

## A Bledlow Ridge X1 v an Aston Rowant X1

Home – Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2018

### Ridge Squeeze Home in Fluid First Outing

### Taggart Rules the Waves

### Robbie Carter in Irony Shock

Aston Rowant X1: 165-7 (40 overs)  
BRCC X1 : 169-8 (39.2 overs)

BRCC won by 2 wickets

Within only 10 days of the announcement that all cricket at Bledlow Ridge would be cancelled until 2023 due to heavy rain, The Ridge sneaked home in the last over of a 40 over match in which at least fifteen players were treated for sunstroke.

Fortunately Ian “King Canute” McTaggart had bid the rain cease earlier in the week and by dint of private communication with Rowant via underwater megaphone had kept the fixture afloat, so to speak.

RolfeDog had drowned in a storm of emails about the sodden pitch which had come in waves but just when we thought the fixture would be sunk, Groundman Jamma was joined by the Head of Rolling, Mr Steve BlrdDog for a tidal wave of hard work and preparation.

Captain “Birdseye” Dakin, formerly known as “The Sloth” could not be bothered to walk to the wicket to toss up and told Rowant they could bat if they wanted to, which they did.

Dakes put Chesh where we could not hear him and from there he ran out a batsman who assumed Chesh was not only incapable of fielding, but incapable of throwing. Appearances can be deceptive.

Although not captain, McTaggart took himself off as soon as Rowant’s new overseas-professional-with-a British-passport got going, leaving the lucky Alan Loxton the pleasure of bowling to him and testing our fielders’ ability to identify lost balls in “Keeping’s field”.

Alan fooled the other batsman into giving Matt “Hollywood” Brightwell a fine running catch off a steeper and was later rewarded by being replaced with Chesh, probably the low point of his career so far.

Ben Hilarious had opened up well at the top end before being replaced by Captain Birdseye who, now captain, was more animated than ever previously known. When not bowling Dakes found himself fielding at Extra Cover without knowing who had put him there. His parents never showed up to watch, a smart move as Dakes would have been lured to the boundary like Jason and the Argonauts to the Sirens, and certain oblivion.

Now that I’ve completely lost both Birdie and Brooksie and anyone else ending in “ie” with that sentence ... back to the cricket. Chesh not only bowled but took a wicket, the return catch thudding satisfyingly into his chest where he grappled with it before sending it into orbit from where it almost landed on Taggart’s head, but didn’t.

Luckily the British-Overseas-Pro had had to retire at 50 and when he did so the game had returned to normal and normal also meant three wickets for Ben Hilarious in a fine second spell, all the more so as he had mentioned at one point that he could not run. One of these wickets was a catch-behind by Brooksie who hurled the ball even higher than Chesh had done, again in Taggart’s direction, but with equal bad luck. Another wicket was a catch by BirdDog and the third a catch by the opposition’s substitute fielder James, who reminded us that he had spent much of his week in the employ of Simon Tremlin cutting our outfield so that BirdDog could roll it.

In between time, David Saint had a good bowl and we had the Curious Incident of Rain Stopping Play During a Heatwave.

Forgetting temporarily the flood of discussion, emails and emotion that had gone into getting the game played despite April’s mostly monsoon-like weather, Taggart ran us off the pitch at the first drop of rain, as he did not want the possibility of any damage to a pitch which would be used for another friendly next week – a game which would only be played if we could raise a team and if it wasn’t called off for more rain.

As soon as the rain (what rain?) stopped and we realised that McTaggart is neither captain or groundman, we resumed. Luckily we only lost 17.5 minutes which is the equivalent of five cigarettes or seventy-three vapes and after a brief conference it was decided that under Duckworth-Lewis no overs would be lost and no runs added or deducted, only that Cricket Can Damage Your Health.

Chesh did not get another wicket thereby proving that lightning does not strike twice but Ben had his aforementioned fine spell and Alan got another go when the prospect of Chesh taking a second wicket proved too much for all of us.

Rowant ended with 165-7 off 40 overs, and we wondered if Dakes had ever been described as a ‘cat’ before – a word used at one point to describe his fielding by a player desperate to remain in the team.

We were treated to a fine tea by The Real Saint with the appropriate volume of biscuits and cakes so that not even Birdy complained.

With brilliant timing Robbie Carter showed up at tea with Charlie and complained there was no cricket. Many of the world’s ills were put right during the next fifteen minutes during

which Charlie considered saying something but thought better of it. Robbie commented that his daughter Molly could be really grumpy (takes after his mum) and this is the first known instance of irony by a Carter since Vera told Tex his bowling was useless.

RolfeDog opened up with Chesh who was proving hard to shake off in this game and did so to a chorus of jokes about being back-in-a-minute and other gems he had never heard before in a fifty-five year career.

In a sort of “up yours” approach to batting RolfeDog almost hit the first ball of the season for four but didn’t and after Chesh had hit a few powerful shots into the offside field (adding to the suspicion that he now bats on steroids) RolfeDog hit the first six of the season well into the Stud Farm, so that back in the pavilion BirdDog had to be treated for shock.

Chesh eventually nicked one behind and proved his Australiasation by ‘waiting for a decision’. His replacement Matt Hollywood started smashing the ball around but, clearly unnerved by RolfeDog’s big hitting, played on for 14, trying to emulate his partner. This brought in Brooksie whereupon RolfeDog lost the will to live being LBW for 23.

Dakes succeeded in hitting a bigger six than RolfeDog just to prove that he can and belted the ball around for 25 until he tried to hit one out of South Bucks but only got the ball as far as the wicketkeeper. Brooksie (13) and Hilarious (unknown) followed soon after and we were in a bit of Schtuck.

The run rate had slipped as we tried to rebuild the score, that is until Alan started hitting out only emphasising how slowly BirdDog was batting at the other end. Alan’s innings of 27 turned out to be match winning but not before he and The Real Saint had made way for Taggart who gave us a few scares in the traditional manner before BirdDog was shocked into action and hit over the top for four just so that he could creep into pole position with 28 not out. We won by the slimmest of margins with four balls to spare.

This was a welcome victory in a friendly warm-up match which gave Brooksie his first winning game for two years. Does that tell you something Brooksie?

Reflecting on our victory over the weather we stayed and soaked up the atmosphere and hoped that our win would have a ripple effect and turn into a deluge rather than prove to be a drop in the ocean. Our thoughts then turned to next week’s weather, use of the same pitch for next week and whether we should put the covers on.

It was decided not to, on the basis that a drop of overnight rain would be good for the pitch the following week. I woke up a few hours later in the middle of the night not to the sound of a light drizzle but to thunder, lightning and the heaviest rain of the year so far, all of which was somehow the most satisfying moment of the whole week.

RolfeDog

*No plains were flooded in the writing of this report*

