

MATCH REPORT

RIDGEBEARS v SANDFORD St MARTIN – 1 June 2013

Sandford 151 all out (44.3 overs)

BRCC 152-5 (45 overs)

Won by 5 wickets ... yes we W-O-N

“Who is captain today?” asked BenDog of RolfeDog “You or me?”

I was about to suggest he should have said “You or I?” but the answer to the question seemed to be more important than grammatical accuracy and anyway, at that moment the news came through that Dakes was running a bit late. Or perhaps it didn't, but it usually does come through about an hour before the start, so I kept quiet in case the phone rang.

In fact Dakes wasn't running at all. After surviving last week's 27-over spell he had damaged his ankle playing tag-rugby mid-week versus some girls from St Trinian's – you know how rough they can be. He would be unable to bowl.

Taggart had organised our XI which did not include Middsy (golf day), Conor (study day) or BirdDog (sick day). First panic was whether we had a scorer. Second was that we had no shed key to get the 30 yard markers out.

So Taggart drove all the way back from Bledlow Village with a set of keys, which was a good thing as Nathan had just arrived for the 2nds trip in the opposite direction. Griff arrived to a loud cheer saying he had told RolfeDog last week he would score, but RolfeDog's memory isn't so good nowadays.

On seeing our jailbird removing the covers with Russ Turner, I called his name “Waite”. They both stopped, thinking the solid blue sky was about to turn to rain. I hoped that on this “act-according-to-your-name” basis we might perform better this week: eg that “Turner” might spin the ball, “Keeping” might discover a new talent behind the stumps, and so on.

I am not sure what the umpires thought about our state of preparedness; one of them had arrived to find David Maunder rifling the umpire's room for a set of 'keeping gloves suitable for a 3 year-old, then there was the question of scorer, then the discs... but while Sandford warmed up and BenDog won the toss, Brooksie got the discs in place with military precision and somehow it all fell into place. Out of this chaos, a resounding victory just had to emerge.

We then discovered we were leading the Division in one respect. During the week The Chair had called RolfeDog to say he had a 20-inch clock. RolfeDog's hearing is not so good nowadays and he had heard it differently, putting it down to the wishful thinking of an ageing geriatric. However the appearance of a magnificent horological specimen on the clubhouse was

evidence that a hearing aid for RolfeDog would be more useful than a ruler for the Chairman.

BenDog chose to field. We watched his run up and first ball nervously. It was a miracle, not only did he not break down, he walked back to his mark to bowl another one, then another one and another. In fact he bowled all damn afternoon – which is what you can do when you are captain. We got them two down but their stoutly built number 3 got their score to 100-2 during which time, in between fine strokes he gave us catching practice. Eventually RofeDog accepted one of these which was remarkable because R'Dog's fielding otherwise resembled that of a blind, ageing geriatric with hearing problems.

Russ Turner had replaced Matt Donnelly early on and was soon encouraged by his captain after the fifth ball of one particular over with the words "Well bowled Russ – let's have another six like that". Well we have bowled a few 11 ball overs this year I suppose.

Somehow it did the trick as we gradually got into them. Russ took two caught and bowled and BenDog took a fine catch at mid-on which he claimed was a *dive* but RolfeDog who knew better, described as a *fall*.

And Dakes... remember him? He managed to limp from one end of the ground to another in between overs, being otherwise unable to move. In fact his perambulation – as Lords officials like to call it – was reminiscent of Malcolm Ashby moving at his fastest. This contrasted with Henry who as usual was moving with the speed of a whippet on a racetrack.

Baz Hawkinsport was also playing and brought his usual fashion-style while DougDog brought irony, mostly *verbal* but occasionally *situational* which is defined as "an *incongruity between what is expected or intended and what actually occurs*" by both *diving* and *stopping* the ball.

SamDog could find no reason for missing a game this week and was back to his verbal best behind the stumps albeit that irony is not generally associated with his sledging.

We bowled them out. Russ 18 overs 6-54 and Ben Dog 22.3 overs 4-67. Who said we were short of bowling?

It seemed to be a family day. The boundary was littered with extended families; lots of Keepings; Liz Hawkins in the company of some Australian guests which gave us an opportunity to do some Ashes-Aussie-Bashing practice in the bar afterwards. Later in the day the Carter family arrived and consumed an entire chip-shop of fish 'n chips on the boundary.

In the meantime we had a chance, that is if another great tea (thanks Roz) did not weigh too heavily on us.

Clearly Brooksie is inspired by Roz' cooking and he and Baz set about the bowling putting on 80 for the first wicket before Baz (28) decided he must spend some time with his guests.

Everyone said the situation was tailormade for RolfeDog. That is a euphemism for: "there is so much batting time left that RolfeDog can bore us to death". Well RolfeDog survived four balls and his departure brought in Russ Turner who was soon run out. Brooksie followed for 54, BenDog joined Hennes, the oppo scented a chance and for a while we couldn't buy a run.

But then Henry decided to put Ben through a post-22-over-spell fitness test on his hamstring by playing a game of hit-and-sprint. Ben came through it; Henry's 31 turned the game in our favour again and SamDog came into finish it off with 11 not out while BenDog ground his way to a stupour-inducing 10 not out.

In view of four wickets, a fine catch and a victory as captain, he was forgiven this snail-like performance. As long as he can improve his grammar the outlook is bright.