

Match Report

Bledlow Ridge 2s v Didcot 2s Away: Saturday 20th July 2013

RIDGE POWER FAILURE AS 2S FAIL TO RADIATE AT DIDCOT

BRCC 2s 186-8 (53 overs)

Didcot 2s 190-1 (not many overs)

Lost by 9 wickets

I had forgotten what a nice power station it is. The massive cooling towers are enhanced by the sixties buildings below, which are covered with barbed-wire that make Guantanamo Bay seem like a visit to Regents Park. Luckily the location of the car park some three hundred yards from the pavilion gives one plenty of time to reflect upon the surroundings as you drag your kit, taking time to detour around the square which was rather thoughtlessly laid in the middle of the ground.

We batted. Matt made 4, then Ady smacked an aggressive 21 before being adjudged the ball *before* drinks which was a slightly unusual 'take' on the principle of drinks always getting a wicket; this time a wicket got drinks. Dan followed Jake and then Jamie followed Dan and then Shakey followed Jamie. ShakyE's first words to his partner were "I feel sh*t" a statement he was able to back up with his dismissal. He reflected upon this in the pavilion saying that if his son made more than him he would retire.

This brought captain Doug to the wicket with the instruction to RolfeDog to see out the 53 overs whereupon RolfeDog (70 – runs not years) followed the above procession to the pavilion which brought in Sniff.

Ady had never seen Sniff facing spinners early on and was entranced by the footwork that is something akin to the chimney sweeps dancing on the rooftops in Mary Poppins. Schniff, batting by now with Doug who made a fine 29, managed one of his rotating-table-hockey-360-degree shots for four in his unbeaten cameo.

It was at around that time that someone said: "That looks like your dad on the other side of the ground ShakEy". "Do you think so?" replied ShakEy.

You'd have thought he'd recognise his own dad but then you'd have thought that his own Dad might have mentioned he would be making the 700 mile trip from Norfolk to drop in and see him play at Didcot-upon-Sea.

Well Tony did at least see grandson Shaun smash a four through mid-wicket and add a single in our final over all to the delight of the rest of the team. This was rather more than ShakEy had achieved and had the double-benefit of threatening the premature end of ShakEy's career.

We came in reasonably satisfied with 186-8

Not easy to find humour in a heavy defeat but after the splendid tea, Ady's gymnastics behind the stumps and his promise that he would catch the ball if the batsman ever nicked one gave us plenty to chuckle about. It was enough of a coincidence when on one occasion ShakEy actually threw the ball in accurately to Ady who actually caught it.

Putting youth first we opened up with MSDonnelly and Shaun (no E). Didcot set off like a train (geddit?) but finally, once Shaun had given way to his dad in the way that polite young men let the elderly take their seat on the tube, something good happened.

MSD bowled a fast full toss, the left-handed opener flailed hard at it and we turned to see Schnippffgh take a mighty sharp catch at cover and almost break in half from a combination of the force of the ball and then the back-slapping he received.

That was the end of our success though not the end of the events. Credit to their other opener who ended with about 60 not out although for me his was the worst 50 since someone called A Miller for Staines and Laleham, now presumably known as Staines-upon-Thames and Laleham, versus High Wycombe 2s in the 70s.

His late cut or dab, mostly in the air, eluded all our combinations of slips and gullies all afternoon. At one point we packed the area for ShakEy's bowling only for RolfeDog to allow a gentle dab to roll past his hands and with it the best chance we had all afternoon of a maiden over. ShakEy was not amused and was able to retaliate for the copious amounts of stick Rolfedog had already given him that afternoon.

We went through various bowlers in an attempt to get a further breakthrough. Most encouraging were Jo Mannion's leg-breaks. Even if a few full tosses later on were despatched, he asked a lot of questions of both batsmen.

My personal favourite moment of the match came when I suggested to Jo that with a bit more confidence he might tell the captain of any field changes he wanted. Geoff Tombsdog, our umpire for the day, was within earshot and complained that as *his* captain I had never agreed to any suggestions he had ever made when *he* was bowling leg-spin. I was able to remind him that it is not normal to have all your fielders outside the boundary protecting spectators.

It was also encouraging to see Jo, Shaun and Jake tearing around the boundary and a few especially powerful throws from Jake. And Ady scrabbling around at the wicket ha ha.

So we lost by nine wickets and were acting a little disappointed until we heard the 1s score and realised how well we'd done.

As we left the ground I was able to reflect upon the fact that in 2003 *Country Life* readers had voted the Didcot Power Station the *third* worst eyesore in Britain and that we could presumably have been playing at Sellafield or Sizewell B.

RolfeDog

The above Match Report which has been written with a certain amount of poetic licence in order to add to centuries of fine literature from Geoffrey Chaucer and William Shakespeare to modern greats like Dizzie Rascal and Jamiroquai, in no way detracts from Didcot CC which is a fine flourishing club, or their members who were all extremely friendly and none of whom had more limbs than normal, or their tea which was excellent and completely radiation-free, or the view which with a few cooling towers and barbed-wired buildings behind you is as good as anywhere in Didcot.