

RIDGE SUFFER IN PANIC ATTACK AND EXPIRE DRAMATICALLY

Abingdon Vale IIIs 192-7

BRCC 2s 176 ao

Lost by 16 runs

Despite the return of the youthful Taggart and the evergreen Malcolm the (former) Guv'nor Ashby to breathe fresh life into the Ridgebears, we exhaled too sharply at key moments of the match before collapsing comatose in defeat.

It was a bit of an Old Boys reunion with the likes of Phil Evans, Robin Newman et Al still turning out for Abingdon (I don't think anyone called Al was playing as it happens but you get the gist) and many participants appearing to be on life support.

We won the toss and elected Baz to be our fifth 'keeper in eight games on the basis he said he might have kept once before even though he was not sure. We were never able to hold the runs back as we would have liked but on the other hand they never really got away.

At times Dickers appeared to be in need of resuscitation as he trundled around the boundary in pursuit of various difficult aerial catching chances off their major run scorer, Ed Tilley, former 1st X1 captain, who we actually dropped for times although to be fair to Dickers the catching chances were shared around.

Shaky (no E) was smart enough to cease bowling when a bit of an onslaught came, generously yielding the bowling slot to Malcolm before returning to take a couple of quick ones at the end and finish with four. Pure experience. Taggart toiled uphill and into the raging wind all afternoon in the belief that he would get a wicket, and managed two while the nerveless Doug took two high catches. They made 192-7, surely gettable.

No Silly Run Outs was the captain's memorable advice to his batsmen.

RolfeDog decided to expire on the spot offering no resistance LBW and Doug joined the Old Persons Club with a similar result, but Malik and Baz took the bowling apart so that at half way we were well set at 108-2.

Cue damage.

The arrival of a 13 year old bowler did for Malik for 53 and then in the funniest moment of the day David Maunder, our English Oxford Graduate, or is it Oxford English Graduate, playing for the first time this season and after travelling from London for the privilege, faced just one ball from said bowler. We heard an awful lot about that one delivery from David as the day wore on, and I use the

phrase “wore on” advisedly as that is how it felt. The ball literally did not bounce above ankle high and David had no chance. Not even One Degree. We were torn between malicious laughter and genuine sadness at his and the team’s loss. Inevitably it was the former that won especially as Baz seemed to be in perfect form at the other end.

With Baz’ departure for 59 however the stakes were raised and the target of four an over became harder than it should have been even though Dickers looked in fine form, or is it fettle, I never remember, until falling victim perhaps unluckily to an LBW call.

Nip and tuck but cue further disaster. The breath was leaving the body. Of the last four wickets to fall two were run outs both to Phil Evans who if he does not mind me saying is well beyond 50, as we lost our composure in the run chase despite some quick scoring from Shaky (no E), 34no.

This is not an easy game to be funny about but the second best was left to last as the second run out and final wicket was a “wait no stop go, oh dear! affair” with Taggart doing his own version of the Lambeth Walk as he decided whether it would be he or Shaky who was run out. It was he.

Yes it was the captain who defined for us what a Silly Run Out is. In his defence it was the earlier batsmen that should have won it but chasing a total brings challenges we need to face up to if we are to win this Division.

At least David Maunder gave us something memorable, not least various promises that he would not be seen playing cricket again, now, this week, this season, this decade, ever. It was therefore good to see him Graduate to our ground next day saying how unlucky he was, clearly keen for more.