

Bledlow Ridge 1s v Twyford 2s (Away)

Saturday 19th May 2018

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Ridge Victorious in Twyford Wide-Fest

Umpire McTaggart Swallows Rule Book

BenDog Contemplates Marital Good Fortune

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BRCC: 288-6 (50 overs)
Twyford 171 ao (33 overs)

Won by 117 runs

“No Scott and no Birdy -what a relief” said RolfeDog on the journey to the ground.

After the – as yet unreported - chaos of last week’s abandoned match v Oxford I suppose it was good to have Taggart back.

Last week without him no one knew where the balls were (in the cupboard) or where the scorebook was (well erm, in Taggart’s house) or where my trackie bottoms were (in his kitbag). This week we hit the jackpot: he was there but umpiring not playing. It’s like true love: can’t live with him, can’t live without him.

And when your umpire is on the League Management Committee, is the only person on the ground who knows the Playing Rules and his

name is McTaggart, well you're going to hear about it. Made us wish Scott and Birdy were playing.

The Inaugural 'See Who Can Arrive Later Than Saeed' competition, was won by Captain Birdseye who went to Wolverton who are not in our Division, thus giving RolfeDog ammunition for the rest of the afternoon.

SamDog won the toss and decided to sit in the sun while the rest of us batted and watch the Inaugural Most Wides Bowled In An Over competition which enabled us to reach 45 off the first five overs for the loss of Brooksie, caught one-hand-one-bounce.

They had a few young hurtlers one of whom pinned RolfeDog on the belly-button with a full pitch and caused the first of a number of interventions by Twyford captain Mohammed Shafaqat who had an interesting day.

His comment that this should not have been called no-ball as he claimed RolfeDog had been hit on the leg elicited an invitation from 'RolfeDog to inspect the bruise and a subsequent erm 'discussion' with a fielder all of which came to a halt when from 90 yards away, SamDog, that most lippy of wicketkeepers, yelled out "just get on with the game". This was rather like being told by John Bercow to respect women, so in a state of shock we did so and played on.

Umpire McTaggart (shoulder injury caused by bowling too much left-arm-slow-crap) was by now in his element. It was just unfortunate for Twyford that they came across him in top form having swallowed the 50/50 Cherwell Rule Book whole.

He next took delight in refusing a number of leg byes when our batsmen had pretended to try and hit the ball, by calling "I'm Not Having THAT" in an authoritative manner before undergoing Aashort cross-legged dance routine.

No Balls of any description are now followed by a free hit and in this match were also followed by enquiries from Mr Shafaqat such as “What Rules are we playing today then?” to which Umpire McTaggart always had a ready answer.

BenDog, fresh from 98 v Challow was by now batting like a million dollars which you might expect for someone who works for an American investment bank even if it is just loose change.

Eventually BenDog was rather well caught, for a fine 64 of a partnership of 136 at 146 for 2. SamDog arrived and hit one blistering cover drive before smearing a long hop only to see one of the young opening hurtlers dive full length and catch him. Captain Birdseye arrived, smashed the leather off a half volley only to see Hurtler No 3 grab a caught and bowled with both hands.

So having watched the seam bowlers spray it around, three fine catches had been taken and we were a bit shakey (or ShakEy) at 160-odd for 4.

Lloydy came in to bat wearing a Gerrards Cross shirt with “The Ceramic Tile Co” emblazoned on the front which was proof that he has not paid a sub for about nine years or obtained any of the goodies that go with it. He may however have had his bathroom fitted for free.

He was cautious to start with as if sampling a new wine. He also developed a new batting technique which involved using the bat more than the pad.

RolfeDog – who had by now been batting so long and so slowly that everyone on the boundary was asleep – agreed with Lloydy that they would play out the overs of accurate non-spinning off-spin form Shafaqat and another decent bowler whose identity remains unclear

at the time of writing. It might have been Majid Aslam however he has only been credited with bowling four overs on the Cherwell League report card.

No doubting who Umpire McTaggart was however and the innings continued well until he signalled a wide off a delivery that hit Lloyd's ample figure, almost dislodging a few ceramic tiles in the process, at which point both RolfeDog and Lloyd did the decent thing and told Umpire McTaggart to pull himself together and withdraw the wide call.

Lloyd had wandered slowly down the wicket to make himself understood and Twyford took the opportunity to return the ball and take the bails off in a kind of Gentlemanly-Act-Meets-Ungentlemanly-Act. Mr Shafaqat again got in a bit of a kerfuffle. I do understand that it is not always clear from Lloyd's running speed whether he is attempting a run or not but this was not in the Spirit of Cricket so McTaggart intervened with "I'm Not Having THAT, I've Called Dead Ball" and so we resumed.

Lloyds bashed it about. RolfeDog's innings expired for 92. HairBear had a quick thrash, all in his own kit. We finished at 288-6, with Lloyd a fine 51 not out, a score from which we had lost at Twyford three years earlier. The bowling figures ranged from 3 overs 0-36 to 9 overs 0-20.

The WhatsApp gang excitedly WhatsApped everyone they know and got a photo from Birdy in reply. This being the Royal Wedding Day (Megan and Harry for those of you reading this in 2065) it rather looked as though Birdy was getting married to Larty, somewhere sunny.

The tea ladies were thanked for their tea so many times that they fainted with embarrassment and Dakes and Gilet set to, bowling

eight of their ten allotted overs in succession with Dakes getting four and Gilet ... zero.

Dakes' wickets included an LBW drawn from Umpire McTaggart in the painful fashion that befits a bowler-umpire trying for better season's figures than the bowler.

In order to do this the umpires had changed ends at half time much to RolfeDog's delight as he was then able to state that this contradicts the Laws of Cricket, the Customs Union and the Laws of Nature. Quick-thinking Umpire McTaggart countered that the Laws have changed (of Cricket presumably) and MCC Member Brooksie sniffily replied that his club were the guardians of the laws and he hadn't heard anything.

Dakes put Henry Wilkinson to the sword (geddit?) before making changes and we revived the Wide-Bowling competition as BenDog got very confused about which were right-handers and which left-handers. David Saint was using BenDog's radar too but Freddie Wilkinson tried to hit a straight one to Kingdom Come and SamDog, with a lot of yelping while the ball was orbiting the sun, finally located the orb and caught it. Surprisingly, not in his mouth.

Chesh celebrated his day of not batting and not bowling by tearing about and confused us all when a batsman hit one to him and took a single, by calling out "There are no singles to me in the field". He later explained this Fake News by explaining it was not a description of what had just happened, but a prediction, which proved correct as thereafter, confused, Twyford, did not run any more singles to him.

This brought Mr Shafaqat to the crease and after a while he was able to just reach a wide delivery from BenDog and nick it behind but not so clearly as to make him feel like walking, so he stayed there and we noted that for once he had no complaints about the umpiring.

Neither did we either for the record and BenDog put things right shortly afterwards with a catch by Lloyd.

Strangely although six wickets down, Twyford remained with a chance for as long as Joss Goff (22 at scrabble) batted aggressively and we had difficulty completing our overs due to a glut of wides.

McTaggart was almost beside himself with the news that we would be deducted 6 runs, yes runs, for every over not completed by 7pm and we faced the prospect of losing the game at 7pm with Twyford something like 200-9, 88 runs behind. At least this day quashed the myth that McTaggart and RolfeDog's captaincy has been responsible for slow over rates, a burden they have had to bear for a few years.

Fortunately Saeed's radar was set properly and he took two wickets, one a slow motion return catch, before Captain Birdseye decided enough was enough and returned to claim his fifth wicket. Gilet came back and dismissed the dangerous Goff to complete an equally fine spell and one which did not require him to buy a jug of beer in the pub afterwards.

So another win, a beautiful evening at Twyford's local pub where BenDog wondered out loud why on earth Hermione had married him. We tried very hard to think of a reason but failed completely although someone did suggest it was because of his smooth hair and dark-rimmed glasses.

The next day McTaggart expressed disappointment that Dakes had awarded his umpiring as only 16/20. This was explained as deductions for: knowing too many Cherwell Rules, too much loudness, changing ends at tea, being Scottish, not waiting for a run to be completed before exclaiming "I'm not having THAT, you never played a shot", acting Scottish and setting off back to The Ridge in the wrong direction.

For the rest of us, the prospect of listening to Birdy again next week was partly alleviated by the good news that Aston Villa will be in the championship play-offs on Saturday so we will all be spared Scott's burgeoning Brummie accent. Sometimes listening to Taggart can be a joy in comparison.