

Ladies at Railway Union 12/08/11

Your correspondent returned to duty with the Ladies XI for this latest fixture at Park Avenue. Kate Voice had to remain on duty at the Glen Royal and so Donna Nicholson took charge of the side. The team was: Karinda Tolland, Orla Martin, Hannah McGuckin, Mary Curley, Deirdre Fahy, Donna Nicholson, Emer Bell, Vanessa Kelada, Lisa Kelly, Helen Caird, Nicola Marples. Phoenix won the toss and elected to bat.

There were early setbacks for Phoenix when the side's two big hitters – Lisa Kelly and Karinda Tolland- both fell early to Nicoll to leave it 19 for 2. Orla Martin proved a more durable partner for the veteran opener Helen Caird and Railway conceded a total of 20 extras in the innings as Caird and Martin took the score to 48 before Martin fell lbw to Johnston. Caird and Marples then added an unbroken stand of 34 runs in 26 minutes with Marples avoiding dismissal when she was bowled by a no ball. Fresh from her stint with Vanuatu U19s Caird's 40 not out from 59 balls was the backbone of Phoenix's 82 for 3.

As Phoenix took to the field Marples was behind the stumps with Caird as backstop as the opener had sustained a hand injury in the latter part of her innings. Kelada had first blood for Phoenix when she bowled Johnston for 4 and she and Martin managed to do enough to keep Phoenix in it as the early overs ticked by. MacArthur and J Ingram were either struggling to find singles or not pushing hard enough to make the opportunities. Martin concluded her spell with a maiden in the 10th over to leave Railway still 63 adrift of outright victory but with 9 wickets in hand. In the next over J Ingram was lbw to Kelada but this seemed to revive Railway's prospects as Stokes brought an energy to her batting which seemed to rub off on MacArthur and together they progressed against Fahy and McGuckin. The tension mounted as the game evolved towards a tight finish. After 16 overs Railway were still 30 adrift but with 6 for Stokes and 3 extras in the 17th over the deficit closed to 20. Phoenix had made a strong improvement in the proportion of wides bowled and Tolland especially policed the short boundary with determination. Railway's push for victory saw little successes for both sides as in between run outs for Stokes and Breen MacArthur got 3 when Phoenix should have kept her to 1. However, Railway had now lost more wickets and needed 11 off the last over to win. The first ball from Fahy was a wide but she managed to restrict the batswomen to four singles from the next five. Another wide followed to leave Railway needing a six to win. MacArthur was unable to score off the last ball and Phoenix had won by 4 runs.

Lady of the match: Helen Caird 40 not out