

# Bledlow Ridge 2s v Kingston Bagpuize 2s

Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> September 2019

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**Birdie's late injury spells disaster for the 2s**

## **Battle of the batting averages ends in controversial fashion**

**Win leaves 2s 10 & 8 for the season**

BRCC        177-9 (45 overs)

BRCC        159-8 (45 overs)

Won by 18 runs

The bombshell dropped on Friday morning. Birdie's knees were knackered and he wouldn't be able to play in the 1s away at Bagpuize. No one had expected this. So far this season Birdie has dropped out on account of his back, his hip, his elbow, his thigh, his hangover, his holiday, his timekeeping, his car, his box, his shoes and his 4 court injunctions preventing him from going within a hundred metres of anyone under the age of 70, but his KNEES!

The Real Saint, who has done a marvelous job all season of getting teams out to the extent that we have not played a man short in either team all year, remained calm. "It's OK, we had 30 a few days ago. Been a couple of drop-outs, but we'll be fine"

"YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!!" responded the rest of the team. "He won't travel all the way to Bagpuize to watch the game and he's got absolutely nowhere else to go so he'll be here, ALL DAY"

A sombre mood fell over the team.

There was a definite feel of 'end of season' about this game. The Ridge were sat in 5<sup>th</sup> in the table and if we won, there was an outside possibility we might climb to 4<sup>th</sup>. If we lost, unless we construed a way to be deducted a bucket of points (you laugh but see 1s match report against Leighton Buzzard), we would still be 5<sup>th</sup>. Bagpuize were 8<sup>th</sup>, couldn't finish lower than 8<sup>th</sup> and would need to score about 40 points to get up to 7<sup>th</sup>. Add to that the fact that Kingston Bagpuize would be in our top 3 favourite clubs to play

and the chances of there being any edge in this game were pretty remote .... unless of course you were studying the averages. More of that later.

Sniff lost the toss and was invited to bat and decided that as it was the last game of the season and there was nothing to lose, we would have a slightly revised batting order so Chesh went out to bat with his 7<sup>th</sup> opening partner (Carlton) in 9 goes at the top of the order.

Sniff's idea had been to promote a 'carnival atmosphere' for the game and as such Chesh decided there was to be no running involved and departed the season for 16 runs from 4 scoring shots. Carlton had initially missed the memo and was playing some very sensible defensive pushes before he got bored and spanked young Joe Hornblow for a 4 and a 6 before clothing one to mid on for a well made 23.

Geoff managed a boundary and a single before nicking off which left Tom Hickey at the other end to watch as the heavily hung over Shaun and the newly promoted Sufi both came and went for a sum total of 3 between them.

This brought Mo to the wicket, who has looked promising with the bat, but had yet to deliver an innings of substance. KB had moved to the change bowlers however and this proved to be exactly what he needed. Mo crashed 10 4s on his way to 62 while Ginge at the other end played a very promising supporting role, amassing 24 before going for a gentle jog on a single, seemingly unaware that he needed to get to the other end before the ball and was run out. The pair however had put on 88 and taken us to the relative respectability of 149-6. When Mo got out a couple of runs later, the stage was set for the big averages showdown!

Since week 2, when David Saint won the game with 61\*, the batting averages in the 2s have been headed by either The Real Saint, or Taggart. It was mostly TRS, but it had swung back and forth and after his 65 against Thame, Taggart started the day 1.22 runs ahead (on average), with both having been dismissed 9 times. This battle had provoked mild amusement between the 2 protagonists, however we had an agent provocateur in our midst. Birdie had spent the whole day building this particular contest into something that made the Rumble in the Jungle look like a village tiddlywinks competition. And now they were both in the middle, both on 0 and battle was joined. Birdie was beside himself with excitement. Desperately trying to work out the various permutations, he got out a slide rule, decided it was only good for whacking Ginge round the head with and threw it away. He got out a calculator, couldn't work out how to switch it on and so whacked Ginge round the head with it and threw it away. He then tried to work it out with some spare stumps, at which point Ginge screamed and ran for his life while trying to simultaneously call child line.

Meanwhile in the middle, KB had brought on Stu Edwards to bowl who was generating good pace despite bowling off a couple of paces and was harder to get away than the previous bowlers. Taggart patted a couple back and then tried to run one down to 3<sup>rd</sup> man but only managed to nick it through to the keeper for a duck. Birdie was now faced with the prospect of trying to calculate the odds with the 2 batsmen on a different number of dismissals and melted down completely. Somewhere in a psychiatric ward in South Bucks, the former head of maths at 'Risborough Grammar' was straining against his straight jacket screaming uncontrollably "I told you, I told you!!!!"

Sniff's visit to the middle was brief and uneventful (at least as far as the total was concerned) and with a couple of overs left, in went our last man. Much has been made on commentary in the Ashes series

about England sending in a number 11 with a top score of 165, but surely, in context, a div 9 CCL side sending in a number 11 with 4,275 CCL runs and a high score of 134 means that Shaky tops Stuart Broad.

With just a couple of runs added since the 6<sup>th</sup> wicket had gone down, Shaky set about the bowling in the penultimate over and raced up to 18, taking the total to 177. This left TRS with the final over from Stu Edwards. He made a careful calculation, decided that 177 was probably enough and given that Bagpuize were only 85 points behind us in the table, decided, with no thought for his personal stats, that it would be best not to risk giving them an extra bowling point so blocked out the last over.

With Chesh's kitchen still missing inaction, tea was constructed in the club house and out we went for our final session of 2019.

Shaky and Sufi opened up and Shaky quickly induced a catch to TRS in the cordon. Shaun kept the Dryden name in place at the top end and quickly cleaned up Tom Lewis-Lyon, but the run rate was competitive and Stu Edwards and Dougie Phillips were looking pretty secure. Sniff approached Taggart and asked whether he fancied it. Taggart collected up the slide rule and calculator at which point Ginge went and quivered behind the sight screens. Having worked out that he would have to go for 0-641 to cede the bowling trophy to TRS, Taggart accepted the skipper's invitation. His brief was to dry up the run rate so when the first ball whistled away to the cover point boundary, Sniff had cause for concern, however the next 9.5 cost a fairly measly 15 more with a wicket thrown in for good measure to take Taggart to 30 wickets for the season. Shaun made way for TRS who bowled tidily enough, and picked up both the danger men, dismissing Edwards with an absolutely superb return catch. Carlton came on for Taggart and bowled a very tidy spell, giving absolutely nothing away, and Shaun came back on at the top end and scooped up a couple of wickets to finish with 3-45, his 3<sup>rd</sup> 3fer of the season.

From there, KB put up a valiant defence, but didn't have the firepower to keep up with the required run rate and the game slightly fizzled out for a comfortable win.

There follows a brief resume of the season but at this point we need to offer up big thanks to Sniff, Chesh and David Saint, who captained and organized the teams throughout the season. Administering the 2s is only slightly easier than herding chickens and so just getting them out is an achievement in itself. To enjoy a modicum of success suggests a very well organized season.

And so the 2019 season came to a close with the 2s having won 10 (including 1 forfeit) and lost 8. We accumulated 304 points in total. Back in 2012, we were promoted from division 7 with 8 wins and 286 points.

Of our 10 wins, 4 were in limited over and 6 in timed (the forfeit game was a timed one). Of the timed games, we won 4 chasing and 1 by bowling out the opposition. In the three we lost, we batted first each time.

We won 4 win/lose games and batted first in all of them. In the five we lost, we batted second in 4.

All of which just goes to prove that .....