

Bledlow Ridge 1s v Minster Lovell 2s

Away: Saturday 11th August 2018

Ridge Defeated by Drops of Dangerous Rain

Ben Keeping's Average Increases to 15 Runs per Mile

Hillarious and Brooksie Divide the 'Thanks for Coming Prize' which is a Share of Hillarious' kit

BRCC: 357-5 (50 overs)
Minster Lovell: 54-1 (13 overs)

Result: Match Abandoned - Rain

On a day when Challow & Childrey were bowled out for 61 by Eynsham yet got 10 points in defeat, Bledlow Ridge made 357 in 50 overs at Minster Lovell (ML) and got just 6 points for an abandoned match. A little bit of rain was deemed enough to take the players off after 13 overs had been bowled in reply with the score 54-1 and not a hint of sawdust anywhere. 20 overs are needed in the second innings for there to be a result.

Let's face it – and without diminishing our batsmen's achievements - Minster Lovell had largely given up after about twenty minutes.

By this time Hamsah had already hit enough boundaries to make it clear we would make a large total. RolfeDog had gone early to a sharp catch behind the wicket which in the context of the rest of the fielding was little short of miraculous.

Three of four lost balls were recovered during the afternoon by Rolfe “Sniffer” Dog after ML had made little effort to recover them themselves from the river or look for them from the bank beyond. In retrospect then, it was not that surprising that the ML umpire (who had started the game with the unusual entreaty of “Let Battle Commence” rather than the more traditional call of “Play”) should be so keen to take players off in the lightest of rain. More surprising was that ML should be happy to go off despite being in desperate need of any points they could get in their fight against relegation.

We had arrived in bright sunshine. Cilla Hillary arrived too, not with Graham and Ben, but on her own. For this week’s edition of “Where’s My Kit?”, Ben had arrived only to realise it was sitting on the sofa at home. Usually it is in his father’s car in a garage somewhere or bits of it are scattered within other players’ kitbags.

But Cilla, loyal as ever, made a 60+-mile round trip so that Ben could sit all afternoon in his kit and watch the others bat, before fielding for 13 overs.

There had been some concern at the dryness of ML’s ground. The drought had caused many areas of the outfield to crack open. Much of this had been filled with topsoil and the boundary brought in on one corner.

None of this bothered Hamsah who started by trying to break mid-off’s hands twice and by peppering the car park on the other side. As encouragement, every time he played a defensive shot a round of applause broke out from his teammates and RolfeDog reflected on how much applause he might have had over the years if this rule had applied to him.

Ben Keeping – alias BenDog – had travelled back from Cornwall for the second week running (life’s just one big holiday) in an attempt to improve his average of 0.25, ie 2 runs for every 8 hours travelled.

He played the perfect anchor innings as Hamsah made his way to 90 and was out with the score at 144 after 20 overs. Hollywood carried this on before being bowled for 25 having tried to break one bowler’s hand with a return drive.

ML were pleased to see him go but this brought in Dakes who is having various personal competitions with teammates mostly on the wicket-taking and wicket-average side. He is now involved in a six-hitting competition with Hollywood and Hamsah and this continued as he made 49 with 3 sixes, in about 10 minutes while in his sleep, including one huge effort over the pavilion (worth 9) which ML recovered quickly, probably because it did not involve any fishing.

When Dakes was out he credited these runs to RolfeDog whose cap he wore for inspiration and returned it to him a lot more sweaty than when he had started. For RolfeDog's part, there was a moment when he looked at the scoreboard when it showed 202-2 and reflected happily that he had contributed 7 of them.

Junaid went out to bat, described previously as "Like Hamsah but with defensive shots" and returned five balls later to be described as "Like Hamsah". The one disappointment of the day - apart from a few drops of rain and an umpire's determination to end the game - was how near we had come to having two brothers score a century for the club in the same season, Junaid having made a century for the 2s a few weeks earlier.

All this time, Brooksie had been put down the order to protect him from the new ball, then the slightly old ball, then the old ball, and most of all from himself. He commented that he would have like to open after all but with Hamsah not RolfeDog and thus ended a long friendship with RolfeDog who retaliated by refusing to get him a cup of tea.

Luckily Brooksie was able to spend much of the afternoon chatting with BirdDog and when they could not think of anything to say about sex, there were long silences, and when they could, there was a lot of exaggeration.

SamDog - rather short of runs this season - went out to join BenDog who was moving remorselessly on towards a hundred with a mixture of pushes, drives and toussles of his beautiful hair. With late cuts and drives SamDog nursed BenDog past the dangerous 98s and to his second century of the season so that with a final score of 108 not out each hour's travel was worth 13.5 runs.

* photo of scoreboard and Keeps here*

We had a magnificent tea and a quick headcount confirmed that no player had been lost down any of the cracks in the ground caused by the excessively dry summer and whose condition rain seemingly does little to alter.

Dakes opened up in traditional fashion with five wides but thereafter did a 'Jimmy Anderson' on both batsmen finally inducing an edge from opener Ryan Frost who was caught behind by SamDog.

The ML second wicket partnership made a good if forlorn attempt to keep up with the rate, with Hamsah hit for the Six-of-the-Day by Ashley Horne - bigger than any of Hamsah's or Dakes' and which RolfeDog later recovered from the far river bank.

No attempt was made to find this ball at the time, but an old lump of leather was provided in its place before Dakes bowled a few with it, then made the point that a nearly-new ball should have been chosen to replace a nearly -new ball and had it changed.

Batting well, ML were in with a chance of picking up bonus points as we carried on in the lightest of rain which inconvenienced no one, not even the bowlers who were careful to avoid the dry areas while fielding on the boundary.

Gilet came onto replace Hamsah, put Hollywood on the boundary about 80 yards away and cursed him as he ran ten yards in an unsuccessful attempt to make a very difficult catch. "That's why I put him there" said Statto. "I'd have preferred it if you had put me 10 yards to the right in the first place" retorted Hollywood who a little earlier might have run one of the batsmen out had Dakes not been standing in the way. I know what I'd have done.

And then... it spattered slightly harder for a minute... yes marginally harder but not as hard as the rain at Lords in which the Indian batsmen are facing Jimmy Anderson as I write.

One of the officials pulled up a set of stumps. We looked for signs of rain on the run up, wickets and surrounds and couldn't find any. No one had slipped or slithered, no one had fallen down the cracks cause by the excessively dry conditions and ML were going well on 54 for 1. Was it too wet or too dry? No one knew.

Once you come off for rain it's difficult to come back on even if it is scarcely spitting, unless you are playing a test match at Lords v India, where they have just done exactly that.

There was a dilemma when it did stop completely for a few minutes. At this point the ML captain said that the groundsman (who was nowhere to be seen) wouldn't like us to play and he was terrified of him anyway because they'd played once before when it was a bit wet and the groundsman had got quite cross. It was not clear what the pitch was being protected for unless one of the tests v India is due to be played at Minster Lovell.

The umpire was busy looking for anywhere that might be wet and carried out an experiment, rolling an old ball for a few yards which proved it had previously been raining. At this moment RolfeDog gave him the nice shiny new ball that had just been found, which was probably not a wise move.

If you wait long enough on a grey day the rain will eventually come down harder and finally it did and with it any further chance of going out to play. We could have got about 30 overs in instead of consuming more tea and cake.

The Ridge was therefore again scuppered by rain, for the third time this season to a team in bottom or second-bottom place, this time with 357 on the board. There is a rule in 50:50 matches that forbids declarations. It's not a Cherwell rule, it is copied directly from the rules of the HCPL, which are copied from the ECB rules. We considered sending in our batsman with the instruction to deliberately give away their wicket to hasten the end of the innings, but decided quickly that was not in the spirit of cricket and up (or down) there with the player somewhere in the country, who recently threw the ball over the boundary to prevent a batsman getting a century, so discarded the notion, but it might have got us another 19 points!

Had we done so of course BenDog would not have made a century and would have paid someone a lot of money to have us all killed.

A disappointing end to the day was lifted somewhat when, having hurriedly dressed to make an early start back to Cornwall, BenDog dragged his kit through the changing room, went bright red and exclaimed while looking at Birdy, "You've put Deep Heat in my underpants". "Don't worry you can take them off after four hours driving" said Birdy who was giggling like a 10-year-old.

The dressing room finally emptied so we assumed that Ben Hillarious had taken all his kit with him rather than put it inside his teammates kitbags. There was panic about the missing scorebook after we'd left but it was eventually found at the bottom of Dakes' kit along with Ben Hillary.

News had come though of an extraordinary result at Eynsham nearby, where the home team had been bowled out for 65 and had then bowled Challow out for 61 with Sam Whatshisverylongname taking 6-10 off 10. SamDog and RolfeDog stopped off there en route to give thanks and to return Luke Smitten's cap.

It turned out that credit for victory did not go to Sam Aforementionedbowler but to Tom Gerken who had promised to run around the field naked if they won. Challow thought this worth the 15 points they would sacrifice for the sake of Tom fulfilling this promise.

Luckily for SamDog and RolfeDog, they arrived in time to witness the event, shown here, [*photo here see below*](#) and to offer condolences to a toy donkey

which had been chosen to protect Tom's modesty. Two thoughts here: 1) why the presence of a toy animal at a club where players like to get naked? (don't answer: it's a rhetorical question) and 2) no wonder Tom's one victim was LBW shouldering arms if this is what he looked up and saw as the bowler ran in.

It was a day of strange news as one of our close rivals Twyford, had cried off on the morning of the match and forfeited 10 points. More bizarrely Taggart had made 91 not out for our 2s - with this, the umpires realised that all sense of reality had been lost, so they abandoned the match.

This did not alter the fact that on this particular day 357 had not been enough for The Ridge to win. There was one more piece of good news though: BenDog had got back to Cornwall in record time with the added incentive of a change of underwear on arrival and had made it in 3.5 hours not four, thus bringing his average per mile down to 15. Not even a drop of rain could alter that.

No ducks drowned during the writing of this report

