

RidgeBears fall 10 runs short on sticky dog

Cropredy 161-9 53 overs

Bledlow Ridge 151-4 47 overs

Match drawn

BRCC 1sts went away to Cropredy this weekend with the omissions of Brezza and Dakes being filled by a gone-but-not-forgotten MorfDog and a new shiny pair of spikes for Jawad (see last week). Brezza was said to be on a 'romantic weekend'. Ahem. Many speculations were made as to what this might be, including 'pork pies', 'the Euros', and a few things crude enough to be left in the dressing room.

We found ourselves in a familiar pre-match scenario: grey weather, damp pitch, bowling first. The new ball did the trick early on for Keeps and he struck early making them 1-1. A battling 2nd wicket stand led to time-old clichés such as 'keep it tight', 'stay patient' and 'remember last week'.

The strain of getting through 21 overs was proving too much for poor MorfDog and he had to leave the field at drinks for some treatment. Highly trained medical professionals like myself gave him some tape and scissors and said here you go while highly experienced business negotiators said we should all stay here so they can't start until we're all back. Long story short, Tombsy and Morf never emerged after drinks. Classic. God knows what they had been doing all that time, answers on a postcard please. So Keeps bowled to 7 fielders and did so for a measly run return, and Morf, highly rejuvenated of course, bowled the bloke first ball of the next over. Good to know it was all in the plan.

This led to an opposition player walking onto the pitch and remonstrating that he shouldn't have been allowed to bowl for an over after he came back or something, to which nobody really paid attention, not least the umpires. Funny that.

They did score a bit quickly early on but a drop in the slips (from a man who can be more than forgiven on recent form!!!) wasn't enough to stop us from taking wickets in quick succession around the 50 mark again, same as last week. While pressure began to build from both ends ("The only time pressure is useful") there was a contrast in fortunes for our workman-like openers. While Morf and Keeps came in to bowl time and time again, Morf's deliveries were put short, over and through the slips, or past the edge entirely. Keeps however was having better luck. Full, late-swinging highlights included a beautiful yorker and a few LBWs, somewhat debatable but evenly given.

In the end their number 6 got a 50 and number 10 prodded his way around and the luck didn't go our way later on. We had few chances and to be fair they batted very well. Geoff bowled well to a field in the final overs and Keeps took an up-and-under on the last ball to leave himself with figures of 7-56.

So they finished on 161-9 and we only had 47 overs to get what they got in 53. Silly rules I reckon. Middsy (35) was unlucky early on and Brooksy (2) was even moreso, he reckoned the kitkat in his pocket had broken as he played the shot, giving the umpire the idea he had hit it and giving him out. 3 was Conor and 4 was Russ Turner back to the fold but neither found it easy on a slow, wet wicket with a slow, wet outfield against decent young bowlers. Conor made 35 before being undone by the bustling swing of a new, more experienced left-armed and the same guy kept Russ, Jamma and Birdy under wraps as the innings progressed. Even the thwack of a trademark 6 by Turner couldn't get him to his 50, or us to their total and we ended up 10 short, 151-4. After much debating and handbook reading it was decided that they had 10 points and we had 9. In the end we were disappointed not to win, a positive sign seeing we played the only team above us at their own place, with what was really a winning-draw.

Congratulations to Jamma on an impressive captaincy debut. [\(Editor's note; might have been prudent to add at this point, "Keep it up and whatever you do, don't leave 2 players stranded at our place tomorrow, or forget to take a new ball"..... What???? I'm only saying!!!](#)

We go into next week with returning superstars and a run of 3 home games on the trot. There's no reason why we can't pick up maximum points in at least 2, and with the 2nd team winning again and the club progressing in the VKO curtesy of a Brookes family day out, it looks like sunny times on the Ridge (if only speaking metaphorically, at least!). Hopefully the weather stays off this week allowing midweek activities to exist, and good luck to all for next weekend.

RolfePup