

Bledlow Ridge 1st X1 v Bletchley 1st X1 (Away)

Saturday 12th June 2021

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Bletchley are Shepherded to Victory Over The Ridge

Hamsah Struggles with 6-Times Table - George in No Early Wides Shock

Mystery of Silent Helmetted Ridge Keeper

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100 over W/L/D match

BRCC: 236ao (50.2 overs)

OCC: 239-3 (45.2 overs)

Result: Lost by 7 wickets Scorecard [here](#)

Following the CCLs merger with the OCA, the CCL Secretary who may be Scottish by descent though Worcester by birth, devised a cunning plan. Teams below the third tier would be regionalised in order to minimise travel.

Thus it is that we no longer find ourselves journeying to beautiful country locations like Minster Lovell or old friends like Kingston Bagpuize, but to somewhere north of Milton Keynes and just south of the Arctic Circle, with a warning from Secretary Taggart not to underestimate travel time and to set off early the day before.

This really was a noisy game. Bletchley is quite picturesque if you make sure the concrete car park, steel containers and functional changing areas are behind you, rather like the old Didcot ground with the power station on one side. At times when batting you wished there was a motorway nearby like at Banbury XX's venue (soon to be sold) to blot out the chatter.

One way or another this was an unbelievably noisy game. To give Bletchley credit they did not go quiet even when we were at 78-0 which soon became 89-4 and they kept it up while the fifth wicket put on almost 100 more and we fell away again. Perhaps and regrettably, it proves the value of 'chat'.

Talking of which ... what a transformation! A couple of years in Barcelona is all it took for Bledlow Ridge's loudest (probably the CCL's loudest) to lose his voice. Or maybe it was just that SamDog realised for the first time that in Bletchley's keeper Matt Shepherd he had met his match. With 127 later in the day Shepherd was on the pitch for most of the game and had something to say after almost every ball ... except that is, after the one which lifted sharply down the legside off Cooperman when he had only a few runs, and our team went up for the catch. There was no comment or eye contact after that one.

RolfeDog had to deal with another misplaced comment in an opening partnership with Mike Nonickname. “The Old Man is looking for singles and the Other Guy is trying to score boundaries” came the comment from somewhere behind the wicket. This was a case of mistaken identity of course and after Mike was caught, RolfeDog hit another boundary as if to prove the point but was then out caught next ball trying to hit another.

Si Bird and GGG didn’t last long as they had an appointment with Mike to play cricket-ball-bowls around the boundary. This left Hamsah and SamDog in the middle where Hamsah went into BiG-SiX blast mode, hitting several of them over long on or long off and occasionally calling to the boundary for an update on his own total. If he had gone to Crown House School in the sixties, he would have been made to master his six-times table and that would have made these simple calculations easier.

Somewhat surprisingly, our newly mute wicketkeeper batsman outscored Hamsah with ten boundaries in his 49, but in customary fashion had not brought his wallet so flashed at a wide one. Hamsah was caught on the boundary two overs later for 58 trying to hit one to the moon.

For the second match in a row Gilet’s talents as scorer were not required. That he is still undergoing withdrawal was evidenced by him regularly lifting his hand to acknowledge an umpire’s signal in a kind of Pavlov’s Dogs response. Other things we learnt were that Steve is not the only S Bird with a catalogue of most interesting bodily injuries.

Talking of bodily injuries it was so hot that Brooksie (14) did not bat with more than three sweaters. Allan found himself nursing the tail, which comprised Shaun (3), Cooperman (4) and finally Gilet (0). Allan’s amber-coloured gloves are even brighter than Dickers’ T-shirt (see last week’s report on traffic lights) and caused havoc with local air traffic which had only just recovered from Hamsah’s aerial assault.

Gilet announced to Allan that he (Gilet) would be blocking out while Allan smashed it, and then proceeded to try and hit every ball he faced, further than Hamsah, until he finally missed a straight one. 235 all out after 50.2 overs was what we chewed on over tea although of course under the current bring-your-own-tea system, most members of the batting team have scoffed their tea and possibly other people’s by the time it starts so most of the thirty minute break is spent milling around asking how the 2s are getting on.

Apparently Midds had made 150 while Chesh tried to get off the mark and we had declared on 3zillion for a few with Midds putting his success down to a rare abstemious night-before.

It’s not much fun describing being on the wrong end of 239-3 but much of the drama happened at the start as we nervously awaited George’s first over, wondering whether he could improve on last week’s six opening wides, whatever “improve” means. He let us down by not bowling a single wide in his first and ended with 0-18 off 8 overs which was all a bit of an anti-climax.

You may have spotted in this, that captain-for-the-day SamDog, who is currently averaging 90.5 as skipper, extracted an extra two overs from George’s usual quota by taking the subtle “can you manage just one more” approach, until George rumbled him. As a nostalgic Dad, I realised this was the first game SamDog had captained in which George had played since the Sunday X1 about 15 years ago, when SamDog was in fact “SamPup” and George was about 1’7” rather than 7’1”.

Man-buns were unknown at The Ridge in those days, but they have become *de rigueur* now. Cooperman's was in full flow as he steamed in, in contrast to George's short-back-n-sides. Not long after bowling that lifter to Shepherd, he pitched one well up to Patrick Scholte who shouldered arms to a big inswinger which he shouldn't have left alone and was castled.

Yasir hit one of Gilet's balls for a huge six – at least that's what Gilet said it felt like – before Gilet got his revenge when he had Yasir stimped – or even stumped – by SamDog. Talking of which... what a transformation! A couple of years in Barcelona is all it took for SamDog to decide to wear a helmet when standing up to the wicket... something that had never been seen before. Perhaps Alex will return as a noisy, brash, helmetless, keeper and about 5'7" tall.

Teymour Omar joined Shepherd and soon afterwards Gilet had Shepherd dropped at mid-off and missed through a vacant first slip. That was the last sniff we got for an hour and a half as SamDog rotated the bowlers in an attempt to make the breakthrough. Allan bowled very tightly and even Simon Bird forgot his injuries and got a bowl. Ironically, each week the captains have worked hard to ensure a minimum of five bowlers are selected for win/lose matches, and as soon as we play win/lose/draw where we need only three, we bowl seven. RolfeDog and WinsonDog were warming up vigorously, Brooksie shed three sweaters.

Eventually with Shepherd on 127 Hamsah bowled him the super-slow low one and Shepherd could hardly believe he had missed it. Not long afterwards Bletchley passed our score and we drank our sorrows in the evening sun.

It's not always a bundle of jokes when you lose. This is something SamDog reflected on during his journey back to the club to find out if Chesh had got off the mark in his opening partnership of 218 with Middsy. Unusually quiet, SamDog travelled back in his unusually quiet car and averaged just over 90. He was probably wearing a helmet too.

Boris Johnson is away selling sausages to Australians