

Match Report
Bledlow Ridge 2s vs Tetsworth 2s

May 22nd 2021

Stair Rods Rainbows and Fireworks at the Ridge

**Cheshire proves there's more than one way
to skin a cat**

Lloydy in "No-one offended by late night WhatsApp
rant" shock

Bledlow Ridge 161-6 in 41 overs (by D/L calculation, but not really)

Tetsworth 147-10 in 31 overs

Ridge win by 14 runs

The forecast said it was going to rain all day, but in a 14 second hiatus around 10.30, Birdie popped his head out of the shed and announced to the WA group that the 2s was 100% on. On arrival at the ground about an hour later, it was the lightest of light drizzles that was trying to fall on a ground that looked better prepped than some county grounds. The pitch was covered, the bowlers' run ups were covered, the adjoining pitches with damaged ends were covered.

Rolfedog was driving the roller out to the wicket with a look of trepidation, presumably on the basis that the roller's default speed is considerably quicker than the average speed he propels his Mondeo along at, and despite the gloomy forecast, it was starting to look like a game of cricket might at least start.

All going well until the phone rings at 12.10. It's Dakes. That's nice, the 1st team captain is ringing us to wish us well. But no. Late call off, unavoidable, means he only has 10. The consequences of the 1s playing with 10 and the 2s with 11 are somewhat akin to a time traveller bumping into himself in the past. No-one actually knows exactly what will happen, but it's almost certainly really, really bad!

No time for tactical discussions, evaluations of form or balance, just get a player moving towards Tiddington NOW. Who's nearest? Rolfedog of course.

“No time to explain, you’re needed to play against Tiddington.”

“Why?”

“No time to explain!”

“Where is it?”

“TIDDINGTON!!!!!!”

“How do I get there?”

“You plug it into your Satnav and do what it tells you”

“I’m not sure I know how”

At this point he was bundled into his car and pushed towards the gate like a Daytona 500 pit stop. As he went wheelspinning onto Chinnor Road while trying to programme a hitherto untouched Satnav and remove his road construction uniform, a message came in from Hollywood.

“No panic, it’s hosing down here.”

Oh well.

This left the 2s with a problem of their own to solve. Lloydly had generously offered to umpire the match and on arrival was immediately turned round and sent home for his kit. An appeal was sent out on the WA group for someone to step up and be the hero that got us the extra point for having an umpire. Ideally someone local who could get there quick and so it was that Jovan set off from somewhere just west of Warsaw and said he’d be there in half an hour. He arrived around the same time Rolfedog was asking a bloke dressed in all white stood next to a short cut field in Tiddington if he knew where the cricket club was.

In the meantime, Sniff was trying to assess the possible impacts of playing under Duckworth Lewis. Various pieces of advice were offered. “Definitely better to bat first ... or second” “Whatever you do, make sure we bowl second ... or first”. He took the only sensible option left to him and opted to lose the toss. This however proved less decisive than might have been expected. With their captain not yet at the ground, Tetsworth had sent their vice-captain out to toss. On receiving the news of his glorious victory in calling correctly, he then announced that as he wasn’t the captain, he wasn’t sure what they wanted to do. A summit meeting was convened at the top of the nets and in slightly longer than it takes to elect a new pope, the decision to put us in was conveyed.

Tetsworth were our first opponents from what was formerly the OCA and they came into the CCL with a big reputation. Tales were circulated of an unbeaten season in the curtailed 2020, and possibly the same in the previous season. The sight of Ryan Mosely charging in from the top end for the first over, which put several in mind of Collis King, only a bit sharper, did little to dissuade anyone of these rumours. Chesh opted for a quick leg bye off the third ball of the over. Let’s say that was in the interests of strike rotation and nothing to do with a desperate desire to get away from the bowling and leave it to his 15 year old partner. When Clifford Jacob came in for the second over and gave absolute confirmation that Taggart’s assertion that no-one could bowl fast up the hill at the Ridge was complete bollocks, Chesh opted for a similar response to the third ball of that over.

Ginge the Hinge however was staying in line well and got the scoring off the bat underway. When this correspondent commented to him afterwards how impressed he was with this stillness at the crease, a slightly less technical than expected response was forthcoming, "I was bricking it mate. Frozen to the spot." When he played back to a ball that was either a bit short and stayed low, or a bit further up than he thought, he lost his off stump and Brooksie strolled out to the crease. After a less than auspicious 2nd team outing at Stokey, Brooksie looked much more like himself and started to take it back to the bowlers with a couple of crisp pulls to the boundary and some confident drives. By the 10th over we were up to 29-1, with Chesh's 1 the anchor, but in fairness, this was the best opening attack the 2s have seen since the day we turned up at Long Marston to play their 2s only to find their 1s had been called off and were all at the ground.

Brooksie was going well until an excellent throw combined with a bit of a jog and a bowler in the way (never the bowler's problem unless he moves there deliberately) saw him run himself out for a well made 36. Lloyd was just getting into his work when a pulled calf muscle and the oppo's refusal to let him have a runner left him in a bit of trouble. Junaid got a first baller (LBW) and Midds got a few before going the same way to the same bowler (Aaron Huish). Tetsworth's change bowling was not as intimidating as their openers, but was tight and runs were at a premium, so when Fats went, swinging at a lifting ball, we were in a bit of trouble. Throughout all this however, Chesh had been going about his work and despite the ripple of applause in the 26th over when his total finally exceeded the number of overs bowled, this innings was keeping us in the match. Fats had gone at the end of the 37th with the total on 132-6, but the cricket gods were clearly angered by the loss of their favourite son and rained down their displeasure. Literally. It was suddenly throwing down stair rods, the covers were put on and we all rushed back to our cosy gazebos.

The umpires decided this was a good time for tea and once that interval was up, we started eating into the spare time, and then finally the actual playing time. By the time we got back on, it was decreed that 8 overs had been lost in the match, so it was now 41 a piece. Ben Hillary went in to join Chesh and started to flick the returned Mosely about the outfield convincingly. He saw Chesh through to 50 and added 20 invaluable runs of his own to take us to 161 off our reduced overs.

Duckworth Lewis didn't do us any favours in giving a revised target figure to Tetsworth of 170 (off 41) and it looked way too small when the opening bowler (Jacob) came in as the opening bat and despatched Hills for 10 off the first two balls of the innings and 16 in total off the first over. He had also however clothed one to mid off before the second 6 and could have easily been back in the hutch for 10, but unfortunately the lack of a Dave Wells fiver for holding a catch saw it go down.

Taggart came up the hill as ever it was and opened with a very tight line around middle and leg and was not going for much of any. Hills kept plugging away, and while his extra pace beat the bat frequently, it also meant that when the bat beat the ball, it went a long way. Nevertheless, chances were coming and Taggart finally threw one up outside Phillimore Miller's off stump and unable to resist, he sliced it off the face of the bat straight into Alan's safe hands. Crook lasted just 3 balls before being adjudged in front to the same bowler, and when in the same over, Taggart's 'even-slower' ball induced a top edge skier off the big hitting Jacob (37 off 25 balls) Ginge pouched it safely.

The hitherto very vocal Tetsworth tent, was now noticeably quieter, however the big hitting Jacob had been replaced by the equally aggressive Mosely. With Hills off to the outfield to have a quiet nervous breakdown, Fats came on at the top, took the pace off and runs became a whole lot more difficult to get. Both batsmen were having plenty of swings, plenty of misses and the odd very clean, very big hit, but we felt we were still well in this game.

Taggart bowled on unchanged from the bottom end and in his final over had two big appeals against Ryan Mosely who had progressed on to 38. One was stone dead and one maybe not so much, but the detail is less important than that justice was done and the batsmen trudged off, noticeably unimpressed. The cricket gods however were clearly angered by the loss of their second favourite son and rained down their displeasure again and so as the batsmen departed, so did the rest of us.

We lost another 4 overs and the highly sophisticated Duckworth Lewis app decreed that Tetsworth now needed 162 off a maximum of 37 overs. Or to put it another way, one more than we got.

Once the game passed the 20 over mark, there was much toing and froing about what the par score was, what a par score is and why are we talking about golf anyway, but the cricket gods got bored, went off to bother someone else and left the sun to look after the remaining overs.

Al took over from Taggart at the bottom end (it saves moving the sight screens) and Fats bowled out his now reduced maximum of 7, with a match critical return of 1-22. Tetsworth stayed close to the par score for a while, but once Al got a bit of rust out of the joints, he bowled some lovely stuff for nowt, followed by a filthy half-tracker that Williams, the last effective resistance, slapped obligingly into the bucket hands of Midds. He bowled a couple more out, Hickey had a rumble at the top end and picked up one and with 9 down, the game looked like it was only finishing one way.

Tetsworth had smashed their way to miles ahead of the rate but had little left to affect the victory. Chesh's 51 not out from 41 overs had not had many IPL clubs rushing to the phone but had been the anchor around which a match winning innings was forged.

There is as they say, more than one way to skin a cat. Especially a Cheshire cat.

Hilarious had finished his course of counselling and came back on, but not before proof that it never rains but it pours, both physically and metaphorically. Last week at Thame, a batsman put up a skier, which Shorty steadied himself under and got ready to catch. Its descent however was accompanied by calls from the batsman of "Miss, miss, miss". Catch held, no drama, but on checking with the umpire, he confirmed that he would have upheld the appeal even if the catch had been dropped and with little else to do during the week, your correspondent engaged himself with Law 37.1.1.

Either batsman is out Obstructing the field if... he/she wilfully attempts to obstruct or distract the fielding side by word or action.

With 9 down, one of the remaining batsmen (not for the first time) called loudly for a run while a fielder was retrieving the ball but made no attempt to run. He had commented to the umpire and wicket keeper earlier in his innings that "you wouldn't believe how many overthrows I've had doing this." On the penultimate ball of the match, he did it again and Brooksie, the retrieving fielder, turned to throw at the stumps, but fortunately realised what had happened and held on to the ball.

This prompted Taggart to come into the batsman's earshot and announce, "If you do that again, I will appeal to the umpire and have you dismissed by way of Obstructing the Field". To have done so would have probably sparked an intercounty incident, but Hills bowled him next ball, just as the end of a rainbow parked itself in the field formerly known as Lord Keeping's.

There is as they say, more than one way to skin a cat. Any kind of cat.