

Bledlow Ridge 2s vs Oxford Nondies 3

Away: Saturday 4th August 2018

Ridge 2s sail the Longboat home with 16 overs to spare

Dales reveals why he taught PE rather than History

Nondies 121 all out (32.2 overs)

BRCC 122-4 (28.4 overs)

Won by 6 wickets

As we entered the changing room on a picturesque little ground in Islip, we were greeted by Dales smiling face and the first of what was to be several 'pop quizzes' for the day. "Guess who was born in Islip?" Now given that both Hudson and OGIMD were in the team, sending the average IQ way beyond this year's average score, you would have thought that we could have knocked this little piece of English history straight out of the ground. There were some random guesses; Winston Churchill, David Beckham, Madonna (??), before Chesh tried to bring some sense back to proceedings and asked for a clue. Was it a politician, and was he recent?

"He was a sort of politician, and a good couple of hundred years ago. His middle name was 'the' "

As more random guesses floated around the changing room (Winnie the Pooh, Alexander the Great, Henry the Eighth) my will to live floated gently out of it into the shimmering outfield just as Dales revealed the answer. Edward the Confessor (born 1003). He must have been a good age.

I'm not sure what it was that Edward was famous for confessing, but he would have denied vehemently any involvement in the preparation of the latest incarnation of div 9 pitches we were faced with. The surface didn't *look* as bad as Thame, but you could almost see the writhing snakes just below the top. As we embarked on a serious discussion on how to play on it, whether to bat first, pace on vs pace off, back foot/front foot, Dales piped up again.

"Did you notice that the playpark we walked past is themed? It's based on a Viking Longboat. Anyone know why?"

Hudson discovered that no matter how far the will to live has drifted, it is still too strong to allow you to kill yourself by holding your breath, OGIMD, having only completed 3 further degrees since the last match, made a note to get one in making yourself temporarily deaf, and we en masse looked sympathetically towards Sufiyan and Farhan who had travelled up in the car with Dales.

As it turned out, Islip was where Edward the Confessor had made his last stand against the invading Vikings. It's unclear as to whether he chose the place deliberately, or just happened to be at home watching Love Island when they arrived, but it was the site of a great battle, which was then commemorated by the building of a playground. It seemed a strange place for the Vikings to be invading, given that Islip would be a genuine contender for the title 'Town Furthest from any Coastline' but we then realised that actually discussing it would only encourage him further, so we turned our attention to cricket.

All plans were scuppered when Sniff proved himself to be a consistently useless tosser, but the spirit of Odin threw a thunderbolt at Nondies' skipper Saleem (I'm going to go out on a limb here and suggest he does not have any Viking blood) and he found himself saying that they would bat.

Islip CC jumps immediately ahead of Lord Bills on the grounds that they have sightscreens, however it seemed that the wheels had been forged from Thor's hammer so they were a little less portable than would be desirable. As the nearest fielder to the screens, Taggart moved them for the first over and then informed bowler Saint that he choose over or round and stick to it, cos they weren't going anywhere again.

Having examined the pitch, our bowlers clearly deemed it unsuitable for bowling on and so decided the safest thing to do would be to consistently deliver the ball on the full. This let Nondies get away a bit faster than we would like, although the word fast was never used in the description of the first wicket (run out) where their opener, while shouting push push to his partner, ambled one and a half and then dived in just as the next batsman was approaching the crease.

Sniff made some rapid bowling changes, bringing Dales on at one end in the hope that it would give him something else to think about, and eventually Farhan at the other. Dales wheeled away relentlessly, threatening the batsmen's ankles with some short pitched stuff, and getting a 'one for the over' for a half volley that the batsman only had to nod at to duck under. In all the pitch excitement, no-one really noticed that Dales was consistently taking wickets (5-22), and when he made way for debutante Carlton, they were 6 down with only 2 left on account of 2 of their originally selected players getting held up in a traffic jam at Valhalla. Carlton picked one up on debut, Farhan was quick and unlucky, and David Saint was a bit grumpy about having been taken off after 2 and came back to get a cheap tail ender.

As we left the pitch, there was much grumbling about how defendable 121 might be on that surface.

After a top notch tea, where the water for the tea was just left out in the sun and was amply hot enough, Sniff announced that Taggart opening against Thame 2 weeks ago had not in fact been a practical joke, and that he was going to do it again. And so the Batman and Robin of the Ridge (Chesh and Taggart (dynamic duo, it's ironic, keep up)) opened the innings. Chesh tickled the first ball for 1, Taggart swiped a full bungler off his shoulder that was deemed to be there or thereabouts waist high, next ball for 4 and thanks to a couple of extras, we were 8-0 off 1. At the end of the over, the head-banded crusader came down the wicket for a stern word with the boy wonder.

“I want a call every ball!! Doesn’t matter where it goes, or how far it goes, a good clear call! Understood?”

Bowing to his more experienced opening partner, Taggart began building up the volume and variety until a loud ‘NO RUN’ for a leg bye was met by an incredulous look from the man of steel (yeah I know that’s Superman, but go with it, we’re sort of on a DC Comics theme). Slightly non plussed, Taggart looked around to see what had so upset the Dark Knight, only to find that the umpire had answered the little more than polite enquiry from the bowler in the affirmative.

22-1 and the pitch was starting to live up to what we were expecting. As the bowlers settled into decent rhythms, batting got a little harder, but OGIMD was punishing on the loose stuff and Taggart was patient (barring a couple of loose swishes) and made it to the 18th over before going the same way as Chesh (7) to a different bowler for 21. With the ball softening a little, the mischievous parts of the pitch were now more theatre than threat and OGIMD and Farhan batted very well to get us to within 5 runs of the win before Farhan was adjudged in front for 19.

With OGIMD at the other end on 46, newbie Carlton came to the wicket, swished and missed, swished and missed again, and then swished and smashed the ball 18 inches short of a 6, leaving the scores level and OGIMD needing to hit a 4 for his 50. First ball of the next over was short, he stepped back and decided to make it safe by hitting a 6, which he surely would have had the ball ever come back from ground level. Smacked him in front and he was gone. Sniff went in, faced a wide which won us the match and came back asking what all the fuss was about.

We were umpired all match by someone from Nondies (which seemed a bit strange as they had only 9 players) and lost 4 wickets LBW. It’s possible that he made mistakes (obviously just mine, the other 3 were plumb in front), but if he did, they were certainly honest mistakes, and he turned down a lot more than he gave. Didn’t catch his name, but if he ever reads this report, I hope he will accept our thanks for doing both innings. That’s a luxury you don’t often get in 9.

As Dales switched on the shower he got hit with a blast of cold water. “ooh, that was a bit refreshing. This is interesting. Who knows where showers originated from? Anyone anyone?” Tumbleweed blows through an empty dressing room.

With the 1s all wrapped up by 5, we were back at the club with both teams on the patio by 6 o’clock for only our second 50 point weekend of the year. This despite the fact the aggregate number of runs from both games was less than Keeps’ total for the season, a stat that Gilet (who will not be mentioned in this report) would have thought so obvious as to not be worth mentioning, and Keeps, had he thought of it, most certainly would have.