

## ***Mighty 4ths take Premiership - 13-12 winners over Orioles***

### ***Back-to-Back Division 1 4ths Premiers!***



Don't know if the hangovers have quite worn off yet, but the Mighty 4ths have taken out the Division 1 4ths title for the 2nd year running and **Dan Ward Bourton** provides us with his usual incisive observations on the game:

Cheltenham's last remaining Senior finals hope, the Division 1 Fourths, ventured out to Ramsey street last Sunday to tackle their competition's minor premiers and powerhouse offensive lineup, Blackburn, in a rematch of last year's grand final showdown.

In a contest in which both teams seemed to have by the scruff of the neck multiple times, only to see the tables turn drastically, Chelt's ***Mighty Fourths*** triumphed once again by the slimmest of margins in a cracking game that went right down to the wire and was still very much in the balance till the very last out.

Getting off to a slow start both offensively a defensively, Cheltenham found themselves down by 6 after 3 innings were completed with starter **Stu Holland** finding it extremely hard going trying to find what was (by this totally unbiased observer's observation) a ridiculously restrictive strike zone in the early going that played right into the hands of the prodigious offensive talent of the Blackburn lineup.

Relief pitcher **Casey Hodgson** came on to steady the ship while Cheltenham was able to get its own offence firing on all cylinders to turn the tide of the game and complete what amounted to a 10 run turn around after a 5 run top of the 5th ended with Chelt up by 4 .

But Blackburn's bats wouldn't be silent for long as the next inning saw the Orioles notch 3 runs on one swing of the bat and had them back to just one run down.

Cheltenham answered right back and plated another 3 runs in the top of the last to provide some much needed breathing room, but it would not be a comfortable margin to defend by any means.

With 2 down, 2 runners on, a 2-2 count and with 2 runs already home in the bottom of the last and the score 13-12, **Casey Hodgson** blew a fastball by the hitter to finally silence the opposition one run short and unleash the raucous reaction of a jubilant and highly relieved Cheltenham in one hell of a game that was mired only by, how should we say, some interesting adjudicatory decision making throughout.

Highlights will be hard to keep concise as both teams were able to score consistently and racked up a lot of hits. For instance, I'll list the names of Chelt guys who had multiple hit games and I think I'll end up just about naming a list of guys who got a medallion at the end of the game. See, watch. **Pete Burdett, Dave Johnson, Tim O' Neil, Jordan Osbourne, D. Stenny, Adam Leech, Stu Holland** and that really up-himself guy with two last names...all racked up multiple knocks. It was one of those days.

The real standouts came from Captain/Coach/Mascot **Dave Stenhouse** who came up big in his 5 innings of play (which is 4 innings more than he usually plays, not to mention doing so on a broken toe!) with 2 big situational hits including a base clearing double that was really the turning point of the game.

**Stu Holland** who again came up huge in the defensive department when he made a diving stab on a dying quail to right field that stunted a huge chance for Blackburn in the bottom of the 6th.

And **Casey Hodgson** again this week doing a sensational job on the mound in extremely trying conditions for pitchers.

Commiserations to a more than gallant Blackburn squad who were the team to beat all year as usual in this division, and obviously congrats to our boys who managed bring home the bacon again in spite of the fact that the years of hard yakka (and by that I mean "Beer") appear to be taking their toll physically as almost to a man the Chelt team has been battling injuries that rate from at best "niggling" to at worst "Life-threatening" or so some would have you believe.

DWB

ED: Great stuff Dan and minimal "Appropriacy Editing" this year, well done!

***GO YOU MIGHTY 4THS!!! GO RUSTLERS!!***