

BRCC vs Hambleden

35 over Friendly - Sunday 5th May 2019

Hambleden 110 – 12ish (35 overs)

BRCC 145-5 (28 overs)

BRCC won by 5 wickets (and 35 runs)

Having played perhaps 2 Sunday fixtures in the last 2 years, The Ridge put out its second Sunday side of the season in 2 weeks against a very genial Hambledon side on the first weekend of May. As with the previous week, the match was preceded by a very heavy night at the newly refurbished club as the Hairbear memorial walkers went into full blown party mode (assisted by a slightly inebriated DJ).

Hambleden had rung in on Saturday to say that they were short of players, but we said to come along and we would help them out with fielders and in the event they arrived with 9 so David Saint (an oft time Hambleden player) switched sides. Having been abandoned by his other half for the weekend, Birdie found himself with nothing to do on a Sunday, which is unusual because normally he only has nothing to do on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, so skipped off home to get some kit and join Ben Hillary (who had also arrived with no kit) as a 2 games in a weekend player.

Chesh had raided Henry's piggy bank and went out to toss an old penny, which Hambledon called correctly and put us in the field. As the batsmen and umpires waited patiently in the middle, the skipper gathered his team around him (minus Birdie who was still kit hunting) and introduced everyone to each other. This was just in case we had all forgotten the players we played the last league game of the season with, or perhaps just to make sure that everyone knew who Tom Hickey was. One (slightly) truncated version of Churchill's darkest hour speech later, Gilet opened the bowling up the considerably less hilly hill.

Gilet's predictably monotonous line and length was boring the batsmen to death, while Carlton at the other end (off half a run) seemed to be scaring them to death and so the scoring rate was pretty pedestrian. At the end of each their 4 over spells, Gilet had gone for 8, and much to his chagrin, Carlton had gone for 7 (although Gilet pointed out at length in the tea interval how a misfield had cost him 3 so actually his figures were better. It's expected that the statute of limitations on said misfield will run out in 2025. Somewhere Hollywood was chuckling.).

Neither had managed a wicket, but Hambleden were now 1 down as the batsmen had met in the middle of the wicket to see where the best view would be of Riz throwing down the stumps with a direct hit. Tom Hickey came on and was a bit short early on (as was his bowling) and went for a few, but induced the batsmen into another risky run, enabling Carlton this time to effect a direct hit to put them 2 down.

TLB settled into a better line and length and bowled well in partnership with Ben Hillarious (now fully kitted out thanks to a long suffering mother), who despite claiming to be as stiff as board after playing yesterday, bowled a particularly frugal 7 over spell, picking up 2-10.

Birdie had since reappeared although given the number of jumpers he was wearing, you could have been forgiven for thinking that Dickers had taken his place, but we were now 11 of number and suitably attired.

Taggart had been having a chat with one of the oppo on the boundary and on discovering that they had very little batting left, immediately gave Chesh the nod that he was ready to bowl. Having dispatched 1 back to the hutch for 3 runs there was brief pause while Hillarious and Jovan decided to swap jobs and put Hillarious behind the stumps. As we were already well behind any kind of respectable over rate, Birdie then served up the most ignominious moment of Taggart's long career. Wearing precisely none of the traditional wicket keeping kit (pads, gloves, helmet, box) he shouted down to the bowler.

"Don't bother waiting, just bowl and I'll catch it. Standing up bat"

... and 2 balls later, he did just that as the batsman top edged a sweep (it just gets worse) and Birdie pouched the catch.

The next batsman decided that Taggart had to go and after 3 huge hacks, none of which made contact with the bat and all of which somehow construed to miss the stumps, fell to Taggart's (even) slower ball.

Having picked up 3-5, Taggart wandered off to fine leg muttering about how no-one would have dared to stand up to him, even in full kit, 125 years ago when he was quick, however the gloom lifted slightly when it was pointed out to him that he had gone for less than Gilet and picked up 3 wickets into the bargain.

Hambleden had now picked up an 11th man who was due at the ground any minute, but with Suffiyan and Rizwan both getting into the wickets, we had technically bowled them out for 58 in the 23rd over. As it was a practice match however we offered to bowl out the 35 and let them go back through the batting order, so their opener Rosier came back in, hit a few, retired to let the newly arrived no. 11 bat come in and at the fall of the next wicket, came back to hit a few more.

The scorers had had a nervous breakdown but a total of 110 was agreed as a target and after a David Saint tea, Chesh and Jov went out to see what they could do about it.

The most exciting point of the innings was in the 21st over when Chesh's score got above the number of overs bowled, from where he accelerated to 46 not out as we passed the target. He was accompanied by an exciting (but short) knock from Carlton, a very brief stay from Suffi, and a dashing knock of 20 from Rizwan, before Birdie came in and hobbled a few singles to see the target off.

With still a few overs available (in theory Hambleden had agreed to bowl the 35 as well), Chesh finally got to 50 and we called it a day there.

Earlier in the day we had seen the cartoon like figure of Rolfie running round the ground. He was heard to gasp, "Nice to see Sunday cricket again, can't stop, going too fast" Presumably Chesh's scoring rate was the barometer.

A thoroughly pleasant day's cricket against a splendid bunch and as we move into the first league games of the season with 3 wins from 3 and our fantastic new clubhouse and a couple of grand already gone over the bar, the club looks in even better shape than we ended last season.

Watch this space.