

Owers demolishes Berko

Potters Bar 2nd XI produced an excellent performance on Saturday to beat division 2 promotion contenders Berkhamstead 1st XI. Captain Greg Hodge lost the toss and wasn't too disappointed when he was asked to bowl first on a typically flat wicket at The Walk that would be ideal for chasing.

Hodge opened the bowling alongside his younger brother Charlie, who bowled a number of wayward deliveries early on. Greg managed to keep it tight at one end however it was Charlie that took the first wicket as Berko's opener pulled a long-hop to mid on, the dismissal brought Berko's captain Mark Herring to the crease. Herring made his intentions clear early, hitting some crisp boundaries.

A couple of bowling changes including the return to action of Andy Colquhoun could not stem the flow of runs as Berko raced to 74-1 off the first 14 overs. Hodge then tossed the ball to youngster Dan Brown who dismissed Herring his first ball for a run a ball 38. Brown bowled brilliantly and with Hodge using the spin of Owers at the other end Bar started to slow the flow of runs. Owers picked up his first wicket with the score on 90 and then started to take wickets at regular intervals as Hodge rotated himself and Brown at the other end in hot conditions.

Owers ended with 6 wickets for 46 off 19 fabulous overs, whilst Brown took 2 for 16 from 9 overs as Bar dismissed Berkhamstead for 190 in the last over. The bowlers had done an excellent job to turn things around and had setup a chance of a good victory.

The chase got off to a terrible start when Charlie Hodge was caught at slip for two off the bowling of Herring. Things went from bad to worse for Bar when veteran Mike Palmer was caught behind for 12. His dismissal brought to the crease Ajith Wallawitta, who was to play match winning innings. Wallawitta and ex captain Dave Pett started to rebuild Bar's innings however, when Pett fell with the score on 40, Bar were facing an uphill struggle.

Wicket keeper Paul Martin went for 7, as Bar slumped to 60 for 4. 15 year old Tom Pett came into bat and started slowly, however once he was off the mark he started to play some lovely shots off his legs and through the covers. At the other end Wallawitta was punishing anything too short or too full, hitting some swash buckling fours on both sides of the wicket. Pett and Wallawitta added over 50 for the fifth wicket, however just when it seemed Pett would go on to make a big score he fell LBW for 19. Jessie Taylor came and went two balls later and Bar were looking in trouble at 120 for 6.

17 year old Luke Owers came in at 8 and followed up a superb bowling performance with his best league innings of the season. Wallawitta and Owers hit boundaries at will and saw Bar home with the best part of ten overs to spare, Wallawitta ended on 82 not out and man of the match Luke Owers on 47 not out.

The win maintained Bar's position of fifth the table and got them within touching distance of Cockfosters in fourth. Next week the team travel to Northwood, with availability a bit thin on the ground, Hodge will be hoping for another big performance from his young players.