

BRCC 125-10

Wolverton 129-8

Lost by 2 wickets

In a triumph of hope over expectation, the world's second grumpiest Scotsman declared in writing that if there were 22 out there, he would put them on a pitch. This was in response to an assertion (also in writing) by the official BRCC world's absolutely grumpiest Scotsman that we should save a few quid and forfeit early.

With normal methods of persuasion all exhausted, we resorted to kidnapping two juniors and employing a Kashmiri head hunter to make up the difference, and before you knew it we had 11. Well not exactly *before* you knew it. As openers D Maunder and D Maunder walked to the wicket, the skipper (D Maunder), reminded the other opener (D Maunder) that they needed to hold up any potential batting collapse for a few overs at least as approx. 30% of the team was still negotiating the many and varied roundabouts that Milton Keynes has to offer.

The non-captaining D Maunder (let's call him Dan) looked a bit tentative and was having trouble timing the ball, almost as if he hadn't played any cricket for 9 months. This was later found to be because he hadn't played any cricket for 9 months. He managed a couple of scoring shots before falling to a sharp catch at 2nd slip. The captaining D Maunder (let's call him Dave) looked to be in some sort of nick and amassed 16 before having a dig at Glenn Dickinson's leg spin and offering up a simple catch. This was a disappointing moment for the rest of the team as we were all too well aware that he would now come back and tell us how two paced the pitch was, never really got in, not playing as well as I was when I was 14 and got 88..... which he did.

Malik hit a sumptuous 4 before being undone seemingly trying to swat a moth away with his bat while the ball coincidentally was making its way to the middle stump. On the up side, Saeed had now arrived with the fruits of his head hunting expedition and debutant Charlie King was the first batsman in the top four to walk to the wicket in the sure and certain knowledge that we had 10 wickets to play with. The young man looked a little nervous but nevertheless acquitted himself well before falling to the guile of Dickinson.

Enter the first of Saeed's new recruits, Haroon. From the outset he looked comfortable, stroking the bowling firmly away rather than dead batting it, and coming very close at one point to parking the ball exactly where Saeed had parked his car. After a brief cameo from Saeed himself, which rather mirrored Mailk's innings, Haroon was joined by Jake. Finally we began to build a partnership. Haroon was eventually undone by the drinks break, and Sniff was undone by a hair trigger, which even the bowler seemed dubious about, which brought the star of many a junior match report, Efan Morris to the wicket. He and Jake continued to bat sensibly (apart from some slightly dodgy running) and we continued to make progress. They added 29 for the 8th wicket, before Glenn made way for a 6'5" bowler who ran in from the boundary and had the wicket keeper standing just the right side of Bedfordshire. Efan unconditionally surrendered. Taggart and Jake added 19 for the 9th, but Jakes huge 6 was to prove the last scoring shot of the innings as he ran himself out trying to hold on to the strike. In fairness, it wasn't a bad call as Wolverton's fielders had seemed incapable of hitting a cow's arse with a banjo up to that point, but by the law of averages they were going to get a direct hit

eventually. Unfortunately, the run out not only denied Jake the strike, it also took Taggart, who hadn't looked in any great trouble, to the wrong end and the innings was wrapped up 4 balls later.

Thanks largely to the youngsters, the 8th and 9th wickets had added 50 runs, and whilst 125 didn't look insurmountable, it was something to go at.

Captaining D Maunder (sorry..... Dave) then gave a rousing speech which was centred around not fielding as badly as the previous week when we had failed to defend 256. Taggart's final shot was a muttered "bowled sides out for less than this" and off we trotted to the middle.

Batting hero Easton, then became bowling hero Jake the Great as he and Taggart despatched 4 wicket for 22 in the first 12 overs, including a slightly fortuitous run out where Jake got a fingernail on a spanked straight drive which went on to hit the stumps. It was there however that our luck seemed to run out. The next 2 batsman produced a mixed bag of lovely shots, interspersed with some ugly swipes which spooned up in the air, invariable equidistant from 2 fielders. Both went on to make 40 plus, before Saeed turned one square to dismiss one, and then the returning Easton had the other caught behind by Malik.

At 120-6, the game looked all but finished, but with a final roll of.....etcetc, Captaining D Maunder threw Taggart on at the other end. Ball 1 did for Steve King with a perhaps slightly generous lbw decision. Balls 2-4 produced a bye and a run, before ball 5 stunned the aforementioned 6'5" bowler with just how staggeringly slow it was and meandered gently into his middle stump. Thankfully there was enough of a breeze to persuade the bails to topple, and there were some very nervous Wolverton players around.

The second ball of Jake's next over produced a very (very) good shout for lbw against their skipper. It was turned down. Sniff was not amused. A couple of balls later it was all over.

Although we don't seem to enjoy much in the way of results against Wolverton, they are always a welcoming bunch and an enjoyable team to play against. This was a well contested and ultimately exciting match, but we can take more from it than just that. The Chair is oft quoted asking (not unreasonably) where all the youngsters are. Well this week, Joe Mannion and Matt Donnelly were taking wickets in the 1s supported by Shaun, Jake was making runs and taking wickets in the 2s, Charlie King didn't make many, but looked like it won't be long before he is and fielded really well, and Efan Morris batted stubbornly and effectively as well as running in hard when called on to bowl.

And what of our other young pretender, Hairbear? Well he was out on a date with Efan's sister.

A word son!

1. Saturday dates start at 8.30 (Game finishes 7.30, shower, quick pint/coke and a chat with the opposition before making your apologies along the lines of "Gotta run, am on a promise"
2. Your team mates' sisters are for making sandwiches. End of!