

# Didcot 4 vs BRCC 2

Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> May

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## **Saints Alive!! 2s win Again**

World's Grumpiest Scotsman Contest reaches Fever Pitch

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BRCC 193-8                      45 overs  
Didcot 166-10                      44.3 overs  
Won by 27 runs

Storm clouds were gathering as we arrived at Didcot's recently built splendid new facility and before even a coin had been tossed, the Didcot captain was asking what the par score was at this stage of the match. He explained to Taggart, who was standing in for stand in skipper Chesh, he of the recently broken finger, that the rules on DLS seemed a bit vague on the Cherwell League site. Having written said rules, this made Taggart a little bit grumpy.

When the coin did eventually head up to the ever blackening sky, Taggart had counted 8 BRCC players in attendance and so having called correctly, had little option but to bat. Out he went to open with Hugo, to face a decent couple of opening bowlers who spanned just about the full range of ages in which it is possible to play cricket.

At the younger end of the scale, Matthew Ford (aged 14, looked about 9) did for the stand in stand in skipper who chased a wide one and nicked off for a solitary run. This turned up the grumpy dial by a notch. Hugo fared a little better, playing some nice shots for his 15, before the other end of the scale, 'Steady Eddie Martlew' (age; definitely more than 14, looks .... well people in glass houses and all that), bowled him round his legs.

Jovan's stay at the crease was short and uneventful (at least as far as the scores were concerned), and in went the (relatively) cheerful world's second grumpiest Scotsman, back for a flying visit from Ireland, to join Farhan at the crease. They muddled along quite nicely, adding 20 odd before, in a sign of things to come, Farhan hit a ball to long on. Aware that he speaks quite softly and that perhaps Doug's hearing might not be all that it was 30 years ago, Farhan decided to wait until Doug was 2/3rds of the way down the wicket before shouting (?) No!. Doug did a passable impression of the QE2 on a U turn and made his ground. At the end of the over, he asked Farhan why he didn't take the run, to which he replied " I didn't want to get run out". The grumpometer went up a notch.

A couple of overs later, hit repeat, result: no more turning capacity in the ship and Doug was run out for 6. As he grumbled back to the boundary, reports were coming in that the grumpometer needle was bending at the top of "Quite a Bit" and could go into "Very" at any moment.

Rizwan swung at a couple without success and then watched sadly as the ball bounced off his pad and rolled at snail's pace towards his stumps, apparently unaware that he was perfectly entitled to kick it away.

Enter The Real Saint. The skies were continuing to darken all around, but bizarrely, not immediately above. It was like there was a huge halo over the ground.

Farhan played round a straight one and departed for a well made 27 and Carlton was in and out in the space of 2 balls without bothering the scorer. After what had seemed an OK start, we were now 7 down for 70 off 22 overs as Dales came to join the The Real Saint.

You would have got pretty good odds on what happened next, a fact that was not lost on Doug, who likes a little flutter, and did nothing to alleviate the pressure on the grumpometer needle. I'm sure he won't mind me saying so, but The Real Saint batting would never put anyone in mind of James Vince. It wasn't always elegant, but it was an absolute triumph of pragmatism and common sense over flash and blind ambition. Both he and Dales were resolutely defending anything remotely on line and dispatching the half trackers and full tosses with great effectiveness. This is div 9 cricket. There is always going to be a hittable ball coming along shortly and both showed great patience and concentration in compiling what was potentially a match winning partnership of 122.

The Real Saint got to 50 with about 5 overs left, and a couple of overs later Dales hit a fine shot to the square leg boundary for 4. His team mates applauded and Dales duly lifted his bat, only to find the applause muted and fading away. It was for the shot, not the 50. Never mind, try again. Another fine shot crosses the rope, the applause goes up, as does the bat, but no, still not there.

With 2 balls of the innings left, and still no confirmation of 50, he went for a big drive, missed and was bowled for a fine 48. Sufiyan then slapped the last ball of the innings for the 2 Dales needed and we closed on 193-8, with The Real Saint unbeaten on 61.

With 80-100 runs more than we looked like getting at one point, we went out for the second innings feeling like we were in a decent position. The first 4 balls of the innings however all went down the leg side and were all called wide, so in effect our 193 was now only worth 189. Carlton did manage to induce a very sharp chance to gully which did not stick, and then a regulation caught behind, which Jovan dropped, but fortunately in an upwards direction straight into the hands of Dales at first slip. He then got their skipper to hit one up in the air which was looping reasonably gently towards a widish mid off. Three fielders converged on it but Doug took the responsibility and warned all off with a positive call. At this point 8 spectators reached for their phones, quick accessed BetFred and put their house on Doug catching it.

There is now a homelessness issue in Didcot.

Doug approached Taggart at the end of the over. "What a day I'm having. I'm unfit, overweight, got run out and have just dropped a dolly. I am sooooo grumpy!!!"

Response

The SISI skipper's plan had been to hold himself back to the later part of the innings, or preferably not bowl at all on account of an ankle that