

Bledlow Ridge 1s v Challow and Childrey 1s

Saturday 13th July – Home

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Victory for The Ridge as Gilet Almost Hits Two Sixes

The Boy Angell in CatchFest

Wells Fills His Boots While Hugo Fills His Car

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BRCC: 238-9 (53 overs)

KB: 88 ao (28.2 overs)

Result: BRCC won by 150 runs

Hugo's watch was correctly calibrated for the start time and so he and Wellsy arrived well in advance in a luxury motor, Hugo wedged in with the seat back as far as it would go, Wellsy with the seat comfortably forward. The dressing room was awash with paper as evidence of RolfeDog's attempts to educate players about the points system. Birdy was awash with bad jokes as usual.

Dakes chose to bat. The wicket was greener than last time. RolfeDog and Dakes negotiated the first 26 runs before Dakes was bowled around his legs by opening bowler and skipper Martin Turnbull who seemed particularly pleased at this and even more so when RolfeDog toe-ended his long-hop in the air to the only fielder anywhere west of Weston-Super-Mare.

"Good day to lose the toss" exclaimed the bowler whose team was to be bowled out for 88 later in the day. There was also a remark about all runs being on the legside, but as RolfeDog mentioned later, they are definitely allowed and count for as many as the others.

The Boy Angell joined Wellsy who spent some time facing the other bowler, Alex Wells so it was "Wellsy" to "Wellsy" for some while which made it easy for the scorers as they cancelled each other out. Well scorer (singular) actually as sadly we did not have one, and despite Martin T's observations later, we were not deducted any points or runs for that matter, even any on the leg side.

Jai carried on where he left off last week and entered a competition with (our) Wellsy to have the most classic batting technique of any RidgeBear. Alex will have to rise to this challenge next week and Middy too whenever he returns to the game from his latest LoveFest. Lord Keeping could be an also-ran though it actually doesn't matter what you look like if you make runs, if you have wavy hair.

After a short while Dave Wells called for a drink of water which was odd as Wells are usually full of the stuff. Perhaps this one had temporarily run dry. Wellsy is a bit of an endurance sports freak and had some fun calling quick singles with Jai who, after a bucketful of cricket, was afflicted with Birdy's Hobbling Disease. Wellsy also kindly 'withdrew' a single on account of his obstructing the bowler when Jai straight drove. If I knew how, I'd overrule all of Brooksie's runs.

The Boy Angele made a fluent 28, Wellsy made it to 46 but as he was due to empty his bank account to the club later in the evening, felt he had to decline a half-century. As a Landlord, he had been batting with his Lodger (Hugo) the first time this kind of partnership has happened for a number of years. Perhaps ever, depending on whether Mike Stevens ever played with Steve "Budgie" Buhaghiar when Steve was ensconced in the Stevens' barn. From the barn, he used to have copious volumes of food delivered into Routs Green via articulated lorries which regularly prevented Mike and Christine getting out – to the benefit of us all.

Brooksie arrived and watched Hugo playing a number of shots on the hoof. When you are an in-form farrier it pays to strike while the iron is hot, so Hugo hit a Huge six which struck the blue portakabin full pitch at a distance of almost a furlong, the first time a blue portakabin has been hit by a farrier, unless Mike Stevens has ever driven into it while delivering horseshoes to Ben Keeping or horsefeed to Steve Buhaghiar.

Partnerships were the feature of our innings and it was not necessary to have a landlord-lodger relationship for all of these. Hugo blasted 32 and Brooksie 21. When Hollywood arrived at the wicket Wellsy asked RolfeDog what sort of a batsman Hollywood is. 'Almost beyond description' was the gist of the reply, 'but rather defensive'. RolfeDog was soon in the field at the top end looking for the ball which Hollywood deposited at least twice in that area before more artfully hitting a flat six to square leg which returned on to the field after hitting HairBear's sturdy bench.

Hollywood made a defensive 38 in about five minutes before Birdy arrived at the crease. Birdy, who had earlier suggested that a certain teammate likes to be centre of attention, gestured theatrically after one run that he had again gone in the calf. A vet was called for while RolfeDog padded up as runner and practised short sprints BirdDog-style, only to be completely forgotten by BirdDog who moved effortlessly (sic!) to 22 not out. At the other end Junaid had made 9 and Hillarious with 5, was out in the last over.

With two balls left, Gilet strode to the wicket with strict instructions to "get something on it" and the field at the far end filled with ball-retrievers just in case. This was a wise precaution as Gilet took the view that he could open his six-hitting account for The Ridge with the only two balls he would face. He only narrowly missed both of them.

Roz had been reinstated as Tea Provider par Excellence but could have been marked down for providing a packet of small biscuits that had broken, but as Brooksie was due to go to Lords the next day we took the smart option and did not mention it. The tea, incidentally was still being eaten at around 9pm.

Dakes got into them early. Joe Durie (who may have played tennis at Wimbledon in the 80s) was taken with a diving catch Alex-style by our endurance athlete behind the wicket, before Justin Penrose was trapped by Dakes, LBW.

Tom Pill and Oliver Hill enjoyed a very brief rhyming partnership before Junaid bowled Pill with a big inswinger taken with a small glass of water. Hill went for aggression, cracked an aerial drive towards extra cover at the speed of sound where The Boy Angelle, cool as you like, caught a belter just before it broke the sound barrier.

In 2015 Dakes had served up a similar delivery to James Gaskins of Twyford who blasted the ball to RolfeDog at similar speed. On that occasion the catcher was greeted with multiple hugs by ShakeY and Tombsy which should not be wished on anyone and thankfully for Jai they were not playing in this match (and ShakeY can get a bit emotional). It turned out to be the last game Tombsy played for The Ridge for four years, so it wasn't all bad.

Junaid bowled Harry Rooke. His figures of 2-28 in his best spell for the club, were something to Crowe about. 12 of these runs were scored in his final over.

Gratifyingly Challow adopted a policy of hitting the ball in the air to where our fielders had been placed, something that Shipton and Kingston Baggers had miserably failed to do in the previous two weeks' drawn games. Hillarious benefitted from this approach with a catch taken by Brooksie while he was checking his Lords Pavilion Pass. The new batsman was greeted by Umpire Graham with the news: "Right-Arm Over Rubbish" which is the first known instance at The Ridge of an umpire sledging a bowler, although not before time.

Lured into this trap, Marc Gregory was also dismissed by Hillarious, caught by Dakes in an unlikely double-whammy though not before Hollywood had started experimenting with bouncers from the top end, removing Matthew Frost who hit one into the huge hands of, well, Huge. This prompted a glare from Gilet who had been wheeling away economically (he works for Tesco after all and every little helps) for some time, but with no reward not even Nectar Points, from the other end.

Skipper Martin Turnbull arrived at the crease with no intention of playing out a draw and soon obliged by hitting one off Gilet to where Dakes had just planted himself, and was out for a total of 8 runs, hit mostly or all on the legside as I recall, for which no penalty was imposed. Gilet visibly relaxed and updated his smartphone.

Alex Wells came in to be terrorised by Hollywood only to find himself at the wrong end so Alex Dawson (what is it with all these "Alex's" nowadays?) obliged by edging a quick one to second, third, or might have been nineteenth slip where The Boy Angelo snaffled another one so easily that he might have been swallowing one of Roz' broken biscuits.

Challow had made 88. They may have suffered from claustrophobia being used to vast open spaces and there was – allegedly – a reference to our "kids ground" being a bit small. Still, it was good enough for us.

it was about 5pm according to Hugo's slightly unreliable watch. Hugo had travelled down from Preston to play and would soon be returning to Preston, crammed inside a van about a quarter of the size of Apollo 11. This sort of dedication was last seen from Keeps in 2018 when he returned twice from a family holiday in Cornwall in a modern-day version of Chitty-Chitty-Bang-Bang, to play. In Keeps' case his apparent dedication was balanced by his desire to flee his 72 kids and get some peace. Gratifyingly he travelled hundreds of miles to register two runs on one occasion. Today, Hugo made 32, hit a portakabin (every man's dream) and caught a catch (when did Keeps last do that?).

Hugo made a note to ask to borrow Keeps' Tesla next time; apparently the seats go a long way back and it can fly.

Theresa May is away on a dancing course