

# Bledlow Ridge 1<sup>st</sup> X1 v Horspath 3<sup>rd</sup> X1 (Home)

Saturday 5th June 2021

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## The Ridge are **Dazzled** by **Traffic Lights** and Defeated by Horspath

### George Counts the Cost of Record-Breaking Over

### Brooksie in Multiple Match-Report-Mention Shock

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50 over W/L match

BRCC: 196ao (48 overs)

OCC: 198-6 (45.1 overs)

**Result:** Lost by 4 wickets      Scorecard [here](#)

It was a costly day for George. He was still at the club well into the evening, paying subs, buying drinks, even offering to paint people's houses in an attempt to distract from The Longest Over in History...but there's no hiding place when there is a Match Report to be written.

There was no hint of George's exploits to come later in the day's second innings, when Hollywood chose to bat first. Before this, came a special ceremony in which we put up two gazebos in The Ridge's version of The Crystal Maze. As I write, I have just heard a curator at Bristol Zoo mention on the radio that he has the "largest collection of invertebrates" in Europe; well he has clearly not watched members of the Bledlow Ridge 1<sup>st</sup> X1 assemble a gazebo. Makes me wonder how we then managed to put up an umbrella for their scorer. Perhaps we got an army of ants to do it.

Their scorer was laptop-savvy and maybe Gilet immediately recognised that he had met his match because Gilet took a day off just when we thought that he and a laptop are inseparable. The suspicion remains however that it was Gilet who submitted the score to the league website in the evening because Hollywood was entered in the Man of the Match column. Well as captain Hollywood bowled in a losing cause, Gilet was probably trying to get promoted in the batting order for next week having played a lengthy innings in this game (see later).

RolfeDog and Mike W (we must create a nickname- ideas anyone?) started slowly against some accurate seam bowling from Andy Cummings (no relation, if you are planning a trip north) and Erasmus du Toit. I note not without a little bitterness that on the CCL website the wicket was described as "hard" and can only assume this was entered by someone who did not bat on it at the start.

If you wanted to intimidate the opposition you'd open up with someone called Erasmus du Toit, or at least pretend to, and in any case it's a good thing Gilet was not scoring as he'd never have spelt it correctly.

Mike NoNickName – or Mike van der NoNickName - was slightly hampered by a groin strain and said rather publicly that he and RolfeDog would have to run at RolfeDog's pace and RolfeDog replied that he would be pleased to slow down a little.

Both were out just as they got going (Mike for 22, RolfeDog for 13) and this brought George in a red helmet in to bat with Alex who was sporting a green helmet, a combination rather like the traffic lights they have in the USA, without the amber.

After a bit of a stop-go start, they both stopped jay-walking and hit the road, George with a geo-inormous six to the furthest part of the ground, which would have been a 'nine' if there was any justice in this world, and Alex with some fine 'drives' (geddit?). The score accelerated to 121 when George took a wrong turning and was caught behind for 33. After SamDog had hit the first bad ball he faced straight into the hands of square leg, Hollywood joined Alex and all was going swimmingly until Hollywood decided to hit one to their best fielder Dan Todd, and run, with inevitable consequences. There was no chance of a speeding fine, before he parked up under a gazebo on his tod.

It was Brooksie's turn to bat. He had been regaling the others about Mr and Mrs RolfeDog's new bathrooms and was particularly taken with the rimless loos and the low-level bath. Unfortunately, he soon received a low-level delivery and before he could wallow in it, played on and returned to move the discussion on to tapless baths. While this was going on Allan (12) lost the battle of South Africans to Erasmus, Shaun hung around for a bit, Sufi didn't and Gilet scored a run off four balls, an unusually long innings, giving him a Strike Rate of 25 which is slightly interesting but not as interesting as a tapless bath.

We set Horspath 197 to win. Was this enough? Little did we know what was to come as we munched tea.

Georgous George was in record-breaking form. Luckily Alex had been on a life-saving course. The first delivery of the Horspath innings, delivered by George threatened to wipe out Mike at second slip until Alex intervened at full length. George took up the challenge, bowled another couple of wides which Alex took, then decided enough was enough and sent one so far down the legside that the shortcomings in Alex' diving ability were badly exposed. You'd have thought that George would have been happy with that, but he had his eyes on Dakes' consecutive-wides record (four) and managed to exceed this by two.

At this point the score was 11-0 and strictly speaking, no ball had yet been bowled. We threatened George with taking a tapless bath and he pulled things back so that only 21 was conceded off the first over, an over which involved George running in and going "wham" no less than 14 times.

Openers Todd and Batten (sounds like a DIY store) took the score to 80. Brooksie has been complaining about lack of mentions in Match Reports so decided to get in the game. Brooksie-No-Mentions took a terrific, outstanding, low, sharp, agile, one-handed, catch off Chris Batten, which was full of hyperbole. As this was a terrific, outstanding, low, sharp, agile, one-handed, catch with the emphasis on "low", he ended up prone on the ground

which made his trademark reflex to fling the ball into the air towards the Village Store, impossible to enact. Instead, he got up as if clambering out of a low-slung bath to be embraced by team mates who felt certain he would now get a mention in the Match Report.

Todd (too many mentions) was soon well caught by Shaun off Gilet (1-29) and Shaun (2-45) bowled Reyaan Dogar who must surely be a film star in real life. Our very own Hollywood brought himself on to bowl and Brooksie did not get any more catches because none came his way. He did however enter a discussion with a batsman who was rightly given not out stumped as Alex was too quick (not for the first time). Brooksie advised said batsman, that he would have been out if he had lifted his foot at the right time, which he hadn't, and eventually we all got on with our lives.

Alex for his part started mistreating stumps instead of removing a single bail each time as he usually does and the stumps had to be secured with cement.

We had still only taken three wickets, however Hollywood brought us right back into the game with wickets at 140-4 and 141-5. More interesting events were taking place off the pitch however.

The traffic light contest started by George and Alex had been taken up by Birds and Carters who had arrived to spectate dressed as Blackpool illuminations. None were brighter than Dickers – and you can't often say that about Dickers – who was in a fetching bright amber number, sitting beside, but on the wrong side of Molly in pillar box red and a few Carters who were sporting various shades of green and ultramarine. No wonder you can't trust the traffic on Chorley Road.

While we were trying to judge the winner, Hollywood induced an edge from new batsman Adey Manger. Regrettably some of the cement which had been used to repair Alex' damage to the stumps, had ended up in his gloves and the catch catapulted almost back to the bowler. Somehow this became a matter for dispute in the week's subsequent Fantasy League assessment and Dakes, from his position on a golf course somewhere, decreed that Alex either had not – or could not possibly have – dropped a catch.

Perhaps this was because Manger generously decided to repeat the shot next ball, probably dazzled by the Blackpool illuminations, and this time the ball melted into the cement in Alex' gloves giving Hollywood (3-35) his third wicket inside five runs: 145-6.

We were now in with a chance, but captain James Stead was joined by Erasmus. Cricket is hard enough without being confronted by one of the greatest scholars of the northern Renaissance. Just as Brooksie was pondering this and indeed whether there were rimless loos during the Renaissance era, there was a theft.

ShakEy later blamed this theft on the Rolfe's dog, not RolfeDog. Yes, Pam had arrived to explain all the bathroom options available and while not concentrating on the dog-in-hand, and unseen by ShakEy, Pepper the dog helped herself to a sandwich which ShakEy had brought for Shaun and had put on the ground near a gazebo, as a dog-tempter. Pepper tried one and left two. The Hickey brothers witnessed the event and were seriously tempted to put the rest of the sandwiches back in the pack for Shaun's delectation but in a rare moment of maturity, thought better of it and threw them away out of Gilet's reach.

Back on the pitch our best chance went, when George did not quite cling on to what ShakEy, from his seated position, later described as a “sitter”. This was captured on film and published by Charlie and it probably exonerated George who was at full stretch, which in George’s case is a long way.

But just to be sure of being selected again, and after we went to a four wicket defeat, George decided to buy the team the same number of drinks as balls he had bowled in his four overs. Gilet said this was the first time that 38 cans of Fosters had been bought by a bowler who had also been photographed dropping a sitter. George told us about his (successful) job interview for the position of Head of Rugby and a Bit of Teaching, at Rokeby Boys Prep School in Kingston-upon-Thames, (which is a lot of capital letters).

Let’s hope that Head of Rugby and a Bit of Teaching means a salary hike for George. More four-over spells and dolly catches, could become very costly.

*Boris Johnson is away at Fantasy World in Cornwall*