

WASHOUT RUINS HOPES OF MATCH WINNING TOTAL

Saturday

Potters Bar 127 for 1 in 32 overs

West Herts

Match Abandoned

After losing the toss on a green tinged pitch, Bar were inserted against many people favourites for the Division West Herts on the opening league game of the 2007 HCPL season.

Bar entered the match three players light of arguably their strongest eleven but this didn't stop the hosts from batting in a positive frame of mind, whilst looking at some ease on the slow and damp surface.

Mike Palmer and Nesan Jeyaratnam opened the innings in bright sunshine and the first over passed through with little problem for Bar although the 7 extras conceded showed West Herts bowling for what it was in the only session of play – distinctly average.

Unfortunately though after a breezy start, Bar lost Mike Palmer leg before for 13 with the score on 44, mainly boosted by the extras column (21) as a whole host of no-balls, wides and byes were giving the scorecard a rather lop-sided look to it. With the fall of Mike Palmer, skipper Lenny Cooper promoted Matt Webb to the number three birth and Matt's technique was being soundly tested by the ex-Worcester pro Alamgir Sheriyar but after the initial burst had been seen off, Sheriyar's pace and direction had gone and he spent the rest of his spell trying to abuse all and sundry. After spending the majority of the morning sat motionless on the M25 this may have attributed to his frustrations.

At the other end, Nesan Jeyaratnam started to find the gaps in the field and was playing with great skill and expertise and the score started to improve over by over and Bar were in the ascendancy and West Herts skipper Matt Smith was left scratching his head as to where the next wicket was coming from. With the overrate becoming that of a snails-pace 20 in 90 minutes, Smith resorted to spin and that combined with the forthcoming luncheon interval meant the visitors could get away with a few cheap overs before the break.

Still Nesan and Matt went on and with a towering slog sweep, Nesan Jeyaratnam brought up his 50 off of 75 balls with a six and 8 fours. After being dropped on just 1 and 25 Nesan made the most of the luck and batted beautifully. As lunch arrived, Nesan Jeyaratnam was sat 58* and Matt Webb 25* as Bar were 127 for 1 with 28 overs remaining, with the animals set to come in two-by-two. A total of 275+ would have been the target but for the rain as it hammered down almost as soon as the players had left for lunch. Alas the Bar weren't able to restart and the boys had to be satisfied with a 6 point haul from an abandoned game but knowing they had made the favourites for the Divisions' bowling attack, containing 2 ex-pros look out of practice and toothless.

As for West Herts, their bowlers will have to learn quickly that on a wicket of this ilk the ball must be fuller and not halfway down the pitch and the toss which looked a great one to win will not be wasted.

As for the Bar, after a truly woeful pre-season, the boys came out hungry, akin to the Becker Cup run of last year. The batting line-up looks strong, as strong as it has been for years and the boys

batted with their heads and picked up the 1s and 2s well and didn't just go looking for the big shots like has been in the past. We can still score at a good rate if we run well and if we can keep wickets in the hutch it can only be good for the natural stroke-makers to really come to the piece and express themselves with runs already in the tank.

The twos travelled to Radlett to play their second string and the rain won through. With the Radlett openers taking an age to get the screens in the right position, as the first ball was about to be bowled, down came the rains and washed the cricket out. The 10-point haul from the cancelled game will be much welcomed from skipper Greg Hodge who travelled with a much weakened side and will be certainly looking forward to next week when he will be boosted by more like his first choice eleven.

The threes were cancelled down the school early on Saturday morning after the amount of rain made the School unplayable and the fives made the long trip to Parkfield and Headstone and despite being inserted the boys never actually made it onto the field as again, the rains proved the winner.

Finally there was some cricket for Paul Kennedy's 4th eleven as they made the trek to play Harpenden Dolphins. The Dolphins found the wet conditions to their liking and they were soon swimming out to the centre to face Bar's newest member of the Sri-Lankan family. After 42 overs of juggling balls on the end of their noses and jumping through hoops the hosts were 131 for 7 and the fun and excitement had ended and 10 points each was dished out to both sides.

Next week sees Bar travel to Welwyn Garden City in what is set to be a keenly contested fixture. The hosts managed to eek out an impressive win at Millhillians so already Bar are playing catch-up but will travel in a positive frame of mind knowing the attack they had just faced is certainly if not on a par but perhaps stronger than they will face at Digswell Park. It will also be a return for Paul Barker to where he bowled so well last season where his 5-for almost enabled Bar to pull off a surprise and shock win.

Hopefully though the cricket will be the winner on the day and the 'grief' that always associates itself with games played between two pumped up teams will be put on a backburner and the customary tin-hats will be left at home for all 22 players.

The 2s also travel next week to Abbots Langley in a game they will fancy their chances of a first league win of the season and this enables the 3s to play at The Walk for the first time in a few years, as they take on the cardboard cut-outs from Boxmoor. Many of the 3s will be disappointed in a way, as Boxmoor is the home of the Steam Coach pub overlooking the ground and a pint or two before, during or after the game.

The 4s travel to nearby Elstree, where 'El Presidente' Ian Breeze, now not departing to sunnier climes made his name as a decent seam bowler with a high action (his words Saturday, nobody else's) and the 5s entertain Old Elizabethans down the school.

Sunday doesn't see a game for the 1s as thanks to the rains, Chingford have had to postpone their National Cup-tie with Brondesbury but the Development squad get their first taste of action as they have a dress rehearsal of what that cricket is all about at home to Cheshunt who are looking to get involved in the league next season.

Until next time have a good week, where hopefully the weekend will be rain free and remember the futures bright, the futures Potters Bar

Regards
Fred