

# BLEDLow RIDGE SUNDAY SIDE vs GREAT KINGSHILL

Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> August

## Ridge Bear-Cubs cut their teeth in Sunday Cricket

### Armstrong-Jones in 'lack of surnames' panic

### First ever all girl partnership for Ridge

BRCC            126ao & 80-6

GK                127-3 & 80-6

GK win and match tied

The constant stream of people wanting to play cricket every weekend is a luxury the club has not had for a number of years, and thereby presents problems we are similarly unused to, namely, how do you make sure everyone gets a game? It's only a couple of years since the local graveyards were posting sentries on a Friday night to thwart our attempts to get 11 bodies on the pitch and now we are being forced to actually select the 2<sup>nd</sup> XI and leave some players out.

Faced with this daunting prospect for the third week in a row, Taggart got on the phone and tried to fix up a Sunday friendly. Our friends at Gt Kingshill at first declined on the basis of available numbers, but then came back shortly afterwards saying that a load of juniors had pitched up wanting a game at the weekend.

"Ahh" thought our resident world's cheeriest Scotsman, "juniors. We can do that" and set off to supplement the 3 players who had missed out on Saturday but could play Sunday and the three that did play Saturday but were happy to play again if it meant we got a game with some of the promising prospects from the junior academy. These included 3 debutantes in senior cricket (Anoushka, Tilly & Torr), 1 with 1 game (Max), 1 with 2 games (James) and the vastly experienced Aidan who has at least 5 games under his belt. Between them, they amounted to approximately 76 years, a total that Taggart is fast closing in on all by himself. The last of them in arrived on the team sheet on Friday night after we had 11 and so the BRCC world's most generous Scotsman stood himself down and volunteered his services as an umpire. This turned out to be an inspirational decision as the combination of a late Saturday night in the Golden Cross and a Sunday fixture in 30 degrees has proved to be messy in the past.

The term 'juniors' without any definition of what they are junior to, provides a broad church. James Dow carries I.D with him to prove he's allowed into secondary school but when he went in to open the batting, the 'junior' from GK that was opening the bowling was 6'4", had shoulders like wooden stocks and started his run up in Naphill somewhere. His pace was also commensurate with his physique and the BRCC world's most anxious Scotsman standing in the umpire's position was suddenly wondering if this had been such a good idea.

It was Mark Neal that had to take first strike and survived, albeit looking a little green around the gills, while James clipped the other opener away for a couple of nice 2s to fine leg. Mark had eventually had enough and called James through for a bye. As the bowler thundered down the hill towards James, Duncan (James' dad) was down to the quick of his nails, Taggart was preparing a defence for the law suits and James stepped into the shot and crashed it away for 4.

When Mark's stoic but ultimately unproductive innings came to an end, we sent in our 'gun' bat. In his time in the 1s, Robert Armstrong-Jones has become used to having the least number of years against his name and the most surnames in the team. He was somewhat discomfited therefore to find out he was the 5<sup>th</sup> oldest player in the team and had been joined by not one, but 2 Modray-Lanes. It was possibly the distraction of trying to fill in a deed poll application to add a third barrel to his surname while batting that caused him to be bowled by an off spinner he thought was a seamer having confidently stroked off 7 runs.

We had been kind of counting on something more akin to Robert's 90 that he got against Hetaroi a couple of Sundays ago so fears were growing that the total would be embarrassingly low, but we had not taken account of young Miss Fellows and her mate Anoushka. Tilly came in, defended a few, and then clipped one down to square leg to an uproarious reception from the tented village the rest of the Fellows clan had erected on the boundary. The next ball was a full blooded pull for 4 and she settled in for an elongated stay at the crease. She got through a couple of partners with Torr smashing several straight to fielders before finally going for 1 and Jon Murell coming in, hitting a lovely 4 and then departing. This brought Anoushka to the crease for the first ever all girls partnership in the 125 years of senior cricket at the Ridge. She knocked a few runs off, but was trying to hit every ball away so the BRCC world's most dehydrated Scotsman, now doubling up his roles as umpire and coach, offered some sage words of wisdom.

"You don't have to smash every ball. It's OK to defend and wait for a better opportunity"

The next ball took approximately half a second to get from her bat to the mid-wicket boundary some 50m away causing a slight amendment to the advice offered

" .... Or you can do it your way"

The 2 girls put on 30 odd before departing with Tilly getting 17 and Noush 10. There followed some pyrotechnics from Carlton (19), a brief but promising stay from Aidan (2) and a rear guard action from skipper David Saint (13) who eventually fell trying to add some quick runs, but not before our youngest player with equal largest number of surnames came to the crease at no. 11. As Max approached the wicket, one of the GK players asked the BRCC world's hottest and most seriously hung over Scotsman if this was the lad they played against last year who hadn't played much cricket and was a bit nervous with the bat.

There being far too many parts to this question, Taggart simply nodded and continued downing his 4<sup>th</sup> litre of electrolyte drink. A lot changes in a year though, especially when you're 11. The first ball came right out of the screws and severely stung the hands of mid on. The second one singed the rope on its way over and there followed a couple more 4s on the way to 16 not out, the third highest score of the innings.

We were all out for 126. Not a mammoth score by any means, but a respectable effort and in the context of the players playing, a very good one.

Conscious that this report is headed for Rolfe-like length I shall summarise the second innings thus. They got them in about 32 of the 40 overs for 3 wickets. Robert bowled fast. Too fast for the

batsmen and sadly too fast for the slip fielders. Tilly bowled straight and got a wicket. Torr bowled with great control, good pace and a maturity well beyond his years (and also got a wicket). James's leg spin proved a handful and kept the batsmen very honest and Max and Anoushka both got it pretty much on the spot. Some of the old blokes bowled as well and they were OK I guess.

With a relatively early finish, GK asked whether we would like to have a quick T10 game. Whilst the more chronologically challenged of us were perhaps more focussed on a cold pint of something golden and frothy, the youngsters all jumped at the chance, so off we went again. The memory fades a little at this point, but we made 80 in our ten overs, including the shot of the day from either side when JD danced down the wicket and spanked a medium pacer to the long on boundary.

Our bowling was decent and we held GK to a tie with them running 2 off the last ball.

Great Kingshill were terrific opponents for this game. They had a more experienced side than us, but treated our youngsters with respect, matching the quality of their play to the ability of the players but always challenging and never patronising. We play them again 3 weeks' time and we may load the side with a bit more fire power for a more competitive game, but I couldn't be prouder of the team we took over there.

In years to come as I slip quietly into my dotage, I suspect I may look back at Sunday and understand that it was the first shoots of something special for BRCC. I am sure that the names on that scorecard will appear on many more with scores to celebrate against them (if there's room for anything other than the multitude of surnames).