

Bledlow Ridge 1s v Long Marston 2s

Saturday 4th July – Home

BRCC 263-7 (53 overs)

Long Marston – 259-9 (47 overs)

Result – Match Drawn

As the league's leading run scoring team it is becoming increasingly hard to score large totals and still lose. The challenge was to exceed the 279 we made at Twyford before coming second.

Thanks to a dismal batting performance and an unreasonably accurate final over of the match by Matt Donnelly (MSD) we came up short as it were on both counts.

Yes we only made 263. The day started badly enough for me with a 7am visit to Asda to meet the "Tea for Under £40 Challenge" where I came across lots of older geeks like me. It did not improve later when Dickers of all people, on seeing me pad up to bat with one of Baz Hawkinsport's suits of leg armour, told me I would not be able to run. Birdy then for some reason told me I talk too much. All I needed next was for Taggart to tell me I was too Scottish.

However we batted first, RolfeDog in a state of Bird-Shock could only score at one an over for about 38 overs while Dickers decided he was not going to risk running with RolfeDog and plundered ?? mostly in boundaries before giving way to David Llewellyn Bledwyn Jones. DLBJ must have taken his advice and with his long forearms – or one might think, four long arms - hit the ball to the boundary even harder, trying to smash RolfeDog's ankle's with one shot from 22 yards.

Just when it seemed we would end up with over 300 DLBJ got a nick behind for 31 and Rory, who does not usually hang around, except when serving you lunch at The Boot, joined RolfeDog who soon gave his wicket away so he could spend the rest of the afternoon with former Aussie Ridgebear Legend WelshDog, who had just nipped over from Oz for the Cardiff Test, as you do.

He was on the boundary with MorfDog another former legend and was well on the way to his highest score of over 12 pints of lager, a total easily exceeded by the time he was later dragged kicking and screaming to Penny and Birdy's house via some eating house at about 2am. A performance of which David Boon would have been proud.

We got to 269-7 with, remarkably no one making over 38. Rory made a quickfire 38 followed by Brooksie's 35 with MSD holding things together at the other end with 20. We ended up with BirdDog at the crease with Tombsdog. In fact this was a nine year reunion of the "Dog" clan an exclusive five-man group whose only absentee was BenDog. Sadly the World's Greatest Living Banker had to attend a

Ball, as you do, and had been unable to persuade WelshDog to go as his partner. MorfDog had been sorely tempted though.

Basically BirdDog spectated at the end, while TombsDog rolled up his sleeves and rolled back the years by peppering BenDog's paddock with boundaries as punishment for preferring a Society Ball over the opportunity to spend an afternoon going for WelshDog's lager record and the chance to see TombsDog trying to hit his imaginary horses in his paddock. Or rather jungle as the grass is so long there we could have lost Geoff in it, let alone any of his balls, both of which would have been a tragedy.

So we did not quite exceed our record 279 despite Geoff's rapid 34 not out, but were able to share tea with some former Ridge Greats like Simon Bird and Gracey which sounds like a happily married couple, they both being happily married, but not to each other, they being both blokes and all that... something of which MorfDog was particularly jealous.

Taggart gave some sort of routine speech about not taking the large total for granted and we set about helping Long Marston on their way with both RolfeDog and Tombsdog shelling simple chances close to the wicket.

For once we had almost as many proper fielders as geriatrics in the team which was just as well, as Long Marston batted in depth. Soon David Effffan Jones' grabbed a catch off Taggart in his enormous hands. Notable highlights were the same player's ability to conjure catching chances off the most unlikely of deliveries and the acceptance of same by BirdDog and someone else whose name escapes me, me being old and all that. Might have been Rory, or MSD or Luke all of whom took catches and all of whom are too young to normally get in this X1

The highlight however was Geoff's fielding. Sent to field in the long grass as it were, he was slow to sight one shot and complained that he needed a call to tell him the ball was coming, he being in the shade, the first time shade has ever been blamed for a fielder not seeing the ball. What it really needed was a cricket ball with a bell inside.

Shortly afterwards after a slight fumble his teammates were chided for indeed calling to him while he was fielding the ball and we were left somewhat confused. This was only trumped by a tizzy -fit between Birdy (who had temporarily dropped the "Dog" tag and Tombsy (same) over a catching chance that fell between them. Dickers, who had had a squabble with Tombsy the previous week and refused his offer of marriage, was sniggering quietly.

The Jones Boy was mysteriously no-balled. No not a chest-high no ball of East Oxford fame but despite not going beyond the front line he was no-balled it would seem, simply for having large feet.

Despite the best efforts of Taggart who rotated the bowling with surprising intelligence, Long Marston's run rate increased quicker than our wicket-taking rate. What were those flashes of colour in the outfield? Red kites swooping?

Swallows gliding? No it was the battle of the Jazz Hats as Luke with his multicolour orange peel –style cap and Malik-style brown Doc Martins, whizzed around like roadrunner on one side of the wicket and Rory, our Croydon-Australian, with his spiral toothpaste-style cap dived around, sometimes prematurely, on the other. On one occasion he went full length to catch Geoff as Geoff ran past unable either to see or hear the ball.

TombsDog took a wicket and thanks to Taggart's surprisingly intelligent habit of bowling him in short spells, no pun intended, is heading the bowling averages.

Mention must be made at this point, of Scott Waite.

Scott Waite.

Played again. Did not bat again. Got one over and was then ruthlessly axed. Axed! But plays without complaint and gives everything, well except his shirtsleeves sometimes. And he did bring a lady EasyJet cabin crew member to the game so there's not much to complain about really.

Let's Fly!

The game came down to 13 wanted off two overs with four wickets left, and batsmen going well. Taggart (4-64) took two wickets in two balls and with surprising intelligence declined the opportunity of crowding the bat for the hat-trick ball they wanting 11 to win.

He did however deem it the right time to bowl a full toss which was despatched for four leaving seven wanted off the last with MSD to bowl at the death. He had had a good day. He is learning fast, often asking BirdDog and RolfeDog where he should bowl and receiving consistently useful answers along the lines of "at the bloke at the other end, the one standing in front of those three sticks.". That is, when Birdy was not bickering with Geoff.

MSD took a wicket and with that, Long Marston decided the chase was up, although a boundary off the last would have brought scores level and given Long Marston more points. He bowled a dot ball and we left the field still probably the leagues top run scorers and quite possibly the highest place team in any league in the world to have only actually won one game.

RolfeDog