DIG IN TILL TEA

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Some thoughts on a eulogy for a young cricketer.
Category: Observations

The cricket playing and watching world was stunned last week by the freak accident which led to the death of Australian batsman,Â Philip Hughes.

Yesterday, at his funeral, the Aussie captain, Michael Clarke said these words, which I suspect will find their way into books of sporting quotations:

> *â€œPhillip's spirit, which is now part of our game forever, will act as a custodian of the sport we all love. We must listen to it. We must cherish it. We must learn from it. We must dig in and get through to tea. And we must play on. So rest in peace my little brother. I'll see you out in the middle.â€*

They are beautiful, heartfelt words. I find it difficult to read them without a lump coming to my throat and I've no idea how Clarke got through reading them at the funeral. Just a few thoughts.

- **They are emotive words.** They capture something of the history and wonder of cricket; a sport with a longer history and tradition than any other international game. They also resonate with the reality of male friendship, mateship to the Aussies. These are good things and should be celebrated.
- **They are sad words.** They aren't just sad because they mourn the loss of a friend and colleague, but they capture some of the apparent futility of life. *We must dig in and get through to tea. And we must play on.*Â Till that good night stops play, all we can do is face the bowling and hope to do our best.Â â€œEverything is meaningless,â€ says the Teacher, â€œcompletely meaningless!â€
- **They are hopeful words.** *I'll see you out in the middle.*

Just a few simple lines, but in God's grace they capture the reality of the human condition. There is beauty and friendship on this earth. It's a wonderful place to live. But it is also a place of pain, a place where young men die while doing nothing more sinister than playing with a bat and ball. It's a place of sickness, of war and of suffering. However, it is a place of hope, Christ died to lift the curse from the earth, to pay the penalty for our disobedience and to make it possible for all of us to meet out in the middle one day.

Beyond the fact that they are both extraordinary batsmen, I know very little about Philip Hughes and Michael Clarke, but my prayer is that one day the will meet again, out in the middle. Who knows? If they are generous, they might even let me have a bowl at them; and with all eternity to play with, I might even get one of them out.