

Bar salvage draw to climb table

Potters Bar 2nd XI managed to hold on to a draw against Knebworth Park 2nd XI on Saturday and climb up to fifth in Herts Division 2. Potters Bar lost the toss and were asked to field first on a green hard looking wicket. Captain Greg Hodge opened the bowling with his brother Charlie and was quickly rewarded when Knebworth's opener drove loosely at a half volley and was caught at backward point by Luke Owers.

The wicket played slowly and neither Greg nor Charlie were getting much reward, so the skipper tried the spin of Mehta, who had picked up seven wickets last week. Hodge replaced himself with the gentle medium pace of Chris Boyce who initially bowled with great control.

Knebworth consolidated well and had reach 65 for 1, when a long-hop from Mehta was caught by Greg Hodge diving to his right at point to remove Knebworth's number a three for a well crafted 30. Boyce was then replaced by Owers who removed Knebworth's other opener with a beautifully flighted off break that bowled him through the gate.

At 75-4 a drinks Bar were on top and were looking for a similar performance to last week. However Junior De Brue and his partner had other ideas, as Knebworth constructed a match changing fifth wicket partnership. Both players started slowly and accelerated through their innings. The 100 partnership was reached with around eight overs remaining and enabled De Brue to cut loose. He lost his partner for 69, as he was caught at long on off Mehta, the first of three Knebworth batsmen to perish in this fashion. However De Brue was finding batting easy and despite the loss of wickets at the other end sped from 64 to 92 in less than ten balls. He was finally out in the last over as Mehta picked up his seventh wicket of the innings, as Knebworth closed their innings on 243 for 9.

Bar's innings got off to the worst possible start as Mehta was caught behind for 0 off the bowling of Fisher. Young Tom Pett and Matt Evans started to rebuild the innings, however Bar were hit another blow as Evans was bowled for 11 trying to push a straight ball down the ground. Former skipper Dave Pett and his nephew Tom played nicely, with Tom playing some classic shots off his legs. However when Tom tried and ambitious drive over the top, he was caught at extra cover for 14.

This bought Charlie Hodge to the crease and with him, Bar's last realistic chance of victory. Hodge and Pett batted well, with Hodge choosing which balls to hit with his usual skill and guile. With drinks approaching Bar were well set with 140 runs needed off the last 22 overs, however a stunning catch at first slip ended Pett's innings for a well made 45. Dan Brown came and went quickly and Bar were now reliant on Hodge to see them home, a crunching cover drive for four was followed by a full toss which Hodge managed to hit straight back to that man De Brue who held onto the chance removing Hodge for 42.

Victory was now out of Bar's reach and the main aim was to pick up as many batting points as possible. Hayden Rogers batted well on his second team debut and some lusty blows from a rejuvenated John Pett saw Bar up to 170. Pett was stumped for 21

and it was left to Greg Hodge and Rogers to see out the innings, which closed on 185 for 8. The draw saw Bar climb to fifth in the table, whilst Knebworth sit just two points from relegation.