

KASH, BANG, WALLOP – WHAT A WIN!

Saturday

Hertford 264 for 7 off 60 overs

Potters Bar 268 for 4 in 43.4 overs

What a start for the boys as they went to last years Becker Cup holders and newly promoted Hertford and beat them with at least 6 overs remaining and a handsome 6 wicket victory.

On a wicket that looked green at first when we arrived, after a quick 'shave' the wicket turned from one that looked to give massive assistance to bowlers soon had the appearance of a bowlers graveyard and the scores are certainly testament to this.

Hertford won the toss on an overcast morning and surprised many but opting to bat first. We certainly would have inserted and this obviously suited both sides as at 11-30 the curtain was raised on the 2006 league campaign. After some early sparring, Bars overseas star Kaushayla Weeraratne bowled a low full toss that opener Canagasabey struck firmly but only picked out a flying Paul Barker at wide mid-on amazingly held on to a marvellous catch. 19 for 1 soon turned to 34 for 2 as Riddle nibbled at another perfectly delivered outswinger by Weeraratne and Mike Palmer took a simple catch at 3rd slip and Bar were in the pound seats.

After the opening spells had been completed Bar started to struggle as Lenny Cooper and Charlie Hodge struggled with their line and length and from a position of some promise, Hertford had raced to 78 for 2 off of just 20 overs and the pressure was starting to tell.

Thankfully, Lenny Cooper had three spinners up his sleeve and in Paul McGee and Paul Barker they certainly slowed the scoring rate and half an hour before the lunch break, the impressive Steve Cordingley whacked a ball straight to deep backward square leg, where Nesan Jeyaratnam held a scud missile of a catch and 102 for 3 turned into 128 for 3 at lunch off a reasonable rate of 38 overs which left 22 overs for Hertford to set a challenging total.

Bar continued with spin and seam after the break and Nesan Jeyaratnam removed the stubborn Cavener for a patient 50 off of 114 balls as Charlie Hodge took the catch and after Darby was adjudged LBW for just 7 giving Paul Barker his first wicket from returning from Welwyn Garden City, Bar were starting to turn the screw with the score on 179 for 5 with just 11 overs remaining.

Alas this brought Herts squad player Carlson to the wicket to join skipper Scott Ruskin and the two started to put Bar's tiring attack to the sword as Ruskin completed a fine innings of 62 off of 69 balls and the hard-hitting Carlson smashed 59 not out off of just 38 balls, hitting 4 fours and clearing the ropes on 5 occasions. The target was a large 265 for victory in a minimum of 50 overs and Bar simply had to attack from the start on a wicket that could only resemble the A10.

Mike Palmer and Ollie Coughlan opened the innings and it wasn't long before Coughlan was back in the hutch as despite striking a boundary second ball, he managed to powerfully strike a return catch to Carlson off of a rank full toss. 4 for 1 brought in Scott Fraser, who's keeping had been sound and with some attacking and sometimes bizarre field placings, Scott took advantage as his attacking instincts took over and he found both the wicket and the bowling to his liking.

Fraser raced to 36 off of just 26 balls but was then dropped at first slip but alas a wicket wasn't far away as Mike Palmer was undone by a good googly by Canagasabey and despite Jared

Norman looking in good touch, he steered a simple catch to short third man and Bar were now in trouble at 78 for 3 off of just 15 overs.

This brought overseas sensation Kash Weeraratne to the wicket and despite some early nerves and some 'questionable calling' it took just 3 balls before Kash had comfortably cleared the ropes and he was off and running. After a relatively sedate start, Kash took time to get used to the pace of the pitch and the Hertford attack and it was Scott Fraser who completed his first league 50 in just 61 balls in just over an hour.

Still Bar ploughed on but with both players starting to play for the tea break, the last ball of the session saw the game tip in the balance once more as Chris Box had Fraser trapped LBW for a well made 62 which contained 3 sixes and 7 fours. It was clear to see that Scott was tiring as the innings progressed but this was an excellent start and he is a massive capture for PBCC.

So with the score at 140 for 4 at tea, Bar still required 125 for victory off of a minimum 24 overs and a loss of Kash who was sat 38* off of 33 balls would have made the task very difficult but the burly Sri Lankan had other ideas. He was joined by skipper Lenny Cooper and it was Lenny who started the more positive as he sped to 22* off of 18 balls and Kash completed his maiden 50 in 55 balls.

However a vital dropped catch when Weeraratne was on 58 saw Bar then start to take full advantage and Kash just pressed firmer on the accelerator pedal and he smashed the Hertford attack to all parts of the Balls Park ground. One particular favourite was a 6 over the pavilion which many do not even go that far on their holidays and Kash smeared the bemused and battered Hertford bowlers and Kash's hundred came up in 89 balls and he completed his 118* in 92 balls with a massive 10 sixes and 8 fours. His last 60 runs came in just 24 balls! We mustn't forget skipper Lenny Cooper either who whilst watching the fireworks at the other end cruised to 41* off of just 47 balls and Bar had got off to a great start.

Let's make no bones, this was a great win but the good thing is this was far from the finished article. The bowling was put to the sword for large parts of the game and in Premier League cricket I'm not so sure we should be needing to use all 7 bowlers in just 60 overs – but at the end of the days that's picking holes and it mustn't take away a great victory against a decent side who will surprise many and win a lot of games, providing they chase as I for one cannot see them bowling too many sides out second time around.

Moving onto the 2s where they entertained Kings Langley where they got their first league draw in Division Two in a tight clash.

Despite having Kings Langley 40 for 4 and 80 for 5, the visitors managed to creep up to 191 for 8 off of their 53 overs. Greg Hodge bowled two fine spells and will be pleased with his 3 for 32 return but it's the batting that is letting Petty's men down at the moment. Despite Mark Taylor's fine 76 Bar were never really up with the rate and finished 20 runs short 8 wickets down but they will take great delight at getting 11 points after a disappointing first outing.

The boys in my opinion have nothing to fear in the league though and will surprise many. Bowling is their main strength with the likes of Michael John, Chris Boyce, Mark Taylor, Greg Hodge and throw in the returning Jeff Hackett into the mix then hopefully the batters will not have to chase too many this year!

The 3s won in impressive style against old foes Hitchin in a dour encounter down the School. Bar crept to 145 all out thanks to thirties from Dave Rock, Andy Hughes and Bob Daley and thanks to the ever nagging Rupert Pyrah and Neil Raisborough 4 for 27, Bar bowled out Hitchin, who came up with the boys last year for just 89 on a wicket slower than Forrest Gump.

The 4s and 5s were mullered plain and simple. The 4s lost by 120 runs to old Albanian 3s and were bowled out for just 114, exactly the same as the 5s who only took one wicket of Reeds 3rd XI in reply. In fairness, both sides were short due to illness and another reason of working rather than playing which on the day of the game should be a hanging offence!

Sunday

BAR OUT OF THE NATIONAL BUT HILL GIVEN FRIGHT OF THEIR LIVES

Potters Bar 151 for 9 off 45 overs
Winchmore Hill 152 for 9 in 38.3 overs

Potters Bar ran Winchmore Hill close again in a dreadful game but was high in excitement for a larger than usual crowd at the Walk. After the circus of last week, more of that later, Bar started slowly on a slow wicket which offered a great deal of turn and thanks to Mike Palmer 32 and Dean Dass 28 Bar set a mediocre total of 151 for 9 in their 45 overs.

The early loss of Prior gave Bar a slim chance but the brutal innings of 58 in 52 balls from ex-pro Danny Law took the game away from the Bar and although he and his partner were dismissed, with the score at 118 for 3 the game was done and dusted or it should have been anyway.

What happened in the ensuing 53 minutes was quite bizarre and the star studded visitors ought to be a tad embarrassed at their showing as they lost a remarkable 6 wickets for just 25 runs as some dreadful shot selection, panic and general poor cricket ensued a comeback akin to Noel Edmonds saw Bar in with a real chance with 9 to win, with the last pair at the wicket. Unfortunately a leg stump half volley served up by Lenny Cooper was dispatched and Winchmore Hill snuck home.

The two performances against Winchmore Hill has spelled out for me the transformation Potters Bar CC and last year we would have lied down and had our bellies tickled and we probably would have lost both games by a 8 or 9 wicket margin – not anymore. The fielding by all was keen, we have worryingly yet to drop a catch (famous last words) and we are bowling the right lines, which makes positive stroke play a risk.

Bar took nine Hill wickets and Paul McGee 3 for 18, Nesan Jeyaratnam 2 for 37 and Paul Barker 2 for 43 were the stars with the ball. Fair play to the visitors who came over following on from last week's debacle and played the game in a great spirit and hopefully we can put the sorry scenes of last weeks admin 'cock-up' behind us.

Re last week – we played Scott Fraser in the National and for various reasons the rules of the competition were not read thoroughly by all concerned and once the rules were received by yours

truly, it was as plain as day. I must state, we knew about this on Monday at 4pm and the speed of thought by the cricket committee meant that by 3pm Tuesday, we had **withdrawn** from the competition and not hauled out as many may have read and heard.

The tournament organisers, as well as Winchmore Hill both stated that we as a club had made a mistake, a genuine one at that and we acted with both great openness and dignity and our standing in next years competition is not at any stake whatsoever and we will be welcomed in with open arms.

Yes, a few ballsed up, early suspicions were proved right and we as a club acted both responsibly after the event and wish Winchmore Hill all the best for their next tie, which for the record is against either Fives & Heronians or Gore Court who play in darkest Kent.

What we did do was push a fine club all the way, not once but twice and holds our league season in great stead as at the end of the day we are never going to win either The Standard or the National but we can match sides from more illustrious company and that will do nothing but bolster everyone for the current campaign.

The 2s travelled to Kenton in what we can only say was a one-sided game. Bar won the toss and amassed the ridiculous total of 359 for 4 off 44.1 overs before skipper Dave Rock called a halt to proceedings – that isn't technically true as the scorebook drew a line on the innings as their wasn't anymore room!

The runs were dominated by Mark Taylor 104 and Kaushayla Weeraratne 101 (including a truly ridiculous 34 in an over 6, 6, 6, 6, 6, 4) Dave Rock 65 and Scott Fraser 47*. In reply, everyone had a bowl and the hosts ended up a tame 212 for 2 – who said Sunday friendly cricket was a total and utter waste of time?!

Next week sees the 1s entertain Sawbridgeworth who impressively won their first game against hated rivals Hoddesdon. Sawbo are a talented bunch, who we have had many hard games with in the past and we expect no different at the Walk. Last year was win a piece in the league – both pretty much one-sided affairs so who knows this time around.

The 2s travel to Reed who currently sit at the bottom of the table but that isn't the best guide to the early start. The 3s have a short trip to Cockfosters where they will be confident of continuing their unbeaten start and the 4s and 5s will be hopeful of getting their first wins as they entertain Southgate Adelaide 3s and Sawbridgeworth 5s respectively.

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

Regards
Fred