

BRCC2 vs Cumnor 3

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2019

## **6<sup>th</sup> Highest Run Scorer in Cherwell League is 3<sup>rd</sup> Highest Run Scorer in BRCC 2s team**

Maiden 50 for Rizwan in Rearguard Effort

Murdoch pouches steeping catch (not Taggart obviously)

Cumnor 265 – 4 (45 overs)

BRCC 171 – 6 (45 overs)

“OK, I’ll take Shaun and Hugo then and that should leave you with .....” I didn’t hear the end of the sentence as Dakes faded into the ether, but the correct word was ‘six’. Wednesday night, 6 on the sheet (and that included Doug and Dales who I might have forgotten to mention were available) and it was all a bit reminiscent of yester year.

So the full time job took a back seat, the Cherwell League admin got put to one side and the proper work of getting the 2s out began. Charity begins at home and apparently so does building a team.

“Stu, you’re playing cricket on Saturday”.

“I don’t know how to play cricket”

“You’ll be in good company”

7

Text from Birdie.

‘Mids might be able to play 2s’

Text to Mids

‘?’

‘Yeah ok, but I can’t get there until 1.30’

“You’ll be in good company’

8

Text to Shaky

‘Help! Need some juniors. Who should I try?’

‘Massimo Lynn is not bad’

Email to Mark Lynn containing much sweet talking about introducing youngsters into a team laced with experience at the right time etc etc and trying to avoid phrases like ‘Pleeeeee, we’re desperate’

‘Yep, he’s available but he’s only 13’

“He’ll be in good company”

9

The magic number. No forfeit with 9, and as if by magic, suddenly another couple appeared and we were complete. Just when you don’t think it can’t get any better, we had TWO volunteers to umpire as both the injured skippers put up their hands (at least as high as injuries would permit) and both turned up around 1.15 as I may have forgotten to mention to either that the other was potentially available (belt and braces).

A quick tally up of ages revealed that Doug, Dales and Taggart combined were about 30% older than the rest of the team combined. This was compounded for Dales when Taggart introduced him to Massimo Lynn, suggesting that he might know the name from his teaching days.

“Pretty sure I didn’t teach him”

“You didn’t, you taught his dad”

Most sane captains, knowing that they were starting with 10 would opt to bat on winning the toss, however when you have the 6<sup>th</sup> highest run scorer in the Cherwell League in your team, you do not want a moment longer than necessary in your innings when he is not available to bat, so having induced an incorrect call from Sanjay Mistry, Taggart opted to bowl. And for about 45 mins, it didn’t look a terrible decision. At 10 overs, we had not bowled a single wide. We had shipped just 21 runs and the skipper had had an appeal for LBW answered in the affirmative.

If I have learned one thing about captaincy in my short tenure in limited over cricket however, it is that the key bowlers are the first and second change. And this was where we were in trouble. We had 2 regular bowlers and they had just reeled off 10 overs between them. We could keep them going, but then we were going to be hanging on for 25 overs at the end, so we gambled and went to the creche.

Massimo was a little shaky in the first over but settled well and bowled a really good spell. Tom Hickey was a little erratic, but put in some good ones. We used Mark Neal for a few, Doug had a few and Midds took the gloves off Dales so that he could bowl a few as well. No-one got caned, but unfortunately no-one got a wicket either save one run out, and by the time Taggart and Sufiyan came back on, the batsmen were well set, seeing it like a football and a big total was already on the board, with a very big one in the offing.

Daniel Blakey, Cumnor's number 3, having survived a couple of chances that had randomly escaped any fielder, had gone on to convert his maiden 50 into a maiden 100 when Sufiyan induced a top edged hook that went down to deep backward square. But before it went down, it went up. A long long way up. The kind of up that momentarily sees it disappear into a cloud. Waiting underneath it was Murdoch. Not Ian 35 years of cricket experience, 200+ wickets, many catches dropped but some taken Murdoch. This was Stuart 'I don't know how to play cricket' Murdoch. Having caught it with a minimum of fuss, Stuart wasn't quite sure how to celebrate until he was engulfed by a proud father.

He confessed to his sister later that evening that he wasn't sure how to process the fact that after being appointed head student at school, been promoted to sergeant in the air cadets and passed his driving test first time all in the last 2 years, this was the happiest he had ever seen his dad with him.

265 is a lot in this league, but it didn't feel like a bad performance. We had fielded well at times, our youngsters had bowled their hearts out and incredibly, considering the (lack of) experience of the bowling unit, we bowled just 6 wides in the entire innings.

And we still had Midds.

After tea, Taggart and Midds went out to open. MM took first strike and at the end of the first (maiden) over in which he had to play at every ball, expressed with some incredulity to his partner that he hadn't expected div 9 to be quite that good. A couple of overs later, after a brief glance at the scoreboard, Taggart commented to Sniff who was umpiring (Chesh was now scoring and mumbling something about being conned into being there) that he was outscoring the great Martin Middleton (albeit by 2) and this might be the highlight of his cricketing career. Midds clearly heard and promptly plinked Sam Down into the former Lord Keeping's field (or Lord Keeping's former field or some such combination).

After 9 overs, we had jogged along to 33 with no drama. Taggart took a comfortable single off ball 1 of the 10<sup>th</sup> and Midds creamed ball 3 to long off for 4. On ball 5, he danced down the pitch, slightly lost his shape and gently popped the ball into the hands of mid-wicket who was probably the only living mammal in that particular acre. It was nice knock of 23 and only about a hundred short of what we were hoping for/banking on.

Nevertheless, out came Riz who looked more organized and more focused than in recent innings and he and Taggart added another 35 before the latter was trapped in front for 28. Riz however was seeing it well by now and hitting some very sweet shots. Having stroked his way to 33, he then hit 2 sixes in 3 deliveries and in less time than it takes to fetch a spare ball had relegated Chesh from clear top to clear bottom of the 6 hitting table. Shortly afterwards, Doug rattled the sight screen with a super straight drive to promote Chesh back up to joint bottom. When Doug holed out for 19, we were 133-4 off 30. Behind the pace, but a decent performance, however as with the bowling, we lacked the depth to go on and threaten the target. Riz went on to get a well deserved 50 and Paul and Mark managed to nurdle a few more while Aaron defended his wicket bravely, but the best we could do was get the losing margin under a hundred. We only lost 6 wickets and if this had been a timed game we would have held out comfortably for a draw.

I saw Cumnor 3s twice last season and this Cumnor 3 would have thrashed both of those Cumnor 3s by considerably more than they beat us by. Given that our 6 youngest players averaged just 15 (and that

included 2 19 year olds, one of whom had never played a game of cricket before), there is much to take away from this game in the positive column.