

Bledlow Ridge 1s v Dinton 2s

Saturday 17th August 2019 – Home

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Preamble

Those of you who drop into our website to look at Match Reports will have seen that we were 'off air' last week. The report was written but was only available to club members. This was because after 30 years of my writing reports for one team or another, someone took offence and chose to make a complaint, not to me or to BRCC but to the CCL who, arguably, have enough on their plate already.

That person did not take offence over last week's report but over a report written more than two months' previously, which it seems suddenly had come to mind.

I therefore thought it would be worth clarifying a few Match Report ground rules.

These reports are intended to report the basic match facts while mainly poking humour at: 1) the players (in the main Bledlow Ridge players) 2) the match, and 3) some of its incidents. There may be the odd compliment to a player of either team but if you get one, treat it with suspicion.

If you hit the ball and don't walk, expect to be called out. That applies to both sides but please accept that the chances are I won't be in the middle if one of my teammates is guilty. In my opinion, not walking in the lower levels of club cricket especially with volunteer umpires, is a form of cheating. You may disagree. You are entitled to your opinion on this, I to mine. Likewise, if for example you throw your bat around on being given out, it will probably get more than a passing mention. These are very much the exceptions however; it is more likely the observations will reflect comedic moments, like Cooperman's insistence on doing all his fielding while horizontal.

I believe this is all reasonable and I hope it is clear. As I have said, only one person has complained in 30 years (not strictly true, my playing colleagues complain most weeks, but you get the point) and it took the complainant a long time to get around to it. As this complaint referenced (among other things) a lady player, albeit obliquely and even though it was not suggested she was the least bit upset or even knows about the complaint, here is my final ground rule:

If I call our wicketkeeper a girl, it is not intended as an insult to any girl who may or may not happen to be playing on either side, it is just turn of phrase and it normally only applies to Brooksie, though Alex and Wellsy had better watch out! It so happens that I believe Sarah Taylor is one of the two best 'keepers in the country (the other is male) with Amy Jones not far behind. Alyssa Healy of Australia is pretty darn good too.

In summary, if you are a snowflake, don't read the match reports. Here's the next one:

The Ridge Defeats Dinton as Wides Outnumber Dropped Catches

RolfeDog and Jai take Diving Lessons from Cooperman and Gary Sprake

Morf Wears Silly Cap in Comeback-Shock

BRCC – 285-7 (50 overs)

Dinton 2s – 249-9 (50 overs)

Result: Won by 36 runs

We knew it was going to be a bit of an odd day when Birdy said “I don’t like to interrupt, but...”. Moreover we had heard that a selection vacancy had been solved with the call-up of an old Friend, but no one knew who. Or whom.

Ben Hillarious (aged 19½) became the second RidgeBear called Ben to turn up for a match in which he was not playing (see Ben Keeping, Sandford away, 2018) but at least he knew he was not playing so it was not him. His work shift had changed and he offered to come and play instead of the 3-year-old BirdDog but as no one was able to interrupt Birdy in full flight (geddit?) we never got the chance to suggest it. Anyway, with Keeps and Cooperman we already had our quota of Bens. We’d have to wait to find out who this old Friend was.

It had rained for most of the week so it was no surprise that on losing the toss we were asked to bat. The wicket was very slow and occasionally low and one these did for 43-year-old Ben Keeping (aka Bendog) who was adjudged plum for 15. Jai, the Bucks Under 15 captain, made a quick dozen then asked the umpire how many balls were left in the over by way of cunning plan and promptly fed a half volley into the waiting hands of Ali Humzah: 50-2.

The umpire was Dick Haddock from the panel and panel umpires tend to be on the ball. He needed to be as something fishy was going on. He was kept busy all afternoon as each bowler in turn from his end bowled around the wicket to left-handers, onlookers frantically moved the sightscreens, Dick then warned them all about running on to the wicket, and they ended up going back over, while onlookers frantically moved the screens back.

35-year-old film star Matt Hollywood made 16 before smashing one back at Asfandiyar Khan who somehow clung on (Cling-ons again?!).

The ageless RolfeDog who was on about 1 not out, could not recognise the incoming helmetted batsman. Was it Birdy? Junaid? Was it BenDog coming back out again in disguise? It turned out to be Morf. Our old friend Morf!!! Old yet only 34. Not seen on these

pastures for a long while but returned to the fold and restored to the Dog family as MorfDog, leaving only SamDog (Spain – aged 31) and WelshDog (Australia - born in the outback, age not recorded) unavailable.

A remarkable thing happened. An extraordinary coincidence. Not only did Morf's batting look a million dollars (as befits a good friend of BenDog, Investment Banker to the Stars) but he made runs. The two very rarely go together.

RolfeDog, who knows a good bowler when he sees one had managed to face just one ball of Videet Vadalía's six-over opening spell. He was eventually bowled for the second successive week by a dragon. Oh! all right then, by a drag-on - at least it stopped the ball from being called a wide. 37 off 77 balls out of 164 and proud of it but disappointed at the rarity of going through an innings without being given some verbals by the opposition.

These stats were available courtesy of Gilet who, by a statistical quirk (no offence intended to quirks), is almost exactly the same age as Hollywood. Scoring on a laptop, he was overcome with the emotion of instant statistical calculations. As if this was not enough, he became excited that RolfeDog and Steve Smith have almost identical wagon wheels, although he did point out that there are generally a few more lines on Smith's.

Dakes, aged 32 but with the body of a 55-year-old, found some form with a quick 30, before MorfDog who as ever did not have his wallet with him, nicked off for 47 off the same bowler who had got BenDog, which only goes to prove they are inseparable. Junaid (aged about 22) made 11 before those famous red-inkers Brooks (22 runs and aged 52) and Bird (3 runs – what a coincidence) got a nice little 'not out' each.

You may have noticed that these runs do not add up to 285-7, this being because of the contribution from Man of The Match "Total Extras" with 92, of which 64 were wides.

Roz (age unknown, probably about 25) surpassed herself with her tea though it was noticeable there were no tarts this time. This was not necessary as a couple of tarts (BenDog and MorfDog) took their place in the slips at the start of the second innings both wearing the sort of stripy caps that were worn back in Tom Brown's schooldays or by Tweedledee and Tweedledum in one of the Alice books.

The trouble with 50:50 cricket is that it can be over as a contest very early, and if this one had not already been decided halfway through the Ridge innings, then it was all over after ten overs of Dinton's.

Paul Reynold's and Eliot Lloyd batted well to get Dinton close to 100 before the second and (soon after) the third wickets fell but the total was too big; on the other hand The Ridge did not need to bowl Dinton out.

And so the game played out in rather odd fashion with Dinton continuing to score reasonably well and with The Ridge not needing take all ten wickets.

It had its moments though. BirdDog was fielding so deep at gully that someone did a survey on behalf of HS2, between deliveries. Then, Jai brought back memories of the goal conceded by the Leeds goalkeeper Gary Sprake in the 1970 FA Cup final at Wembley when he (Sprake not Jai) did a Fosbury Flop over a shot from Chelsea's Peter Houseman. Jai did not seem to have heard of either Sprake or Houseman. For that matter it was not clear that he had heard of either Leeds or Wembley, so thank heavens for SatNav (Chelsea is not a real place: discuss).

It was not until much later in the game that The Greatest Mid-Off in the World, 25 year-old Ben Cooperman, was able to show Jai how to do it. After a deft little initial backward step he dived forward to take a dramatic catch finishing in his usual prone position: 'Gowry Theivendram, c. Cooperman, b. Jai Angell - 6' all of which is easy for you to say.

In the meantime wickets had fallen from time-to-time, Cooperman claiming two of them with perfect Yorkers which, for Jai's benefit, is quite near Leeds.

It was Gilet who had taken two of the first three wickets, one a fine bottom-edge catch by 'keeper Brooksie. Thus inspired, Brooksie threw himself around to great affect especially down the legside, took a legside catch standing up, then nearly effected a rather smart run out. With his back to the stumps he reached for a throw that was falling short and flung his arms backwards to remove the bails in the manner of Sarah Taylor, all of which goes to show that he keeps wicket like a girl. There can be no higher praise.

The game became rather odd. The team had collectively decided not to help MorfDog get any wickets by missing two in the slips, then later with Dinton 9-down, a dolly at extra. Instead of say 3-30 he ended with 0-63 after Muhammad Ashgar took a liking to him. Well who wouldn't? RolfeDog set off after a skier from one of Morf's deliveries and despite the magnificent athleticism of his effort ended up belly-flopping a few feet short of the ball.

Cue delirium from three 2nd X1 players walking round the boundary after returning early after their victory against Dinton 4. Simply outrageous. 4 year-old Tom Hickey, 4 year-old Sufiyan Ahmed and 6 year-old Shaun Dryden stand accused of dreadful ageism and appalling lack of manners. It was the best dive since Jurgen Klinsmann and I don't suppose Jai has heard of him either.

Not needing to bowl Dinton out, Dakes – whose first 5 overs for 12 were wicketless - rested his sore ankle and did not return, Hollywood's knee was spared his 10 overs so Jai who had taken four wickets was not given a reprieve. A spate of slow full tosses followed at his end which had Dick Haddock waving his arms above his head for free-hits rather like John Wayne with a lasso (ask me later Jai).

All this gave Dinton the erroneous impression that they could have won the game, something that was enhanced when Captain Dakeseye, in charitable mood, and on condition that he took off his jazz-hat, gave BenDog the final over.

It seemed like this over would never end and in the circumstances we were lucky to get away with conceding only eighteen, all of which makes Scott Waite's final over debacle

against Kimble a few years ago, pale into significance. Scott has never played again (the more's the pity). Let's hope however, that this will have the same effect on Keeps.

We had managed to get Kimble up to 249-9. Jai's spell of 4-64 off 10 would have been perfect in a (so-called) "timed" game and would have done the job in this one I suppose if we had been able to take any of the chances offered off Morf. But then RolfeDog would not have entertained all those children with his belly-flop.

It only remained for us to learn that Tags had given Tombsy out lbw in the 2s and Tombsy had reciprocated by giving Taggart out the same way. They are still some way away from a reconciliatory hug but some people live in hope. Personally, I can't wait for the day when one runs the other out. Friendship is overrated.

No snowflakes were harmed in the writing of this report