

Potters Bar 3rds 168-8 (53 overs) lost to Preston 2nds (39 overs) by 9 wickets

Potters Bar 3rds travelled to the attractive village of Preston on Saturday hoping to secure the victory which would have allayed their relegation fears.

Skipper John Lewis won the toss on a warm afternoon and elected to bat. Openers Rob Daley and Roy Metselaar failed to capitalise on their early starts as Potters Bar slumped to 34-2. Ben Scarisbrick and John Lewis set about repairing the damage and the score edged along until Lewis stumbled down the wicket to be easily stumped by the Preston keeper. Samitha Jayakody joined Scarisbrick and took the score to 110-3, and at this stage with 20 overs left it looked as though Potters Bar could post a challenging score. But Jayakody was bowled between bat and pad for 20 and Scarisbrick departed soon afterwards for 33 as Potters Bar lost 5 wickets for 18 runs. The total stuttered to 128-8 and, with only 10 men, it was left to the last pair Neil Raisborough and Rupert Pyrah to try and set a defendable score.

Batting sensibly the two veterans added 40 for the 9<sup>th</sup> wicket and enabled Potters Bar to reach a respectable 168-8 when the overs ran out.

Michael John and Raisborough tested the Preston batsmen early on, but the breakthrough proved elusive until John blasted one through the Preston number 2's defences. However, that was to be Potters Bar's only success as their fielding and bowling became increasingly lacklustre, and Preston managed to up the scoring rate with few alarms. The Preston opener, Burleigh, compiled a chanceless century to ease Preston home by a comfortable 9 wickets. The game, which had hitherto been played in a good spirit, unfortunately ended on a sour note when the Preston umpire bizarrely became embroiled in an unseemly and unnecessary exchange of views with Metselaar which spoilt Preston's otherwise well-deserved success.

A third consecutive defeat leaves Potters Bar poised perilously close to the relegation zone, and Lewis must lift his team before next Saturday's duel against table-topping St Margaretsbury 2nds at Dame Alice Owens School.

*Rupert Pyrah*