

## **BAR WIN BUT NEED ANOTHER, A WELWYN CHOKE OR A WEST HERTS INSPIRED DISPLAY NEXT WEEK**

### **Saturday**

**Hertford 188 all out off 59.4 overs**

**Potters Bar 190 for 4 in 45.2 overs**

Potters Bar won for the first time in a month and remained entrenched in second place in the HCPL Division 2 East but Welwyn Garden City's emphatic win over Hemel Hempstead means that just 4 points separates our rivals from the title.

Due to a bout of what time does the game start, Jared Norman tossed up, won it and inserted the doomed hosts and it was soon plain and simple to why he'd done it. The conditions were perfect for seam bowling early on and Kash Weeraratne and Gavin Baker bowled beautifully.

The first wicket wasn't long in coming – 14 balls in truth. Kash Weeraratne managed to entice Steve Riddle into a drive which he hit firmly only for a flying Jared Norman to hold a quite spectacular and amazing catch in the gully. 6 for 1 was soon 6 for 2 as Gavin Baker bowled the perfect leg cutter to Rob Carter. It pitched middle stump and crashed into the top of off-stump and the relegation candidates had got off to the worst possible start.

This brought 16 year old Will Bancroft and veteran run maker Cliff Cavener to the wicket and despite the youngster playing and missing more than he managed to hit, they slowly started to get the score back to some semblance of respectability. However just after the 50 had been brought up, Cliff Cavener struck a ball out to deep cover which he thought was heading for four. Nesan Jeyaratnam legged after it, hauled it in via a head long dive, and with an arrow like throw he ran the evergreen batter out by a yard whilst he was trying to complete a third run. A quite brilliant piece of fielding from Nesan. As good as Nesan and Jared's fielding was, Bar still managed to let themselves down in the innings through gifting the hosts three sets of overthrows, 2 went for 5 and 1 went for 6.

Hertford now had Scott Ruskin join Will Bancroft and those two started to bat a little more positively as the run rate was in desperate need of a shot in the arm. Lunch was reached with Hertford 92 for 3 with 25 overs remaining of the 60 allocation. The skipper Ruskin was 26 and the youngster Bancroft had crawled to 30 not out off of 105 balls.

The next 40 minutes after lunch saw wickets fall at a rate as Paul McGee was introduced. His spin twin Paul Barker enticed a hideous slog up in the air by skipper Ruskin and he was easily taken by Guy Thatcher. The Hertford captain had made 32 and the hosts were now 103 for 4. 15 balls later it was 105 for 5 as the 127-ball vigil of Will Bancroft was over as he went caught in soft fashion at slip off Paul McGee which was to be the first of five victims for the old campaigner for 36. Three balls later McGee struck again, this time youngster Oliver Ray went to a sharp slip catch by Dean Dass for 0 and Hertford had gone from 103 for 3 to 105 for 6 in the space of 21 balls.

Still the wickets kept coming. Rob Darby was the 7<sup>th</sup> wicket to go as he smacked a long hop straight to the on-running Nesan Jeyaratnam at deep square leg to hold another fine catch for 9 (116 for 7) and when Richard Cordingley was caught plumb in front for 3 Hertford were 129 for 8 with 11.1 overs remaining.

For some reason Bar didn't drive home the advantage as Chris Box and Tom Bancroft put on 56 58 balls as they hit the ball hard and ran well. Bancroft went for 29 off of just 32 balls as he was caught at deep midwicket by Dave Breeze of Paul McGee to complete his first league '5-for' of the season and Kash Weeraratne bowled Box for 40 off of 41 balls and the hosts had set Bar 189 to win from 50 overs.

With Hertford employing more slow bowlers than Sri Lankan team full of slow bowlers, we were always going to receive more than the permitted allocation. The expected amount was nearer 57 overs. Although Hertford bowled tightly early on, they never looked like getting through the opening partnership of Mike Palmer and Nesan Jeyaratnam with the latter looking in fine touch.

With Hertford starting to run out of ideas, Nesan Jeyaratnam went for 32, his umpteenth score in the early 30's caught well low down at slip and Bar were 47 for 1. At the other end Mike Palmer was quite happy batting at his own pace and was not going to give his wicket away cheaply.

Dean Dass joined Mike but looked rusty in truth and he went for just 9 although it took another good catch to dismiss him. Bar were 59 for 2 and this brought in skipper Len Cooper to the wicket. Lenny hasn't had a great year with the bat this year but in the 30-odd minutes he was at the wicket he showed glimpses of what a fine batsman he is and he and Mike took the score to 103 for 2 at tea.

Bar required 86 from 100 minutes. There were 20 overs remaining but Hertford were bowling far, far quicker than that and this meant if the boys batted sensibly they'd have this game all sewn up.

Alas just 7 balls after tea, Len went for 26 to a catch which mirrored Jared Norman's flying effort in the gully and Dave Breeze went to another low diving effort at extra cover and Bar were wobbling a little at 4 for 136. In truth though Bar had a lot more left in the hutch and Kash Weeraratne joined Mike at the wicket.

Mike brought up his first 50 of the season with a trademark cover drive off of the Hertford skipper Scott Ruskin. It came off 115 balls in 127 minutes and this along with some quite retched bowling allowed him to cut loose. At the other end Kash was a little more circumspect than normal but still managed to find the boundary when the opportunity came along, although Tom Bancroft bowled a decent spell at him.

With the victory target well in sight, Kash played a fine clip off the legs for 4 which brought up their 50 partnership off of 54 balls. With another over pitched delivery Mike struck his 14<sup>th</sup> boundary of a fine innings to bring home the bacon and Bar's eighth win of a stop-start season. Mike ended 79\* off of 139 balls and Kash Weeraratne 22\* off of a sedate 34 balls.

What was interesting was the discovery of Hertford who are now all but down will be getting an overseas player in next year to aide their efforts in rejoining this particular standard of cricket. Ironically Hertford weren't impressed, at us in particular, for having an overseas player, after Kashies 118 off of 90 balls last season. Oh well, we wish the best as Hertford has one of the nicer grounds in Hertfordshire and a return must be good.

The 2s were involved in a bore draw against title chasing Reed at The Walk. The promotion chasers racked up 228 for 5 from 52 overs mainly thanks to some quite woeful catching and a fielding display that would have many of the U-11's embarrassed to be associated with. After a

slower start than the snooker equivalent of Terry Griffiths and Eddie Charlton, Bar were never at any time up with the rate and ended up 156 for 8 from their 48 overs. The result was enough for Reed to get promoted and I doubt they would have minded one iota of Bar's poor effort in order to chase down the target. In fact the thought of Flitwick staying down another year left everyone with a bit of cheer. Mr Gurney, hard luck old chap.

The 3s pulled off the result of the weekend in arguably the whole league structure with a nervy 13 run win over previously unbeaten Parkfield & Headstone. Bar won the toss and only Steve Moore managed to get in behind it and accumulate runs on a slow Bentley Heath pitch. His 49 enabled Bar to make 130 but a calamitous loss of 6 wickets for 17 enabled Bar to bowl out the title chasers for just 117 with a welcome return to the 5 wicket brigade for Rupert Pyrah who ended with 7 for 46 from another marathon spell.

The 4s sadly lost to Potton Town 2s and are now really looking over their shoulders for next week. After being inserted, Bar made 158 with Charlie Scutt making 60 and skipper Paul Kennedy a valiant 25\*. It was never going to be enough as the Bedfordshire got home with 11 balls to spare and 4 wickets left in the bag.

Next week sees the final round of matches and probably the last cricket of 2007. The 1s entertain Stevenage knowing that only a win and a miracle will see the boys lift the title. The only thing we as a side can do is go out, enjoy the game and try and win the game. The first target will be to gain 8 points, which will see us finish in a guaranteed second position which is two places higher than we managed last year and 7 places higher than that of 2 years ago. The proof is there that we have improved wholeheartedly and that cannot be forgotten. One thing is that Welwyn Garden City are renowned last day chokers but even 4 points from the last game against West Herts is even beyond the abilities of nerves but you never know.

The 2s will go with a strong side to face relegation threatened Northwood Town who simply have to get three more points than Old Albanian who travel to Watford Town. The 2s need a win to have any chance of finishing the highest placed 2<sup>nd</sup> eleven in the competition. In truth the sides and availability Greg has had at his disposal hasn't always been the best and a top 10 finish, which they should be more than capable of, will still be a great achievement.

The 3s can put their feet up, bring in the games and wear their own clothes at the weekend as they need a point to guarantee Division 6 cricket next year as they travel to title chasing Northchurch 2s. They have like the 2s really gone through the mire availability wise and have managed to win at a vital time. They like the top 2 elevens desperately need an influx of players as they need to keep improving and giving the emerging young players from the 4s and 5s in later years a good standard of cricket to look to get into.

The 4s have a home game, at Old Owens this week as they play Old Elizabethians who currently sit in 3<sup>rd</sup> spot. The boys must look to win the game to make sure they start next year in Division 9. A draw and it will mean the league table and several phone calls will need to be made. There are about 6 teams in the shake-up and it will be a tense finish down in the depths of Division 10.

A sad note to end on I am afraid. Sunday saw the death of Cockfosters scorer Mike Pratt who was sadly taken ill at the Northwood v Cockfosters game on Saturday. He suffered a double heart attack and passed away Sunday morning. Mike was a nice bloke, loyal to his club and like every club, needs people of his ilk to survive and allow the players to just turn up and play. Everyone at Potters Bar sends their condolences.

Until next week, have a good one and remember the futures bright, the futures Potters Bar  
Regards  
Fred