

Stoke Green CC v Bledlow Ridge CC

Village Knockout

Sunday 29th April 2018

-----=-----

Ridge Routed in Stoke Green (not Routs Green)

Was Taggart missed at all? Captain Dakes makes defining comment

HairBear in remake of 'The Wrong Trousers'

-----=-----

BRCC: 124-8 (45 overs)

SGCC: 127-3 (15.1 overs)

Lost by 7 wickets

Report

For those of you with a poor attention span (Birdy), illiterate (Brooksie) or time-poor (Marcus) who have asked for shorter match reports, here it is:

We lost.

For the rest of you:

The match started the previous evening with a fifteen-message WhatsApp sequence concerning the whereabouts of HairBear's black kitbag at the club in which I finally ascertained that 'on the right inside the clubhouse' did not mean 'in the ladies' loo' but meant 'on the right inside the home dressing room'.

So it was that on Sunday morning I collected from this position, a black bag which was surprisingly large for a Bear who rarely has his own trousers, has lost his bat and usually cannot find the rest of his kit.

I lugged it to Stoke Green CC which was the only interesting feature of travelling with Brooksie, to discover that I had collected a large black Kookaburra bag whereas HairBear owns (presumably more predictably) a small black Slazenger bag.

At Kimble two years ago, HairBear wore Dave Bird's cricket whites in the first remake of The Wrong Trousers. This was something of an indictment of HairBear's eating habits. Two years later and he can fit into my spares which either reflects well on HairBear or badly on me.

A kind of Kit Jumble Sale ensued in the World's Small and Most Chaotic Dressing Room and Our Favourite Bear ended up with a medley of clothes which almost fitted perfectly.

On a very cold afternoon, the captains tossed up, we elected to bat and watched Birdy drive into the ground for a 2pm start. At 1pm RolfeDog and Hairbear walked out to bat.

Had we been playing a Zoo we'd have been well prepared, boasting in our top seven: Dog, Bear, SamDog, The Sloth and Birdy. Sadly we were not.

We played two matches.

In the first, the ball hooped all over the place, moved in the air and off the wicket; the batting team had to contend with tight bowling, difficult conditions and a slow outfield.

In the second match which was played after tea, the ball seemed to do nothing at all, batting was mostly a breeze, the outfield seemed a lot faster and the boundaries a lot shorter.

That we reached 124-8 off our 45 overs was largely due to SamDog and Birdy who work together like Tom and Jerry. RolfeDog had succumbed for nothing, HairBear for just 3, and Hollywood also for zero before The Sloth at least managed a six to the short boundary in his innings of 8 (third highest of the innings). Brooksie then managed 2 before being caught at slip off the 7th ball of an over.

How we all laughed.

SamDog was watching much of this with bemusement at the other end, wondering if it would be possible to better partnerships of 3, 4, 1, 20 & 4 all in the first sixteen overs.

Well he and Birdy managed 55 in the next 17 after Birdy was dropped first ball and despite Zulfi Butt opening his spell with four maidens. SamDog went for a complete half hour scoring just one run before hitting one into the road which bounced into a well-fortified garden. This was guarded by a small Pekingese big enough to frighten off Brooksie, so they found another ball.

SamDog's six narrowly missed a bus going to Heathrow and thereby the opportunity to hit the biggest six ever, landing – or perhaps disembarking – somewhere like Bahrain.

Birdy was both watchful and aggressive and was only troubled when after a close runout, the part of Sam's brain that does running and calling, packed up for a while, resulting in a few midwicket encounters with his partner, somehow none of which ended up in a dismissal.

Birdy was LBW for 28, a number he clearly has a problem with (see last week's report) then there followed a brief but valuable contribution from Cheshire (well from Haw Lane actually), then a briefer one from Allan and 1 not out from Hudson while SamDog opened his mighty shoulders at the other with another six, ending 57 not out. Raja Khan took 3-22 off his 8 overs and Saud Ahmed 1-16 off his 8 which was both mean and uncalled for.

We enjoyed a very fine tea, of which the best moment was when Captain Sloth said "Isn't it nice without Taggart"- and we all agreed that it was.

I subsequently learned that Dakes' remark was made at almost exactly the moment that a 17-year-old rugby player in another part of Bucks, was telling Referee McTaggart to "F*** Off you [*extreme expletive deleted*]". Well they can't all be wrong can they?

We then played the second match and this report should be a lot shorter. About a third of the first half in fact as they won in 15.1 overs, the 'point one' belonging to HairBear of which more later.

We went out with high hopes but Stoke Green had obviously changed the wicket at half time and Dan Simpson greeted Dakes by peppering the boundary and road with fours and sixes. As the last six of this first over was being retrieved and the over had cost 20 already, I dared to suggest to Dakes that he bowl round the wicket. "I can't bowl round the wicket" he replied. I have never been keen on receiving a firm biff on the nose, nevertheless I am extremely proud of the self-restraint showed in not making the blatantly obvious reply.

Gilet fared slightly better and only went for one six and it was a relief at the end of the fourth over – one in which Gilet beat the bat a couple of times, to realise this was the first over of their innings in which they had *not* hit a six. We had managed three in 45 overs.

In fact, after four overs they had reached over 60. In the fifth, Dakes induced Simpson to drag-on to his stumps, for 40 at an estimated strike rate of 250. At least we had managed as many drag-ons as you usually see in an episode of Game of Thrones.

Then, shock horror, new Batsman Singh, clearly out of Tungh, hit his second ball from Gilet hard to HairBear at cover who quickly took his hands out of RolfeDog's pockets and held the catch.

Kashif Abassi and Palmar, whose first name I cannot find so I'll call him Arnold, were clearly in a hurry and the score continued to rocket until a good over from Allan, at the end of which he remembered the trick he played on a batsman the previous week and bowled a high full toss with the same end result that Hollywood took a good running catch.

Dakes decided it was time for Brooksie to have a bowl and for us to have a laugh which we did. There was less laughter however from Hudson-Drama-Queen who had spent an hour at home taping up a knee-scrape from five-a-side footy only to remove the whole lot with one diving stop. He left the field temporarily for a good cry (See Simon Lloyd at Horspath, 2016).

It can only be out of sympathy that Dakes deferred the over he had promised HairBear and brought Hudson on with 9 runs wanted, 9-per-over being the going rate. (Chesh has blown his chances last week by taking a wicket). Would James get on to bowl or not? Hudson managed to concede just seven in an over in which Dakes felt this was not the right time for Hudson to take his first ever wicket and shelled a catch.

Hairbear did not let us down, his only delivery being hit to the 90 yard boundary for four and we all tramped off.

Except for Gilet, who is fast becoming the club's Statto and almost ran to the scorebook to confirm he had only gone for 31 off four overs, 7.75 being slightly below the going rate.

With new covers, new sightscreens a scoreboard under construction and also electronic scoring, Stoke Green are a friendly group clearly on the up and the Caribbean disco afterwards got Birdy's feet itching.

The day ended up back at our clubhouse where a tiny black Slazenger kitbag was found hiding out of sight at the back under a bench in the home dressing room. It contained Hairbear's kit and Dickers' trousers.

RolfeDog

William Rees-Mogg is away but will return next week after holidaying in the 18th Century