

MATCH REPORT

BRCC 2s vs Aston Rowant 3s

15th June 2013

Ridgebears 141-8 40 overs

Aston Rowant 54ao 22 overs

Ridgebears win by 87 runs

On reading back this report prior to publishing it, it occurs that if looked at in the wrong light, or taken out of the context of a game that was played in a great spirit against a welcoming and sporting side, a cynical reader might sense a hint of sexism in it. I would like to point out that this device (because it is in fact a literary device rather than a bigoted underlying prejudice) is designed exclusively for the piling of ridicule and derision onto certain BRCC players, and not as any reflection on Lindsay Smith, who as a fellow left armer, I thought bowled beautifully throughout the day.

It would risk further ridicule at the pen of the young pretender (in match reporting terms) to mention any difficulties in getting teams out, threatening emails, the need for more commitment etc etc , so I won't make any reference here to the extreme lengths, long hours, valium consumed, or the temptation to spit the dummy and beg for a game in Marlow 3rds. I will however say an appreciative thank you to those who made the effort, and in particular one who gave up his ICC champions trophy tickets for Edgbaston in favour of a rainy day in Aston Rowant.

With the weather looming large, Taggart, having negotiated a conditional release from the 1s, called correctly and opted to bat. It looked a decent track, very hard, but with a good coating of grass and he confidently predicted that there might be some sideways movement early on but if we could survive this, it was a good batting track. One day he'll remember that these matches start and finish in the same afternoon and it is relatively insignificant how the pitch will be playing on Tuesday, but nevertheless, batting we were. It was starting to spit rain as we went out and a good start seemed a good idea, so we opened with season debutant Maunder the younger and Malik. The latter started with a couple of safe looking nurdles, before stroking a sumptuous cover drive to the boundary. Unfortunately the next sumptuous drive found the top edge and floated tamely into the hands of point, but at least he got out to a bloke. This brought the scorers nightmare scenario of 2 Maunders batting together, but not for long. Dave scratched about for a bit and was shortly back in the hutch having been cleaned up. On his return, he became not the first batsman in history to query his score, however he may have been the first to suggest that we'd given him too many. "Are you sure some of those shouldn't be against my brother?" he proposed in what seemed an admirable display of sibling unity. It was later attributed to the AR umpire being unaware of the signal for leg byes.

He did however know the signal for out, as Ady found out one run later, having been adjudged leg before second slip. Both Dave and Ady had been sent packing by Lindsay Smith, who is a 17 year old girl. In the interests of fairness to them, she is a very good bowler who has represented England

ladies at U19 level, however in the interests of the rest of the team's amusement, they were done by a GIRL !!!!!

And then, with 2 Dans at the crease, and the score on 23-3, it rained....., and rained,..... and rained.

It was pointed out at this juncture that rain in these areas can be very localised and this turned out to be truer than would have been thought possible. After 2 hours, including an early tea, we went back on, while AR 1s, who were playing on a pitch 400 yards away, declared their game washed out. What a bunch of girls!

The game was agreed very amicably (are you reading this Cumnor) to be a 40/28 affair, assuming no more breaks. The 2 Dans batted extremely well, dragging us back into it, but both got out in the same over. But at least they both got out to a bloke. Saeed went in, to be joined by Vajid, who was almost instantly run out (no, seriously, he was, but at least it was a bloke) and played a well paced innings, building well on the excellent foundation that Dan M (28) and Dan S (37) had put in place, but he fell to a catch on the boundary (by a bloke, off a bloke) as he accelerated and matched Dan S. Ady, who let's not forget was done by a GIRL!!!!, was invoking local knowledge and declared that 130 would be enough to win it and Matt and new recruit Umar stayed positive and kept the score board ticking up to what looked like a competitive 141.

As part of his negotiations, Taggart had also secured the release of long term 1s hostage Matt Donnelly and the 2 opened the bowling 10 minutes later. Heady with his new found freedom, Matt found a wicked length and had both batsmen regularly sniffing leather. Taggart was getting some of the sideways movement that he had confidently predicted would be long gone by now, but both batsmen defended well and attacked positively, feeling that the 5 an over target was eminently gettable. At 9 overs, they had reached 42-0, and we relaxed the field to a slightly more defensive configuration.

The next over however was the turning point of the game. Ridgebears 2s are not short of players that you might think you could steal a quick single from, but Dan Maunder would be a long way down that list. Unfortunately for AR, they hadn't checked the list, went for one off the second ball of the over and Dan promptly threw down the stumps at the keeper's end with the batsman a yard short of his ground. Modesty forbids me from telling you what an absolutely unplayable jaffa the next ball was, so suffice to say it scattered the stumps after jaggging back 6 inches at express pace. As the next batsman approached, Ady, you know, the one who got done by the GIRL!!!!, offered up some more local knowledge. "You won't need anyone long and straight, this guy won't drive you". First ball well up, stayed in his crease. Second ball, full Yorker, right on the boot in front of middle and despite a mumble of "I 'ate givin' Taggart lbws", up went Brooksie's finger.

Next over, having pinned the batsmen on the back foot all innings, Matt cunningly dropped one just back of a length which liked the pitch so much it decided to stay as close to it as possible and burrowed under the bat before knocking back middle peg. 42-0 off 9 had become 42-4 off 11 and it was a whole different game. AR changed tack and started to block out, but they had 17 overs to survive and with Taggart jaggging it all over and Saeed wobbling it about after Matt had to give way due to age restriction (with less of a return than he deserved), it turned into a bit of a procession.

The effort on the ground fielding was superb, with Malik leading the chase, throwing himself around and pinging in exocets. He took a catch off a no ball, but looked a dead cert for a legit one off a loopy shot off Saeed, until the bowler decided that caught and bowled looked better in the book. He leapt like a salmon while pirouetting like a ballerina and simultaneously affecting a hand off on Malik that would have made Tom Croft proud, before catching it in one hand above and behind him. Vajid on the other hand, bent down nonchalantly at first slip and took a sharp chance one handed without looking at it (or pushing anyone out of the way) to dismiss their girl (you know the one, she got Ady & Dave out).

We wrapped it up on the dot of 7.30 and the statisticians quickly worked out that we had taken 10 wickets for the loss of just 12 runs.

Shaky, who to the best of anyone's knowledge, has never got out to a girl, had watched throughout and declared Taggart's spell to be the worst 7 for he had ever seen, which is a bit rich frankly coming from the maker of the scratchiest 134 in history!