

POOR BATTING COSTS BAR WIN AGAINST RIVALS

Saturday

Welwyn Garden City 169 for 9 off 60 overs

Potters Bar 111 all out in 33.4 overs

A dreadful batting performance by Bar cost them 25 points and a win against rivals Welwyn Garden City in a game they had in the palm of their hand.

After winning the toss on a painfully slow and low pitch Lenny Cooper asked Welwyn to bat first in conditions that suited nagging bowling and with a slow outfield, it meant boundaries and an expansive batting game was a no-go.

After an accurate opening spell, Matt Webb was replaced by Mark Taylor and he soon slipped into his usual groove of a nagging line and length and with the Welwyn batters playing and missing almost at will, the Bar bowling and fielding was tight and followed on from the bright beginnings of last weeks game, against again quality opposition.

The first wicket duly arrived. Kash Weeraratne who bowled beautifully enticed Welwyn's skipper Martin James to try and hit over the top and it took a good low diving catch by Len Cooper to account for a big wicket. The hosts soon lost a second wicket as Ben Fraser (2) went in a similar fashion as the slow wicket and tight bowling was not his cup of tea.

Kash came off after 10 excellent overs (2 for 14) and Paul Barker took over the mantel and he soon accounted for Aaron Laraman for 11 as he was rather harshly adjudged leg before. At the other end Eddie Ballard was plodding along and thanks to a couple of lusty boundaries off the tiring Mark Taylor, he took advantage to go into lunch 42* and ex-Kent and Middlesex pro Jamie Hewitt was looking well-set on 26* as Welwyn went in 3 down for 112 with 23 overs left of their allocation remaining.

However after lunch Bar turned the screws. Skipper Lenny Cooper finally entered into the attack and bowled a fine 12-over unchanged spell and he soon panicked Ballard into running himself out for 43 and Hewitt offering gentle catching practice to Jared Norman at mid-off for 31. Herts starlet (?) Jamie Southgate came in and crabbed along as Paul Barker and Lenny were exerting the pressure and kept the scoring rate in check.

Simon White was lb mister for 0 nervously prodding half forward, Southgate departed for a painstaking 19 off 48 balls, Daniel Blacktopp was beaten all ends up for 1 and when Ed Tucker smacked the ball straight down deep midwickets throat for 9 it appeared that Bar would be chasing no more than 150. However and unfortunately for Bar, Ray Hodge came in at 11 and made 13* off 14 balls and took the total to a slightly more defendable 169 for 9 off 60 overs. Why Hodge came in so low, god only knows as he is a typical lower order player who puts bat to ball and Welwyn in my eyes made a mistake batting him so low.

The bowling and fielding from Bar in general was excellent. Yes the wicket was helping, but against a good batting line-up the boys especially in the period after lunch really put pressure on the hosts. So 170 to win in 50 overs and Mike Palmer and Nesan Jeyaratnam went out to face off-spinner Ben Frazer and medium fast Jamie Hewitt.

It didn't start well as Mike Palmer was adjudged lbw for 0 in after just 2 balls of Hewitt's first over and when Matt Webb succumbed to a soft bat pad dismissal Bar were behind the 8-ball at 10 for 2.

Rather strangely Kash Weeraratne was being held back and in came Jared Norman who batted beautifully two weeks prior and he and Nesan Jeyaratnam attempted to slowly bat Bar back into the game. Alas it wasn't easy against some fine off break bowling from Frazer, coupled with more appeals (45 in 66 deliveries!!) than the asylum seeking process in the UK and some outrageous pirouetting and general scuffing up of the pitch which appeared to go unnoticed by the people that matter.

Then bizarrely Welwyn appealed for a run-out after the ball which appeared dead. Much appealing and the old adage of it at first you don't succeed then try try and why not shout again. Not surprisingly Nesan stood his ground and huge disappointment from the fielders was being shown. Unlike the previous week, Nesan despite getting similar treatment from West Herts for this time having the audacity to play straight, it clearly affected him and it was no surprise when he was gone 10 balls later in a soft fashion caught at mid-off again off the bowling of Frazer.

Still there was no sign of Kash as Mark Taylor strode out and for 4 balls, Sir George slayed the Welwyn attack. He struck two fine boundaries but was then run out as a relatively comfortable second run couldn't be completed. Two overs later Jared Norman was again adjudged leg before in debateable fashion and the game was over for Bar. Despite Kash coming in and striking three fine maximums, Bar were beaten and when Lenny Cooper tried an expansive drive and was caught at slip in the penultimate over before tea it was a matter of when Welwyn were going to wrap up the win, rather than anything else.

Kash went in strange circumstances for 31, attempting a reverse sweep which was well taken by skipper James at slip and in just 33.4 overs Dean Barker was bowled through the gate by Jamie Southgate for 2 and it was good night Charlie.

After doing so well in the field, Bar will be gutted at not at least getting closer than the 58 run defeat. For me the boys were bullied for the first time in a long, long time and yes some decisions didn't go their way and some of the antics shown were simply not on but we were beaten by the better team who batted out their overs and Eddie Ballard's 43 in 100 balls arguably won them the game. As one highly respected 1st team player started we needed to bat ugly to win. I couldn't agree more. We could have grounded out a win through not giving up after a poor start but fair play to the hosts, they bowled and fielded well and the pressure told for both players and officials and if they are consistent in this fashion, they will win the league.

The 2s also had a disappointing day at the office. After winning the toss and with just 8 players on the ground at the start of play Greg Hodge amazingly asked the hosts to bat. Finally after some 8 overs, the full allocation of fielders were there, Abbots were just 16 for 0. Thanks to a fine spell of off-spin from Luke Owers 4 for 19 and Dean Dass 2 for 43 set the 2s just 124 to win in lots and lots of overs.

It didn't start well as Davey Pett departed to a good delivery for just 6 but apart from Matt Evans 34 and Dean Dass 39, the boys capitulated to just 102. The shot selection was poor by many by all accounts and the boys mustn't just rely on the now arrived (well on Wednesday anyway) Addy Mehta to score the runs to win games. Like the 1s on Saturday hopefully it's a blip but people cannot throw wickets away like confetti.

The 3s had a great game on Saturday at The Walk and managed to pull off a last ball victory. Bar batted first and managed to rack up 196 for 6 off of their 53 overs. This was in the main down to half centuries from both skipper John Lewis and Chris Boyce. The cardboard cut-outs from Boxmoor tucked into some friendly fayre to start with but Paul McGee and Chris Boyce both took 5-fors to enable a 30-point haul in a thrilling finale.

The 4s coasted to a 10 wicket success over a struggling Elstree second eleven. Manjula Abesekra took a fine 7 for 20 and Mr J, Randika Guyantha took 3 for 15 shot out the hosts for just 67. Steve Moore 48* and Roy Metselaar 11* ensured the boys go their 2nd win on the trot and the only thing that's stopping them at the moment is rain.

The 5s had a farcical finish against Old Elizabethans. Despite the boys bowling out the visitors for 132 thanks to the mother of all scoring blunders a tie was the result, despite Bar scoring 9 more runs than they actually needed to win the game. Dave Rock 50 and Bertie Anderson 31 were the chaps in the runs but to score 9 runs more than is required is pure village behaviour. Hopefully some extra lessons on adding a maximum of 6 at a time will be sought this week so it doesn't happen again.

Next week sees the Bar take on Sawbridgeworth in the league on Saturday and the sooner the boys can get off the marks with a win the better. The 2s entertain Old Albanian and the returning Adjitka Mehta who will be warmly welcomed by one and all. The 3s travel to Hemel hoping to build on the win on Saturday and the 4s entertain Luton Town and Indians whereas the 5s will hope the Leather Bottle is open and a swift one can be had as they go in search of their first win of the season at Leverstock Green.

Until next time, have a good week, the future is bright, contrary to popular belief, the futures Potters Bar

Regards
Fred