

BRCC 1s v Banbury 4s Away

Saturday 30th June 2018

Cpt Birdseye leads The Ridge to Victory Again

Lord Keeping of Toad Hall now scoring more runs than his bowling concedes

Ridge early batsmen culled by Badgers

Banbury 4: 189-9 ao (53 overs)
BRCC: 190-3 (41.4 overs)

Result: BRCC Won by 7 wickets

“Last time we played here I hit one onto the roof of the DHL building” said Hamsah on the journey up. “One of their older players said he’s only seen it done three times”.

That player was Steve Partington who was rolling the wicket he had prepared when we arrived, was organising teas, had got the bar rota sorted and then opened the batting.

Unfortunately Mike Stevens was not available to umpire so could not give him LBW second ball as he had three years ago, as a reward for a week’s hard match preparation.

Instead, Steve cut an impressive figure in helmet, thick glasses and mouthguard as he faced up to Captain Birdseye’s first ball. Either he was planning to do a bit of spot-welding while at the crease or had heard about the vagaries of Dakes’ first-ball-of-the-match each week.

“See if you can avoid bowling a wide first ball” said RolfeDog to Captain Birdseye who had once opened a new season with four wides. Amazingly the first ball was straight and true which fooled Umpire Graham who was already in the process of signalling a wide out of habit and was forced to retract, or redact which is a word I learnt recently, or ‘learned’ even.

Birdseye bowled straight and true for much of the afternoon getting Edward Phillips and Seb Finch early. Partington proved harder to remove as he had by now dug a trench, welded a bit of corrugated to the roof and was resisting all-comers.

Well all except Gilet-Statto, who, fresh from giving the inexperienced 63-year-old RolfeDog a lesson in shining the ball, breached his defences and got him LBW with a bouncing bomb.

Partington de-partington-ed and if SamDog had caught Adnam Ahmed early doors the innings might have finished early doors, but he didn't so it didn't.

As it was, there was time for Dakes to experiment widely with his bowling options allowing Ben Hillarious and Shaun "Shauntrap" Dryden plenty of practice for when Dakes would be away in a couple of weeks' time.

Shaun was pleased to accept this opportunity only breaking the news to Captain Birdseye that his holiday would coincide with the Captains' once his spell was complete, so the experiment was all a waste of time.

Hamsah bowled in two spells with great accuracy and as usual was the unlucky bowler in respect of the dropped catch. He eventually returned to get Sophie Mitchelmore caught by SamDog (reason for celebration in itself) but not before Ahmed had built an innings which threatened to take Banbury well past 200.

In the event he was well caught by Brooksie off Hillarious for 72 whose final figures were 8.4-1-26-1. Interesting figures those, since the innings went the full 53 overs exactly.

This is explained by the Keeping Phenomenon: in fact it is more like a Keeping Ritual wherein Keeps sees how many balls he can bowl before getting banned for bowling two no balls above waist height.

This time he managed 14, ie 2.2 overs. This ECB rule is nonsense in the context of young bowlers plying their trade in, say, Division 6. A young talented leg spinner for example – who needs to learn his art and keep bowling - might have two high deliveries go for two sixes and yet be removed from bowling for 'endangering the batsman' ... absolute nuts!

Ben Keeps however fits none of the categories 'young', 'talented' or 'spinner' so it is always with great relief that his teammates watch the umpire terminate his spell for the greater good of the team in particular and of cricket in general. There was almost an argument however as Umpire Graham insisted he had to come off and the batsman implored Graham to keep him on. At least on the day the rule worked to our advantage as that brought Hillarious back and later Dakes who ended with 5-34 off 10 making him the highest wicket-taker to date in the division.

Gilet poached another wicket somewhere too, caught by SamDog which all seems too much of a coincidence really.

In the end Banbury set just 190 to win which could have been a whole lot more had Adnan lasted longer and had McTaggart been fit to bowl

Tea was par: those of us with longish memories remember the day when Banbury produced a truly magnificent spread. It had been ordered in by a catering company who had got rather confused with other orders and sent a wedding banquet to Banbury CC by mistake leaving us to ponder how the young couple and their guests were getting on somewhere else with a few sarnies, pork pies and Wagon Wheels, on the greatest day of their lives.

RolfeDog went out with Brooksie for the usual ritual sacrifice and was bowled by a badger. A Badger in fact, first name Alex.

The scene began to resemble the Wind in the Willows as A Badger had nailed a Rabbit and after a fine aggressive innings by Brooksie, A N Other Badger, this one by the name Ollie, bowled him a long-hop. The book says Brooksie was caught by a Finch but there is no mention of a Finch in the famous book written by the then Secretary of the Bank of England, so I rather suspect that Brooksie was in fact caught *Owl* bowled Badger for 37.

Anyway, he left the field looking rather Ratty, paving the way for a second ritual Rolfe-Sacrifice whereby SamDog chipped another long-hop back to the bowler and suffered the ignominy of being both caught by a Badger and bowled by a Badger - or to be pedantic (and who isn't?) of being caught by O Badger and bowled by O Badger. This, as everyone knows is something Stoatally different and is occasionally referred to as completing the Set (geddit?).

During all this time, Lord Keeping of Toad Hall had been batting sublimely as he has been all season. He progressed past 50 while Captain Birdseye was still scratching around in the Wild Wood. The Great Lord may never make it to be Secretary of the Bank of England but he is one hell of a Banker to his teammates.

Try as they might, the Eight Bowlers of Banbury could not Weasel either of them out and just when Lord Toad was beginning to near a century and with it, a definite absence of any match report, Birdseye opened his shoulders and showed his class as someone nearly said of a large Cuban athlete (Dakes only qualifies in respect of the word "large").

He hit two sixes and won the match though neither threatened Hamsah's rare feat. With the match over the DHL warehouse ceased to be at risk from any stray deliveries (geddit?).

Lord Toad (86 no) marched off to great applause and comments like "Oh Bliss, Oh My". He was able to quote his batting average to three decimal points as he crossed the boundary, arousing suspicion that he is now receiving Gilet-Statto updates wirelessly while batting.

We then watched some exciting World Cup football on telly and when Gilet-Statto jogged the telly by mistake a couple of Uruguay players and Ronaldo of Portugal fell over.

Steve Partington said it was only the third time he'd ever seen that happen.

Ian Duncan-Smith was unavailable for comment