

1s cruise to maiden victory in div 4 amidst Brooksie run count controversy

Bledlow Ridge 238 (ish) -5

East Oxford 149 ao

Ridge win by 88 runs (+/-20 or so)

With the 2s cancelled last week, this was the first league game of the season at Meadow Styles and I don't care what the panel umpires think, the place looked superb. In a welcome respite from the rain, it looked as though we were going to get a full and proper game of cricket.

The wicket looked in remarkable nick considering the meteorological battering it's had over the last few weeks and on winning the toss, Birdie had no hesitation in opting to bat. Hawkins and Turner quickly turned a steady start into a very good start, with Baz in particular picking up where he left off in the last match of last season. Having deposited the first cricket ball of the season in his Lordship's field, he started looking for new inventive ways of scoring. His first attempt was to chip the ball up and head it to the boundary, however in the time honoured fashion of most contests between ball and un-helmeted batsman (if only there was somewhere convenient for Rob to buy a helmet!!), the ball won.

As his injuries were only minor (blood pouring into his eyes, a mild concussion, double vision), we reasoned that he would be fine to drive himself up to Stoke Mandeville and so left him to it.

The rest of the innings provided some solid batting with Keeps and Russ going well for 20 odd each, and George compiling an aggressive 44, all batting around a particularly punchy Brooksie. Now it is well known that Brooksie's counting is more accurate than a F1 lap timer, so it came as quite a surprise to him when on 48, he clipped a ball through mid-wicket for a comfortable 2 and on raising his bat to his admiring and appreciative team mates, he was met with a resounding silence. "Oh well" he thought phlegmatically, "must have added one somewhere". He crashed the next ball away for 4 and prepared to accept his due adulation, to be met this time by complete indifference. "Miserable bastards" he grumped, ground out a few more and was finally castled for what he calculated was 57. On returning to the hutch, he asked why no-one had acknowledged his 50. "Because you only got 48". Sid then explained that irrespective of what the laws said, he didn't think batsmen should get credit for over throws and if they insisted on scoring runs while he was on a comfort break, what did they expect? For the sake of peace in our time, we called it 52 and gave him a round of applause in the changing room. A quick fire 37 from Dakes, was enough to propel us to somewhere in the region of 238, which is the sort of total which is seldom chased down at the Ridge.

Taggart's tea was considered good enough to finish completely 2 minutes before Baz got back, so he and Brooksie went off and had a grumpy 5 minutes before we went out to bowl. We bowled OK, without being spectacular, but the luxury of a decent total and an opposition who were not about to die wondering, meant that we got several wickets without having to work too hard for them. The innings was in essence a tale of 2 catches. With only one batsman really offering any resistance, he became the key wicket to get. On 57, Russ tempted him with a straight half volley, which he hit like an exocet, straight into Russ's outstretched right hand. Now I'm not saying this ball was travelling fast, but it would have beaten Lewis Hamilton to Russ from a standing start, it was glowing white when it got there and it caused a small rip in the space time continuum as it left the bat which may explain what happened a few balls later.

As the new batsman attempted some sort of paddle/sweep shot, the ball nestled into his glove and ballooned gently towards the waiting Lord of Bledlow. To put this into full context, it may have peaked at 10 feet off the ground, and I'm not saying it was travelling slowly, but while it was in the air, a pint of milk in the fridge went off, which does rather leave you wondering why Ben didn't just catch it rather than looking at it as if it had been dropped from an alien space craft. Ho hum

Taggart picked up a couple of soft wickets with the last 2 balls of the innings, and if we keep going like this, we might finish the season with a positive points total.