

## **BAR EXTEND LEAD IN A TIGHT ENTHRALLING GAME**

### **Saturday**

**Potters Bar 303 for 5 in 53 overs**

**Bishops Stortford 275 all out in 61.3 overs**

Potters Bar strengthened their position at the top of table with a tight and nervy finish at Bishops Stortford which gave them their 7<sup>th</sup> win and continued their 100% record from completed matches.

On a scorching morning, Bar lost the toss and were inserted on a wicket which could only be described as flat. The heavy roller had basically rolled any life out of it and made it a strip where batters would be the likely winners.

However in truth Bishops Stortford bowled really well early on and the in-form Banger (Kevin Walls) kept finding the right line and length to keep in form Steve Gale in check. It wasn't long before the batters finally found their feet as Nesan Jeyaratnam played two lovely cover drives which sped to the fence but at the other end Steve Gale was struggling. It came as no surprise as he went to a simple catch and Bar were 35 for 1 and Stevie G gone for just 9.

Bar's overseas player Lanka de Silva joined Nesan Jeyaratnam at the crease the partnership was soon broken as Banger enticed a poor shot from Nesan as he was caught for 22 and Bar were 44 for 2 after 16 overs. Adam Norman fared no better as the ex-Welwyn sightscreen mover picked up his third wicket from a fine spell of bowling as he was bowled for 8 and Bar were struggling at 3 for 62 and 22 overs had already disappeared.

Thankfully though Bar had arguably their best two batters at the wicket and Nick Walker did what Nick Walker did best and blazed his way out of trouble with some scintillating cricket shots. As Nick opened his shoulders, Lanka found the bowling to his liking as the tiring Whittingham was struggling for a decent line and length and the spinners were simply not bowling in the right areas either.

Still though the two batters strode on and the 100 came up with one of the biggest sixes seen at Cricketfield Lane as Walks deposited a looped half volley into the road with a carry in excess of over 110 metres. As lunch approached Bar stepped on the gas and at lunch Bar were sat 130 for 3 from just 31 overs with Lanka 40\* and a simply amazing 44\* from just 22 balls from Nick Walker.

After the break Bar went from strength to strength. Nick Walker completed his 50 in just 28 balls with a clip to the leg side but sadly the fireworks came to an abrupt halt as he was brilliantly taken at long on by Kevin Walls who took it about 4 foot off the ground. Whether he was attempting to dive out of the way is both harsh and unfair but it was as good a catch at club cricket level as you will see. With Walks departed for 58 and he was joined by skipper Len Cooper who'd yet to bat in the league this season.

Lanka completed his 6<sup>th</sup> half century of the season with a trademark whip through square leg this brought up his milestone in 71 balls, with 11 boundaries. At the other end Len was easing his way into the proceedings but found the tired bowling to his liking as he drove his way to 20 in no time at all.

The 200 came up for the Bar after 42 overs and Stortford were literally blowing. They put so much effort in the first session they had nothing in the tank and Bar went for the jugular. Lanka upped the rate as Coleman, Lindop and Premadasa simply had no answer to the little Sri Lankans stroke play.

Sadly, Lenny Cooper went as he was clean bowled from Whittingham's first ball from his second spell for a lovely 39 from just 41 balls in an innings which contained 2 sixes and 3 fours. This brought the Catherine Wheel that is Dave Breeze to the crease and the overseas star of Stortford lit the touch paper and Breezey went off like the clappers.

Dave's first three deliveries were all dispatched for 4 and only a brilliant stop at cover stopped it being 4 in 4. Alas the crowd weren't to be disappointed as next ball he cut Whittingham to the boundary for a 4<sup>th</sup> four in 5 balls and Bar were now 263 for 5 off of 49 overs.

The next ball of the innings brought up Lanka's first 100 for the club and what a fine one it was too. A chanceless innings of 110 balls in 141 minutes with a six and 14 fours saw his average rise to one of over 100. Lanka now took a back seat as Breezey powered on and struck another 4 fours off a cleared knackered and highly disappointed Whittingham and clipped a 6 into the car park off the skipper Lindop.

Bar finished early on 303 for 5 from 53 overs, with Lanka sat 108\* and Dave Breeze 44\* from just 21 balls. That's now 4 innings from the Breeze dog and he's yet to be dismissed in league cricket. So the hosts were set an unlikely 304 to win in a minimum 57 overs on a pitch that was flatter than road kill.

With Stortford being on the hole a young and ambitious side, they set about the target with a great deal of belief and a flurry of early boundaries as Matt Surry and Luke Padgett saw off Sir Charles Hodge of Blackheath, skipper Len Cooper and didn't have too many hardships off of Nick Walker.

The youngsters brought up the 50 stand in just 46 balls as Bar were looking bereft of ideas but it took a shooter from Nick Walker to get the first wicket as Matt Surry went back and was plumb in front for 25 as Stortford had lost their first wicket for 62 in the 11<sup>th</sup> over. This now brought in ex-Welwyn Garden City player and current Cambridge Uni player Ed Ballard and both he and Luke Padgett played nicely and looked in no real problems as the electronic scoreboard ticked round with regularity.

Padgett completed a fine 50 off of just 46 balls, hitting 9 boundaries as Stortford started to sense a famous chase but the glory was short lived. An attempted bouncer from Will Van der Maat was top edged by Padgett and this brought out a brilliant two handed diving catch by Dean Dass after running back from slip and the hosts were now 88 for 2 after just 16 overs.

Antony Brown joined the Cambridge blue at the wicket and the introduction of Paul McGee slowed the rate down a little but still the hosts were batting nicely and in truth not too many troubles. However the closer it got to the tea break, the more the panic and the rate shot up. There were umpteen close calls on runs that were simply not there and wickets were in the air. Tea arrived with Stortford 127 for 2 from 30 overs requiring another 177 to win from a minimum of 27 overs, more likely to be 35 overs with Bar getting through the overs at breakneck speed.

With wickets in the air, it wasn't long before the breakthrough came. Ballard who'd played well for 33 got a ball that got big on him and he top edged to Dean Dass at slip off Nick Walker and 2

balls later Steve Coleman went back when he should have played forward and was leg before for 0 and they had gone from 134 for 2 to 134 for 4.

This now brought Aussie Darren Whittingham to the wicket with the rocket probably still ringing in his ears from refusing to eat with his team mates at lunchtime and he started positively. Both he and Antony Brown played well and the 150 was passed in no time and they were starting to look in a position to push on and get close to Bars imposing total.

The 200 arrived in the 45<sup>th</sup> over but the chase was effectively over as 2 balls later Dean Dass took his third and best catch of the innings as he dived full length and one handed caught the left hander for 47.

It was now up to Darren Whittingham and how good a player he was if he was to pull off the unthinkable. Premadasa went for 10 as he was bamboozled by Paul McGee and was stumped by Lanka de Silva and next ball Tom Chapman was leg before to Macca as Stortford were crumbling. Credit to Whittingham he ploughed on with a fine array of powerful striking but he lost Dodshon for 5 as Macca's moon ball proved to wiley and when the Aussie import finally went, top edging to Walks at midwicket for a fine 86 the game was almost Bar's.

At the wicket was Kevin 'Banger' Walls who is the original walking wicket. With the spectators cars already purring waiting for a quick getaway he majestically struck Macca for a square drive which sped to the rope for four and time was running out for Bar.

In the 62<sup>nd</sup> over and with just 8 minutes left for play, the decisive delivery was bowled. Skipper Lindop edged, struck Dean Dass on the shoulder and ballooned to a diving Dave Breeze who held the catch. Mass appealing ensued and a quick consultation from Umpires Hall and Hinstridge who were excellent throughout the piece and the decision had gone our way and a 7<sup>th</sup> straight win was the Bars.

Credit must go to Stortford who are a good young team but Bar had pulled out all the stops to record a great win on a flat pitch to go 46 points clear of the pack. Of the bowlers only 2 really came to the party. Paul McGee who is bowling as well as he has for a very long time took 6 for 69 from just shy of 20 overs toil and Nick Walker bowled all the way throughout taking 3 for 119 from 31 overs.

The 2s finally got back to winning ways with a good 3 wicket win over Watford at The Walk. Greg Hodge's boys bowled the visitors out for 164 from 50.4 overs and got off to the worst possible start as Tom Pett went for a round one and Mike Palmer tore a hammy. However thanks to 45 from Davey Pett, 42 from Addy Sheth and 28 from Dan Brown saw Hodgey's boys home with 4 overs remaining and gain a vital 30 points.

The 3s managed to hang on for grim death against Championship chasing Totteridge Millhillians 3s. After having the newly merged club 114 for 7, they managed to creep up to 185 for 9 from their 53 overs. Both Rupert and skipper Neil Raisborough taking 3 wickets each. 41 from Johnny Lewis and 38\* from Navinder Nath and some stout defence from Rupert Pyrah saw the 3s finish 143 for 9 from 47 in their response and leave unbeaten but with just 6 points to their name.

The 4s suffered a crushing 10 wicket defeat against Langleybury 3's. Will Daley, skipper for the day made 58 before losing his wicket to do the sandwiches. The 4s made 168 for 9 from 53 overs but the Mrs Mangleberries tapped them off for 0 with an amazing 22.5 overs remaining.

Poor news from the 5s who slipped to defeat at the hands of Old Owens 3s who came prepared with laptops and all and sundry for registration purposes. Come on lads, its Division 12 for crying out loud and to think 60 colts headed down your way don't you think you've had enough over the years? The 5s made just 134 and the Old Boys tapped them off for the loss of 5 wickets.

## **NESAN'S 100 PUTS BAR THROUGH TO LAST SIXTEEN**

### **Sunday**

**Saffron Walden 219 for 8 in 50 overs**

**Potters Bar 220 for 4 in 45.4 overs**

Strike a light Bar have only managed to beat one of the most famous cricket clubs in the South East as they stride on into the last sixteen of the prestigious Evening Standard Cricket Trophy.

Despite Walden missing their Essex starlets, they still had some fine players on show and they won the toss and elected to bat first on a rock hard pitch, a credit to the hard work Curator Dave Lol does.

The Essex Premier League side started off in confident fashion as they attacked from ball one and a flurry of boundaries and some keen and energetic fielding kept the score to a semblance of respectability early on. But with the boundaries came an over confidence as Parmenter played one shot too many as he held out to Alex Whitehouse at square leg off Greg Hodge and when the 2s skipper removed Ryan Sparrow for 18 and Charlie Knightley for a duck, Walden had been brought back to earth with a bump at 56 for 3.

There was then a spell of consolidation as Ray Mordini and Giles Ecclestone got in behind it and started to get the score up the three figure mark. The introduction of Paul McGee and Tom Rowlands had reduced the visitor's rate to a crawl after their rip roaring start. The rate would be further curtailed as Ecclestone was well taken at mid-on by van der Maat off 15 year old Tom Rowlands for 30. Giles Ecclestone has been a top, top club cricketer for a very long time and for young Tom to get him is testament to how much he is progressing.

The 100 finally arrived at the end of the 28<sup>th</sup> over and with 4 down and an injured Neil Gladwin at the wicket Bar's hopes to chase a challenging total was possible.

However Gladwin and Mordini ploughed on but McGee enticed the now desperate Mordini into a desperate rush down the wicket only to be stumped by stand-in glove man Steve Gale for 34. Gladwin survived a vociferous appeal by bowler and keeper for a catch behind which appeared a good one but he kept his head and batting with a runner started to up his and the Essex sides run rate.

Price went for 19 as he was taken nicely again by Whitehouse off the now clearly fit again Len Cooper and when Mackinlay went for 0 as Van der Maat cleaned him up Saffron Walden were 189 for 7 with 25 balls left. Veteran Tim Smith went for a quick fire 9 as van der Maat took a blinder at mid-off of the skipper Len Cooper and thanks to some lusty hitting from the visitors skipper Gladwin he ended 62\* and the visitors ended 219 for 8 from their 50 overs. Gladwin who 'survived' the mother of all appeals batted for 68 balls, struck 2 sixes and hit 8 fours.

So 220 to win at 4.4 runs per over and Bar started confidently with Steve Gale and Nesan Jeyaratnam finding the ropes with some trademark drives and clips off the legs. The prolific two openers batted with a great deal of sense and it was of no surprise that with 10 coming off Mackinlay's second over saw the 50 partnership and give Bar a great platform to get close to the target.

Sadly Steve Gale went as he mis-timed a pull as he held out to mid on for 20 and Dave Pett lasted 8 balls as he top edged a mis-timed pull to square leg for 0 and Bar were 56 for 2 off of 13 overs. This brought in skipper Len Cooper to the wicket fresh after his 39 from his first 'meaningful' bat of the season. He took 11 off of Ryan Sparrow's second over but at the other end the wily Tim Smith's collection of drifters and cutters were being played watchfully as hay was certainly being made at the other end.

Alas skipper Cooper went for 17 as he was stumped after some swift work from ex-Essex keeper Gladwin saw his demise. 93 for 3 saw the in-form Dave Breeze join the now set Nesan Jeyaratnam at the wicket and the two fellas saw off the wiles of Tim Smith as his 10 overs had cost just 19. Nesan Jeyaratnam brought up his 50 in 96 balls as Bar started to relax and pick off the 5 an over required with a bit of ease in truth and the Saffron Walden boys appeared to be going through the motions and there was also a little of ball following by Neil Gladwin.

The boys 50 partnership arrived in 74 balls as the 150 was brought up and still Nesan and Breezey were batting majestically. Ecclestone did break through as he forced a tired shot from Dave Breeze as he went for 34 and Bar still wanted 42 from 58 balls.

In came Will van der Maat one of the heroes from the last round at Blackheath and he set about the bowling straight away. 'Vanders' looking like a smaller version of Chris Read drove elegantly to the ropes as the 200 was brought up.

However it was to be Nesan's day as he clipped the ball wide of mid-on to bring up his first 'main' 100 for the club and with that Walden were a beaten side. The game was finished with 26 balls remaining with 6 wickets left in the hutch.

Nesan ended 106\* which came in 150 balls and contained 13 fours in a classy, chanceless innings. Will van der Maat who took a wicket and took 2 catches made 15\* off of just 17 balls. So Bar had progressed past a famous old name in club cricket. Credit to Saffron Walden whose behaviour in defeat was a credit to everyone of their players, coach and supporters. So we are now in the last 16 and have been given another home game, this time against High Wycombe on Sunday July 13.

Next week sees the last round of matches before the halfway stage. The 1s entertain Harpenden hoping to maintain and extend their league lead which stands at 46 points. The 2s travel to Rickmansworth and the 3s also get on their bikes as they play Boxmoor away. The 4s entertain Baldock 2s and the 5s travel to Botany Bay 3s. Sunday sees the County Cup emerge from the shadows again as we have another home game, this time against the newly formed Totteridge Millhillians from Division One.

So after a great weekend, have a good week and remember the futures bright, the future is Potters Bar

Regards  
Fred