

## **Bar grab win in the rain**

Potters Bar 2<sup>nd</sup> XI showed great character on Saturday by defeating Old Albanian's 1<sup>st</sup> XI in a rain soaked rollercoaster of a game. After winning the toss captain Greg Hodge did not hesitate in choosing to bat on another good track at The Walk. Bar started brightly with Indian overseas Aditya Mehta, making his first appearance of the season, opening alongside the captain's brother Charlie Hodge.

Mehta and Hodge added 88 for the opening wicket before Hodge was bowled for 33 playing across the line. Mehta departed soon after for a classy 55. Youngster Tom Pett and Oliver Coughlan took their time to settle in and the initial scoring rate of over four an over dropped. 15 year old Pett looked to be set when he was bowled for 16, his dismissal bought Ian Henderson to the crease who hit a couple of quick boundaries before being bowled for 10. At 138-5 Bar were looking somewhere short of the 200 plus score they were aiming at. However 16 year old Luke Owers showed his promise, stroking the ball around the ground. Owers and Coughlan added 50 for the sixth wicket, before Coughlan was caught in the deep for 32. Owers ended on 42 not out as Bar made 207 for 6.

Persistent drizzle during Bar's innings meant that the old ball was soaked, so Hodge opted to use the new ball when Bar came to bowl, starting with the pace of his brother Charlie and veteran Michael John. Charlie Hodge produced a magical opening two overs, taking two wickets in his first over and then another with the first ball of his second. With Albanians struggling at 7 for 3, ex Herts player Mike Dale strode to the crease, as Albanian's coach and captain the pressure was on. He struck his second ball for four but was caught at first slip on his third as Hodge picked up 4 wickets for 5 runs in his first 2 overs.

With Albanian's reeling at 11 for 4 you would expect Bar to turn the screw on their opposition, however the wet ball and difficult conditions meant Bar's bowlers couldn't repeat their feat of the first four overs and Albanian's launched an astonishing counter attack. After 10 overs Albanian's had reached 78 for 3, they continued their assault with both their numbers 3 and 6 reaching 50.

Despite the bowlers barely being able to grip the ball, Greg Hodge turned to overseas leg spinner Mehta, the change paid off almost immediately as he took the wicket of Albanian's number 6 in his second over. Albanian's number 7 made his intentions clear early and hit the ball to all parts, with 30 overs gone Albanian's were cruising at 180-5. Hodge decided to take one last gamble and threw the ball to the evergreen Jeff Hackett. The decision paid dividend instantly when Albanian's number 7 was caught at square leg. The wicket seemed to send panic through Albanian's dressing room as Hackett picked up a second wicket with the last ball of his over.

Mehta then removed Albanian's number 9 LBW first ball. The rain began to get heavier, but with Albanian's less than 20 run away from victory and Bar 2 wickets away, both sides wanted to stay out. Mehta picked up his third wicket with a well disguised googly and the pressure was mounting on Albanian's young number 3 who was 82 not out. Next over Hackett managed to get him to drive loosely outside off stump, where Owers held on to a low difficult chance and completed a remarkable victory for Potters Bar.