

# **Ridge Sail on in the Good Ship McTaggart despite “more ex-wives than-runs” scandal**

**Doug finds ‘Cheerful Gene’:**

**Malcolm in ‘Does Not Get a Mention for Quite a While’ shock**

Bledlow Ridge 2s 145 ao (45 ov)

Banbury Vs 101 ao (35.2 ov)

Won by 44 runs

This will be a shorter report than last week; but not by much. After all it was a shorter game than last week; but not by much. At least it was short enough to enable Dinner-Date-Doug to complete the match and still make it to The Savoy or wherever he goes.

We played at the ground where two years ago, Pete Walker scored for us and memorably went missing after the match. Nowhere to be seen, everyone assumed someone else had taken him home but Pete had found a bar that was not open, persuaded someone to open it and sat supping away for over an hour before wondering why no cricketers had come to join him.

Thus fortified with thoughts of Pete, we lost the toss, batted and had 52 runs on the board when RolfeDog swiped at a wide one, meaning a wide delivery not his batting partner. Doug had had spectacles trouble. His pair was misting up through emotion probably, so he removed them and shouted out some complex instructions to his teammates on the boundary about car, keys, remote locking and glove compartments. The message never got through as unknown to Doug he was in fact facing a small group of park benches as he made this request.

Their very amusing fielder announced that Doug could probably see three balls and should try to hit the middle one. Well RolfeDog’s dismissal for 22 enabled this little caper to be resolved and on receiving his change pair of specs, Doug went into “marooned” mode and said he thought they probably wouldn’t help now. Their very amusing fielder said that Doug would only be able to see two balls now but that he should still go for the middle one.

Malik has probably never played out a maiden over and this week was not going to be the first time. Had he got hold of the ball it might have

reached Northamptonshire, but he didn't and it didn't. Hopefully he is saving up for runs next weekend.

So Shaky(no E) joined Doug and Doug had a midwicket chat with the reflection of Shakey in his specs before taking guard, clipping a ball straight to square leg and looking up to find several images of Shaky (no E) tearing towards him shouting "Yeeees".

Later, in the car on the way home, Jake commented "Shaky(no E) is very fast isn't he". Jake's assessment is certainly accurate and he might have added that Shaky(no E) is a good deal faster than Doug, whose innings came to an end at this point. I believe that in the modern method our up-and-coming scorer, one Shaun Dryden, may have made an entry in the scorebook, thus:" McIndoe... Run Out (R Dryden)... 21. ha ha.

Dickers looked in great form again, in fact he looks like a great form at all times but when he perished to a full-toss we had lost 4 wickets for about 17 runs.

Enter Saeed the Sahib. The New Guv'nor never seems to be far away from a bar of chocolate but this being Ramadan one might have expected him to be quite subdued. He had clearly maxed up on carbos during the night however as his innings took on the quality of a Stand-Up Comedy Show. On being challenged by their slip fielder to hit his first ball for four with the incentive of a £20 reward, Saeed duly smashed the first ball off the back foot through the covers for four, resulting in a great deal of hilarity and a prone slip fielder not sure whether to laugh or cry. His innings contained a lot of chatter and apparently a few more winning bets, however those of us on the sideline learned that the fielder he was winning bets from "owes everybody money".

Anyway, It is rare that Shaky(noE) cannot get a word in edgeways so it was with an air of resignation that he conceded defeat on the debating front, dragged a full toss on to the stumps with his foot and gave way (with 12) to Jake who was celebrating his 14<sup>th</sup> birthday and who had surprised me by bringing a novel to read in the car on the way over.

What better way to celebrate your birthday than with a game of cricket? Well here's one: don't get out to a 14 year-old young lady bowler. Or if you do, ask her out; she's a cricketer for goodness sake! What more could you ask for in a woman? That was a rhetorical question.

While The New Guv'nor (Saeed) mixed solid defence with lively conversation and violent cuts over cover, Jake had his own personal

battle until finally, inevitably he decided that a dinner-date would be the best way of celebrating that day in 1998, hit one in the air and saw his young lady adversary mobbed. He decided against asking for a date at that point in case their very amusing fielder said something very amusing.

We were still in a bit of a tight corner but Jake's partnership with Saeed had yielded 32 runs. Matt and Saeed put on a few more before, Saeed declined a single, then next ball smacked a catch straight to their very amusing fielder on the long-on boundary and came back explaining that he felt it was time to get on with it.

It is not often that we get this far into a report without mentioning Malcolm AshbEy but there is no point in wasting printer's ink. After Matt was stumped off their leg-spinner Schnipff joined Malcolm – a sort of Bledlow Ridge Dream Team where the good listener and the good chatter come together in perfect harmony. (Readers of last week's report – all of you?! – will understand that Shaky's Missing E has found its way into the name of AshbEy (there being no E in Guv'nor you see).

Sniffph not only made his first run, he made three of them and was out going for more runs before the declaration and also to generously to allow Captain McTaggart in to bat.

Two things you need to know; McJock was comfortably run out in his last innings. Secondly, he had announced earlier that he had more ex-wives than runs this season. His dismissal run out off the last ball for two, is therefore likely to put an unreasonable strain on his current relationship. The first thing his partner might do on behalf of all of us is to ask whether he could possibly run a little faster. Decisions about the gold crockery that was a gift to them both, not to mention the signed photo of Gordon Brown, can be sorted out later.

Tea was particularly good and full of chocolate cakes. So was Shaun, with Jake not far behind. Tempt the young lady with chocolate Jake, it never fails – she's woman for goodness sake! (The bowler that is, not Shaun).

We only had 145 to defend but after a bit of pfaffing around we managed to have them about 15 for 4 despite RolfeDog's swallow dive over the ball to give them their first runs. Off Shaky(no E) of course. He who has no E, you may recall from last week has had so many catches dropped off his bowling that he has run out of ways to express his disappointment.

Thus it was, when their opener who was putting up some resistance hit one hard in the air to Doug, (Doug who never drops catches I would say) there was a split moment in time when Shaky(no E) was thinking "There's no way Doug will drop this" and Doug was thinking "What better was to get my own back on Shaky(no E) for running me out." Doug's Power of Thought proved greater than Skaky's(no E) who, completely dumbfounded, realised he had been out-maneuvered, double-crossed and triple salsa'ed, and said absolutely nothing. Another first.

Their very amusing fielder was now batting and carrying out a private fielding session with Scnipff who slithered and dived all over the place frustrating the rather amusing batsman whose response was to do his utmost to run out his partner. Luckily for his partner he lost the will to go on first and was bowled by McTaggart which just shows how much will he had lost.

Doug then became particularly nice for a while and argued that we should welcome batsmen by clapping them in and entered a debate with the RolfeDog who argued that we should not encourage the opposition to do well. This was a kind of role – or personality – reversal.

Saeed came on and induced an error from the young opener who had stayed around and with perfect irony the catch was held by Shaky(no E) who keeps getting a mention. Malcolm of the 30 pace run up condensed into 3 metres Cheshire Cat grin (or is it Cheshire Homes?) came on and took an important wicket courtesy of a sharp caught behind by Matt.

The Former Guv'nor was taken off but not before upsetting their prickly captain, now umpiring, as he apparently insisted on running up while the umpire had his arm out to stop play. This gentleman did not realise that in the time The Guv'nor takes to run in 30 paces everyone stops watching anyway.

So Malcolm was sent to the naughty corner.

And Shaky(no E) who had come back at the top end and bowled some tennis serves actually got another go Malcolm's end which was most likely the sympathy vote for all the season's dropped catches. Just as we wondered if he had some sort of blackmail hold over the skipper he began to clean up with wickets and finally McTaggart was faced with the prospect of bowling to a young lady.

He did the dastardly thing and actually hit her on the legs somewhere before the ball hit the wickets. Jake take note.

So we won, as did Bledlow Village and the big game awaits this weekend. It just remained for the Captain to tell Malcolm he was driving to the shop to pick up some fags and would be back to take Malcolm home... and in a move no doubt inspired by Peter Walker in 2010 failed to return to collect him. It was my bad luck I had not left before Malcolm realised.

Finally after dropping off Jake, I discovered that he had left his book in my car. I Am a Legend. No that's the name of the book.