

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

Saturday 29th May 2021

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Ridge Lose by the Smallest of Margins and Tightest of Hamstrings

Oxenford in Nowhere-Near-Oxenford Mystery

George Almost Becomes The Ridge's Best Looking Player (but doesn't)

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50 over W/L match

BRCC: 176-7 (50 overs)

OCC: 178-9 (46.4 overs)

Result: Lost by 1 wicket

Scorecard [here](#)

Not many people know where Oxenford is which is lucky as Oxenford don't play in Oxenford and never have: they play in Oxford which sounds similar, a bit like "Bledlow Ridge" sounds similar to "Bledlow Village". Come to think of it, on the basis a cricket club can just adopt a town we could call ourselves Rio de Janeiro or Queenstown (let's not go there, even if we could find it) and that way no one could ever accuse us of being "village".

But I digress. Back to the point. Oxford and Oxenford are separated by an "en" which as luck would have it, is the width of a typesetting character, like 's' for example, or 'Q' or even '&'. But you knew that.

Helpful Secretary Tom Hamp had sent us mighty clear directions to the ground at Jesus College. It was oddly fitting for a club that was once a merger of St Johns College and the Civil Service, and then changed its name to become "Aristotle CC" before picking on "Oxenford", that they play in the City of Dreaming Spires.

We had a Dreaming Spire too. Yes, our very own intellectual Cooperman, who was once upon a time in his living room reading Brecht when a BRCC Young Cricketer of the Year trophy was delivered. He was the only RidgeBear to turn up at an adjacent road as far from the entrance as it was possible to be. Brecht would probably have had something to say about that, Aristotle certainly would because it appears he had something to say about everything.

In fact he famously (?) said: "It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it" which does make me wonder whether he had the entire playing staff of Bledlow Ridge CC in mind at the time.

We were just refusing to entertain the idea that our opening bat Mike Winson, the only other person we were waiting for, would be late, when he arrived in a hurry, in the words of Geoff Chaucer in 1386 (just before RolfeDog was born) "better late than never".

Sadly we would have done better with G Chaucer opening the batting as Mike had a particularly long time in which to eat his tea. George played one gorgeous shot through the off side. He then considered hitting one as far as Oxenford but realised he didn't know where it was and was caught at mid off for 7. RolfeDog was adjudged for 15. Dakes also made 7 and commented (to George) that all the best players made 7.

At 68-4 we were struggling a bit, albeit that the wicket was slow after a month's rain. This day was sunny however and a fitting backcloth to the arrival of the larger species of Bird who had replaced the lesser variety for this match. What would Aristotle have said? Well it was he who said "one swallow does not make a summer" this being the furthest he ventured into ornithology. He made an aggressive 32 (Bird the Larger that is, not Aristotle) and it might have been 35 if a fielder's foot over the boundary rope had been spotted by an umpire with twitcher's binoculars 70 yards away, rather than by all those near the scene. He took the score up to 101 with Hollywood, whose 13 was made at a strike rate of 100... what was Hollywood thinking?!

Brooksie's score of 9 was made at a far more respectable strike rate of 21.95 only a little behind RolfeDog's 28.85. I mean statistics don't lie, do they? Dakes took the biscuit (possibly one of Mike's) with 18.92 and couldn't even outscore George.

Even Shorty did that. In fact he rebuilt the score from 115-6 rather well, nursing Brooksie first of all, then Sufi in a partnership with Sufi (9no, SR 39.13) of 42 which only ended on the last ball as Shorty was run out for 29 attempting an impossible journey to... you've guessed it... Oxenford. 176-8 represented a good recovery and a competitive score on a slow track. If it had been a road we might all have turned up at ...??!!

By now Mike had eaten his own tea and nearly everyone else's except Dakes' of course which usually goes down in one gulp. Cooperman tucked in too having been deprived of the opportunity to bat and having chosen to read some philosophers instead.

"Quality is not an act, it's a habit" wrote the said philosopher (Aristotle not Cooperman) and yet Cooperman defied this, having not played for three weeks, and produced an outstanding spell, bowling right through, 10-4-12-1, with Mallick caught behind by Brooksie in his final over. This was the most economical spell since Gilet's 10 overs for 11 at Eynsham which went wicketless and therefore yielded an average of infinity which is a little more than Cooperman's 12. Moreover, Cooperman's spell was the most economical spell by a RidgeBear wearing a man-bun, a category which Gilet has never entered.

At the other end, George, in the words of that famous Australian philosopher Jeff Thompson, just "ran up and went **wham**". He accounted for Shackleton (caught at slip by Mike), Pura (bowled) and Gedara and almost accounted for RolfeDog at gully who opted to take the catch offered by Gedara rather than have his face rearranged. Unluckily for George therefore, George remained only the second best looking player in the team and was able to

jealously watch RolfeDog perform a neat little pirouette and take the catch at the second attempt.

We were well in the game. "Keep plugging away" exhorted Shorty. By now we were being serenaded by a band practising a mellow fusion of jazz and blues on the boundary edge and just as we were calling the tune, Dakes pulled up sharply with a torn hamstring having spotted what he thought was a spare sandwich on the wicket. This was a turning point as it turned out, though we could argue we should not have lost our way (geddit?).

Gilet bowled a typically mean spell of 1-22 off 10 which as he might tell you, is a strike rate of 60 and an average of 22 figures for batting, which I can only aspire to.

Sufi (2-54) took a while to find his radar. His first wicket was a quite stunning catch by George at very short mid off, left-handed at full length off a full-blooded drive. He even managed a more spectacular dive than RolfeDog and caught it at the first attempt, while juggling a pack of playing cards. Don't you just hate that? When Ramaweera departed to Sufi for 32, Oxenford still wanted about 70 with just three wickets left and Hollywood's mean 2-29 off 8.5 to contend with.

We were however, badly hamstrung (geddit?) by Dakes' injury. Tom Partridge who had taken 3-48 in our innings, drove and pulled powerfully and farmed the bowling cleverly. This was his PearTree day. Some lusty blows from Oliver Carr brought Oxenford close but when Hollywood bowled him and then got Mir LBW for 0 there were still a dozen to get and just one wicket left.

No 11 Awan tantalisingly lobbed one up between Sufi, Gilet and Rolfedog but out of reach of all of them and Oxenford crept home with Tom Partridge on 56no.

Talking of creeping home. Where did we lose our way? Well several of the side, left the ground saying "see you back at the club" but hardly anyone got there. Shorty turned up in Leicester and the last we heard, the rest of the side was looking for a clubhouse in Oxenford as if to prove that it is better to travel than to arrive.

Cooperman could see a clubhouse, was oh-so-close, but couldn't quite find the entrance.

"And that...", as Aristotle once said, "...summed up our frigging day"!

Carrie Johnson is away purchasing wallpaper