

## Bledlow Ridge 1s v Kingston Bagpuize (Away)

Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> July 2020

# At Last a Short Report

## RAJ and Hugo in Hairband Drama

# Ridge Lose Pandemic Friendly by 2 wkts and One Sanitiser Bottle

Result: Lost by 2 wickets (40 over match, well excluding wides)

BRCC: 213-7 (40 overs)

KBCC: 214-8 (38.1 overs)

For years you've waited for a Short Match Report and at last, here it is.

Yes, like being late for that important job interview or first date, Peter Short, or Pierre du Petit by any other name, was sending photos to his teammates from the M40 while The Ridgebears were padding up at Baggers.

Photographs arrived, ostensibly of ambulances, police cars and fire engines on the tarmac, all of which were rumbled when one of us identified Pugh, Pugh, Barney McGrew, Cuthbert, Dibble and Grubb carrying hoses and cutting gear. The traffic-accident-delay was taking part in Shorty's TV room while he ate a late breakfast.

Talking of cutting gear, it's either got to go or it's got to be gathered up in a bandana. RAJ or Robert Arwel Bleddwyn Meriion Armstrong-Jones to his friend, spent the day playing cricket with a floppy Etonian quiff while Hugo set a dangerous precedent for the club by failing to sport a man-bun.

Indeed our defeat could be put down to this alone. The Ridge *must* have someone with a man-bun or Alice band in the team and it was with great relief that Cooperman had welcomed Hugo to the club last year and was able to pass the baton (or headband) to Hugo and have his own hair cut. Without one of these, the team struggled at Baggers and RAJ's future will depend on the acquisition of a rubber band or similar.

Ben Keeping, not playing in this match will be delighted to know that RAJ played wearing a pink and blue quartered jazz-hat which exactly matched the cap worn by George Woodley of Baggers, both of whom have been modelling for the Beano in their spare time. No wonder we have a new batch of club caps on order.

Baggers had marked out a changing area just larger than the average cardboard box but matching the dimensions of the away dressing room in their clubhouse, for this the first of our Y20 Pandemic Matches. It was a 40 over friendly before teams play for the Covid Cup starting next week.

Had Shorty arrived only 10 minutes late, he would have found the team 35-3 off about 4 overs. Captain Dakes' beard is now off the scale and he was out caught trying to dislodge a bird's nest which had taken up residence within it in the Spring. Hamsah produced a few fireworks and punched the air when he launched a six over midwicket, before RolfeDog induced the first drag-on since Game of Thrones. Then Hamsah missed one and it was left to Wells and Midds to form a partnership and get us back into the game.

Talking of partnerships, Shorty finally arrived, licking the toast from his lips and was followed a little later by Hollie who travelled separately (well you would wouldn't you?) having preferred shopping in Oxford to a late breakfast. Birdy greeted her arrival with: "For \*\*\*\*s sake Shorty you are batting well above your average" and we reminded him that his own partner is Penny, and that put paid to that.

Birdy went for a walk around the ground and started a conversation with Baggers' Scorer Simon, with the words "I don't mean to interfere but..." and elicited the response "Well you are interfering" which totally non-plussed the Bird. All credit to Scorer Simon for finding a way to silence him.

Incidentally Simon was responsible for the plethora (ask me Birdy) of laminated signs around the place which exceeded Marcus Angell's world record by at least six sheets of A4 and 24 by drawing pins.

Out in the middle Wells and Midds were going so well that they started calling each other WellsY and MiddsY which seemed a little over-familiar. On the sideline, Gilet consulted his phone and declared that this was the biggest partnership by anyone whose nicknames ended with a 'y' since Birdy and Penny went on holiday with MiddsY last year, Penny's real name being LadY Penelope of course.

MiddsY treated us to some tasty drives while Birdy treated us to some delicious shortcake or Short Cake in honour of our debutant. When WellsY the Landlord was bowled for a hard-worked 36 he was replaced by Hugo the Tenant who briefly looked good until he in turn was replaced briefly by Quiff-Man. MiddsY completed a single only to find he had rightly been given out LBW for 64 (pretty much his age) which brought out BirdY to join Brooksie (or BrooksY as he will be known for the rest of this Short Report). The rest of us rejoiced in the return to quiet and normality on the boundary edge.

Seven down with a few overs left, these two octogenarians were under strict instructions not to let ShortY in to bat. This they achieved despite BirdY's best attempt to run BrooksY out, an event that is always a strong possibility given that BrooksY runs between wickets like Groucho Marx used to run after a waitress.

"Who is Groucho Marx?" asked one of RolfeDog's teammates about possibly the most celebrated comic film actor the big screen has ever known. 'I am playing with a load of ignorant Philistines' thought RolfeDog to himself and wished Cooperman had been there to quote a few lines from Brecht or discuss his theories on existentialism and generally raise the standard of debate.

This remained at a low level once our 40 overs were up and our two batsmen Ancient and Modern (or Less Ancient) returned, having successfully thwarted Shorty's batting debut. The final score was 212-7 which included 19 not out for BrooksY and the usual nice little red-inker (8\*) for BirdY. Top score other than MiddsY was extras with 56 of which 43 were wides, gratefully received.

For Baggers, George Woodley took 2-29 and Jonny Warner 4-61 and barely allowed anyone else whose name does not start with a "W" to bowl.

We brought our own teas, it being the year of the pandemic, and contrasting styles included RAJ neatly spreading caviar on granary bread while Captain DakesYe munched through a giant pasty, although part of it went to a small flock of young birds in that bird-nest.

RAJ opened down the hill, quiff blowing in the breeze, while the faithful Gilet, without a quiff, ground up the hill in a gesture of generosity which RAJ returned with a wide or two before he found his radar. He soon started swinging the ball later and asked Umpire Graham very politely for an LBW against Dave Warner which was granted.

By this time, we had had the first of our six-overly sanitisation break which for some of us involved not touching the ball for six overs then having to clean our hands in case we did.

The moment we had all waited for soon arrived and Shorty took over from Gilet. ShortY's whirligig action makes Dakes look like Dakes bowls in a straightjacket (something he should try some time) and it is also fair to say the game is quite loud when ShortY is involved.

Dakes took up the bowling-action-challenge, told Raj to have a break and finish his trifle, and tried a number of different run-ups from the top end. He had clearly taken notice of Raj's good manners and a while later asked Umpire Graham equally politely and was granted an LBW which we needed, as Baggers had now reached 86.

When Dakes decided four overs was enough he brought on Hamsah. This was a reward for Hamsah's exception fielding at cover which mostly involved diving full length and releasing powerful throws from a completely horizontal position, some of which meant that WellsY behind the stumps ended up in an equally horizontal pose.

Will Woodley batting at 4 started powerfully and munched a ShortY full-toss-special over mid-off but he hadn't accounted for our Bird-in-flight. Yes, BirdY swooped and held a fine low catch in the manner of one of the swallows from DakesYe's beard-nest plucking a fly, and Hams had his first wicket.

Smally continued to serve up some Shortcake but 99-3 soon became 102-4 with a comedy moment when opener JJ Smith, always keen to get on strike,

surprised his partner Steve Lewis by calling for a quick run on his partner's call while ShortY sped off in search of the ball. JJ had ample time to turn and get back but kept running before turning and just failing to beat Short's underarm whirly throw which was like his bowling action except upside down.

We were now in it, but it was a little while before Lewis stood in front to Hamsah at 139-5 and despite pyrotechnics at the other end by ShortY, George Woodley and Jonny Warner built up the score until Woodley decided someone not called Woodley or Warner should get into the game.

Hamsah (4-41) bagged Ted Loeffen for his fourth wicket before Jack Phillips-Hyphen-Richardson (the hyphen is silent) came out in a blatant attempt to challenge RAJ's dominance in the name-pretentiousness stakes. He withered under the pressure and was caught by Hugo off Gilet for 0 which only goes to show.

RAJ was back bowling by this time, long enough for RolfeDog to give up a slip chance and Raj's 1-36 off 7.1 was not a fair reflection of his bowling as a large number of runs were off the edge: nothing a rubber band in the hair or a bandana couldn't put right next week.

Thus we were defeated by 2 wickets with under two overs to spare having delivered a measly 26 wides and retired to our open dressing room from where we could watch Scorer Simon slowly disassemble his gazebo and remove the notice saying "No Interference". We also had the chance to admire photos of Dickers and Brez from back at Meadow Styles but what we needed was something like a small mouse in the picture to give us a true sense of scale.

The twos had won, and One Guy Named Mo had made 50 not out. The next day a Sunday XI played West Wycombe and Charley Farley made 25 not out watched by, among others Molly and Tilly. We hope Molly and Tilly will soon start playing senior cricket; if they are joined by Hollie, then rhyming match reports will become a distinct possibility and the thought of an alliteration or two is making me wild...or making me mostly mad, to quote an example.

This Sunday game was most notable for Charley Farley running out Taggart in an act of great judgement, and then for a Champagne 'Dead-Ants' Moment in which Sniiff advanced down the wicket against the world's slowest bowler, thought better of it, ran back, played a sweep shot and after rotating 270%

degrees, ended up supine on the ground at which moment the ball finally caught up with him and came to rest against his prone figure. Either it wasn't going to hit the wicket, or Taggart, by now umpiring, was laughing too much (not something Tags can often be accused of) as Schniff was not adjudged LBW and faced the next delivery.

Next week for the 1s, it is Cheersley away in the first of a hastily designed Short League sponsored by Covid. ShortY will be on holiday eating Maltese Shortcake so there is every chance the Ridge will be One Short.

Here endeth the Short Report.

Dominic Cummins is holidaying in Bernard's Castle and is unavailable for comment. Bernard is also unavailable.