

BAR THROUGH IN THE STANDARD IN THRILLING CLASH AND RAIN RUINS SATURDAYS ENCOUNTERS

Saturday

Wembley 121 for 3 off 34 overs

Potters Bar

A damp squib of a day saw the debuts of both Kaushayla Weearatne and Scott Fraser against Wembley in the drizzle and it didn't take long to see that both fellas are massive additions to our squad.

Kash took the new ball and his opening 5 overs were simply too good for the Wembley boys and his pace and movement wetted everyone's lips for the new season. For the record Kash conceded just 1 run off of his 5 overs and that a dab behind square to a lifting ball. As for Scotty, his keeping was neat and tidy, his general mannerisms in the field first class and he will fit in handsomely.

Yet again it was Michael John who was given the new ball, dismissed Oldroyd and then the pressure created by Kash saw Lenny Cooper take advantage by nipping out Green and O'Neill-Fuller and at 27 for 3 after 15 overs it was looking grim for the visitors, but thanks to the drizzle getting progressively worse and Lenny giving all the bowlers a run out with a wet ball, Wembley had started to power on and at 3-30pm the stumps were drawn with the visitors 121 for 3 with 11 overs of their 45 over allocation remaining.

As for Kash, he is a hell of a capture and there will be few in the league who will be quicker or does more with the ball and as for his batting he will certainly entertain and excite many, although I for one wouldn't want to bowl at him and I cant see a large queue of HCPL Division 2 East bowlers being formed either.

Moving on, the 2s suffered defeat at the hands of Abbots Langley and despite winning the toss and batting, Dave Pett's men were dismissed for just 76 and suffering some 'interesting' decisions found themselves with a mountain to climb and the hosts managed to crawl over the line 5 wickets down. Not a great start but with 5 players returning this week things should be far brighter next weekend.

The 3s started and struggled in all truth at Totteridge where thanks to the rain, it brought down the curtain when Rocky's boys were 76 for 6 and in it up to their necks. I for one was surprised to see Will Daley batting so low down on a surface that required a bit of technique and application and wasn't fit for the aggressive, shot ball members of the side – however that's just my opinion.

The 4s cantered to 100 for 2 off of just 28 overs with Johnny Lewis 60* and the returning Dean Barker 19* starting to put an imposing total on the board for Breezey's men, but thanks to a painfully slow over rate and the rain, the effort was in vain, but this is a show of how well the boys can play and a sign of better things to come as the weather becomes better throughout the season.

Sunday

Potters Bar 199 for 9 off 50 overs

Winchmore Hill 190 all out in 49.5 overs

One word sums this performance up – **pride** and I for one was a very proud chap watching a far from full strength Potters Bar show guts, determination and a sheer will to win that hasn't been seen in this intensity for a very long time. Let's make no bones, as wins go this one is right up there with some of the best the club has ever produced.

After a ridiculous magical mystery tour where it took 50 minutes for a 7-mile journey, we arrived late, harassed and under pressure and having being stuck in on what could only be described as a road, Bar set about attempting to set a challenging total and with new signing Scott Fraser and Nesan Jeyaratnam batting positively and for once we started like a house on fire.

Fraser struck the ball both cleanly and crisply and struck the boundary boards 6 times in an entertaining 35 and Nesan showed maturity beyond his years as he compiled a breezy 42. A flourish partnership between Mike Palmer and Jared Norman was brought to an abrupt halt after a ball had been struck to the boundary, clearly hit the rope, the fielder signalled four but Umpire Fountain let play carry on and with Jared left on strike he fell next ball.

138 for 3 saw an alarming collapse as Lenny Cooper was out leg before for 0, Paul Barker was spectacularly run out for 4 with a direct hit from 90 yards, Paul Martin was amazingly caught at square leg both one handed and in mid-air and John Erroll succumbed to a ball that shot back and removed his off peg. So a handsome position had turned into 154 for 7 but thanks to the ever reliable Mike Palmer 65* off of 104 balls and some intelligent play by Greg Hodge 14, we managed to claw up to 199 for 8 off of 50 overs and although it was a fair few light of an ideal total, it was still a total that was certainly something to defend.

Skipper Lenny Cooper turned to Michael John and himself to open the bowling and in truth the boys started in a positive manner. The fielding was hungry, everyone looked as if they wanted the ball and any thoughts of quick singles were eradicated by the eagerness of the Bar's bowling and fielding.

With the score on 28, Bar got the breakthrough as Neil Hurst was bowled by Michael John for 6 but this brought Winchmore Hill's skipper Andy Varley a hard hitting batsman to the wicket and he set upon the Bars attack and fully took advantage of the early fielding restrictions. He targeted Paul Barker early on but as Bar started to wilt and with just 97 left to win and in his penultimate over of his 10-over spell, Barker removed opener Bowen for 52 to a remarkable diving catch at deep point by Paul Martin and then trapped Mote lbw for 0 and Bar were back in the hunt with the score on 104 for 3.

Still though skipper Varley ploughed on, but pressure was starting to build as spinners Paul McGee and Nesan Jeyaratnam were speeding through their overs and the rate was starting to dry up and pressure ever so slowly was starting to mount. With just 51 wanted for victory Sasha Selveratnam was tempted into driving Paul McGee straight to mid-on, where Michael John held the simple chance. This brought Frankie Griffith to the wicket and he and Varley prodded their way slowly towards the target but Nesan Jeyaratnam slowly started to find the rhythm that had been missing so badly from his early matches but amazingly he clicked into gear and bowled with the right pace on a surface that really offered him little in assistance.

Firstly he enticed Griffith to smack the ball straight down deep square legs throat and then the massive wicket of Varley, for a fine 78 off of 99 balls as he was tempted to nibble at one where

an edge was snaffled up by Scott Fraser. The target was still just 29 away but three wickets for 2 runs edged the game massively in the favour of Bar and with 16 needed off the final over it proved too much for the hosts and Michael John wrapped up the match by cleaning up Kerry to secure a 9 run victory and one of the best comebacks against some fine opposition who took defeat both gracefully and with one hell of a lot of dignity and fair play to all and sundry at Winchmore Hill for that.

So this now means the boys face an away trip to Fives and Heronians on June 4 (a day before my well deserved two week break) in the second round and it's a game both sides will feel that they have a good chance of further progression in the competition.

Yours truly said last week that we had to give this game 'the full gun' and try and really have a good go at them and to a man this was the case and the self belief that this performance would have given not only the 1s but the club as a whole means that a good season should be in the offing and we have nobody to fear, as we have competed against one of Middlesex's premier sides and not only run them close but beaten them in an enthralling contest.

It almost sounds an anti-climax to state that the 2s also won a tight game on Sunday as they chased down 195 for victory thanks to 53 from Luke Owers and 49* from Dan Brown.

Next week sees the first league game for the 1s and a trip to Hertford who will prove difficult opposition as they came up from Division One and are used to winning more often than not – not only that but they are the Becker Cup holders and fair play to them for that although it has to be said the draws they had to get to the final were not shall we saying overly testing and that's being kind.

The 2s hope to avenge an opening day defeat as they entertain Kings Langley, the 3s entertain old rivals from previous seasons Hitchin 2s, the 4s travel to Old Camdenians ground to face Old Albanian 3s (**please note this is a change of venue**) and the 5s start off their campaign with a long trip to Reed.

Sunday sees the return of the double header and this time Winchmore Hill travel to the Walk as they will certainly look to advance in the National Competition where the winners of the tie will entertain either Radlett or Knebworth Park at the end of May. I am positive that Winchmore Hill will not be in the mood to be beaten again and yet again it will take a real effort from all involved to run them close again and if Sunday's match is anything like the one witnessed yesterday then the watching few will be treated to some great cricket – despite what Umpire Fountain stated to a club member on the phone this morning who didn't think he was watching Premier Standard cricket, far from it. I'd like to advise him to wash his eyes out as there were only 10 extra deliveries in 99.5 overs, (normally there would be three times that figure) a direct hit and a run out from 90 yards, three spectacular catches, some unbelievable stops, four innings of high class as well as some tight bowling. He obviously witnesses the great West Indies team of the 80's every week!

Added to that he didn't bother to thank either myself or my colleague at the end of the game for keeping everything ship shape in a tight game where wickets tumbled in clumps rather than in solitary spells and as both scorers and umpires are technically a team ensuring the players are free to enjoy the game and play it to the best of their ability I thought this was pretty poor show on his part.

Until next time have a good week and remember the futures bright, the futures Potters Bar

Regards
Fred