 10, Flanagan caught by Farthing for 23, Gallagher bowled for 14 and Kelly caught by Collins for 5. Dickeson and O'Leary both fell early to Johnston which left Phoenix on 78 for 6 as Battan joined Langford-Smith. This pair steadied the ship temporarily and built a good stand although Langford-Smith was hurt and could have been caught when Conliffe got some bounce from the wicket and struck him on the glove. To add insult to injury Parnell initially signalled a leg bye which would have deprived Langford-Smith of a hard earned run but peace broke out when the signal was revoked. However, when Langford-Smith was caught at deep midwicket Phoenix were on a downward spiral. Battan added one more boundary before Carroll removed him and Nazir and Raza fell rather too easily to similar shots from consecutive legitimate deliveries depriving Khan of the chance to build his innings. Phoenix were all out for 132 of which 32 were extras. Luckily the weather came to the rescue as Railway reached 18 for 0 in 3 overs but the rain was sufficiently heavy and persistent that the umpires and captains had to agree on abandonment.