

# Match Report

## Bledlow Ridge 2 vs Shipton under Wychwood 3

### July 18<sup>th</sup> 2020

Shipton                    161-7 (40 overs)  
BRCC                     163-5 (35.3 overs)

BRCC win by 5 wickets

Welcome to cricket in the Covid Age. Please move around the clubhouse in an anticlockwise direction, only enter the building by the back door and only to use the toilets. Sanitise your hands every 6 overs, pass the ball directly back to the bowler and if the non-striking batsman could please run in a parallel county that would be fine. Oh yes, one other thing, that gentle sobbing sound you can hear from the dark corner is Rolfie mourning the loss of 20 overs a game.

Yes indeed, the coronavirus is such a clever virus, so clever. So clever in fact that is able to defeat all of our antibiotics. So said the world's most powerful man (despite the fact that most Yr 7 biology students could tell you that **all** viruses are immune to antibiotics) but what he didn't know was that it was also able to instantly and at a stroke kill 20 of your hundred overs, wipe out the draw and instantly reduce all cricket matches to 40 overs a side win/lose.

To accommodate the shortened season, our esteemed, revered and extremely wise leaders at the Cherwell League committee had completely reorganised the League structure into a 'regionalised' mixed (to some extent) divisional set up.

And so it was that we welcomed Shipton 3s, a side that finished halfway up division 7 last year (as opposed to our position halfway up division 9) from their extremely local base 41.4 miles away.

The 1s had headed off to Chearsley (12.8 miles, fair enough) with every player in the club who knew which end of the bat was which and (apparently) very few who knew which direction the ball was supposed to be bowled in, so on winning the toss, Sniff inserted the opposition in the hope that this might extend the game to a length that would make Shipton's journey slightly more worthwhile.

Sufi took the new ball and produced 6 dots (and a +) and then Taggart took the second over with a run up now so reduced that he is virtually delivering from a standing position. The second over produced 5 dots and a W and suddenly the task wasn't looking quite so daunting. Sufi stayed tidy for 6 overs, going for just 20 and was very unlucky not to put anything in the 4<sup>th</sup> column. Taggart at the other end picked up 3 with the help of 2 nice catches behind from Jovan and a moon ball that got the Shipton captain so confused he managed to get out LBW and bowled.

It was a real pleasure to see Jim Cornish back complete with new hip and he took over from Taggart at the bottom end and produced some exaggerated turn (that is to say he said it turned but we think he was exaggerating). He beat the bat on both sides several times with no luck and then bowled a horrible full bungler that we should have been picking out of the stables, however the batsman got

so excited about something he could hit, he missed it completely and it plinked into middle stump on the full (34-4).

David Saint had a trundle at the top end but struggled a bit with the radar and Shipton started to come back into it a bit but the game was never out of control. Enter new recruit, Duncan Dow at the bottom end. Duncan is a Kiwi, which as everyone knows means he is one of the most polite, well mannered people on the planet (apart from Canadians who are sickeningly nice).

Until he gets on a sports field when he becomes the most combative, competitive person in the world. Disappointed that none of his appeals from point for plumb LBWs had been answered in the affirmative, he came in and gave the batsmen what for. The appeals and exasperated cries of disbelief as the ball missed the top of off by a whisker put some in mind of the Taggart of 10 years ago before Rolfie put him on a compulsory 2 year camomile tea treatment. It was however very effective and his figures of 3-11 pulled us right back in to the box seat.

After his second over, he was joined by his new bowling partner at the other end, James Dow (not a coincidence!). For a 13 year old leg spinner playing his second game of senior cricket and first League game, James bowled with a remarkable amount of control and no small amount of threat. After his first over there was much encouragement and congratulation as you would hope there would be for a youngster starting out. His father's comment however was "Not as terrible as I thought it would be". Now that's proper parenting! *[Ed note. This comment actually happened the week before, but it was too good to leave out of the report]*. James finished with excellent figures of 7-1-18-0 and would have had at least one stumping had the otherwise very tidy Jovan not done an impersonation of an octopus with a cattle prod up its arse when the batsman left his ground on several occasions.

Duncan decided that 3-11 was fine and declared himself unable to bowl any more, compounding this with a full blown hamstringing pull chasing a ball in the next over and so Taggart returned to finish out his quota before David S finished the innings at the bottom end. He was still struggling a bit with the radar and when he did bowl it straight, Lawrence Allen, the only Shipton batsman to show any real intent, rather rudely spanked him back over his head for 6.

Sufi finished at the top end and despite getting a little bit of tap, finished with the unlucky but decent figures of 0-33 from 8. Shipton had rather scrambled their way up to 161. 23 of those were gifted as wides which was a little disappointing, but looking at the other scores in the division on the day, this was about par for the first innings, so both sides went off to their packed lunches reasonably happy.

Suitably fed, watered and sanitised, Geoff and Jim went out to open. Jim hit a couple of decent boundaries before lolipopping one back to the bowler. Chesh came in at 3 and played very solidly and when Geoff was undone by a ball that kept very low (having tonked several to the rope) we were going well at 51-2 off 12. Jovan came in at 4 and took a couple of overs to get settled, but then proceeded to dismiss the bowling rather elegantly. Chesh departed for a well made and important 27, Mo inexplicably picked up a ball that was rolling back to his stumps and was correctly given out. Mode of dismissal anyone? (Clue, handled the ball is no longer a mode of dismissal). Taggart spooned one up to short extra for 3 which brought David Saint to the crease.

During this period, Shipton had their own parent and child combination bowling with Abi Norgrove at the top end and dad Phil at the bottom and these 2 spells were the closest we got to being under pressure. Abi in particular was accurate and beat the bat consistently and is entitled to feel a little gutted that she doesn't get the credit for Mo's dismissal (have you got it yet?). Once these 2 were replaced, Jovan pushed on and David supported admirably banging a few to the rope himself. With

34 overs gone, the only real question was whether Jov was going to get to raise his bat for the first time at the club. With 9 needed to win and Jov on 46, Shipton's bowlers served up a few wides and there were a couple of reluctantly run leg byes, however David Saint (a man not unknown to block out an over for statistical reasons) resisted the temptation to add to his 16 with the total on 159 and left Jov to clatter a 4 through point to win the match and get him to 50.

Given that we are the lowest ranked team in our tier in the new structure for 2020, every win is a great win, so we can be justifiably happy with a good all-round performance.

But oh the wides!

It's scant consolation that the 1s bowled more than we did (their rules are stricter than ours). Between the 2 teams, our bowlers had to run an additional 728 yards (approximately). That's nearly half a mile! We had to bowl the ball an additional 1,144 yards which is making it softer and removing the shine and we bowled an additional 8.4 overs between us, which is putting an additional 15 minutes into each innings.

Set up 2 sets of stumps next to each other in the nets and keep bowling at them until you hit wood every time. If we cut these down to a sensible amount, it's like having an extra batter. Just saying.