

## **SQUEAKY BUM TIME AS BAR ARE OFF AND STORTFORD WIN**

### **Saturday**

#### **Hemel Hempstead 100 for 0 off 21 overs**

The drizzle and then heavy rain curtailed Bar's march towards the league title and the lead has now been shrunk from as many as 52 points some 4 weeks ago, to just 8 points and with just 5 games remaining.

On a green pitch which was suffering from the odd damp patch from a set of covers which didn't quite do their job, Bar won what everyone thought be a great toss to win but with the rain coming down, a wet ball and a pitch which if you got it wrong was akin to a free hit Bar wasted the new ball.

Bar actually should have struck early on as makeshift opener James Potton was dropped at square leg by Steve Gale, clearly still suffering the effects of a heavy day at his old clubs 8-a-side tournament the previous day. That drop was as good as it got for Bar, as the rain got heavier, the bowling more erratic and the Hemel boys in truth put us to the sword.

Hemish Ilangaratne batted as well as I've seen him and he actually looked to attack from ball one and he continued his amazing sequence of scores against us. In the last three years he's now averaged 82.25 and would have increased on that had it not have been for the rain. The 50 partnership came up in just 61 balls and Hemish brought up his 50 in just 62 balls, striking 7 boundaries. At the other end, James Potton played nicely and was 42 not out as the hundred was reached in just 21 overs and Umpires finally brought a halt to play as conditions were quite rankly ridiculous.

Sadly as the game was called off at a shade past 2pm and many of the Bar's players were on route to watch the 2s the sun came out but the way Bar had started had probably put pay to Bar gaining a positive result.

With Sawbridgeworth's pathetic capitulation, where after being 90-odd for 0 chasing 201, they lost 10 wickets for 60 and thus place Bishops Stortford who are a fine side, right up there with a great chance. 5 games remain and in the words of the late, great Brian Moore, "its up for grabs now" and the rewards there for all to see. Despite the amazing record of 9 wins 1 draw, 1 defeat and 2 rain-offs we are just 8 points clear and still need to win maybe as many as 4 matches to claim the title. Thoughts of the game against Stortford on Aug 30 must be put to the back of the mind as they have 2 hard matches coming up and we must take it a game at a time, starting with a rejuvenated North Mymms on Saturday.

With the 1s cricket being off, details are sketchier than a set of Portugese Police files but the 2s lost again this time to Raj and the boys down at Northwood Town. The visitors managed to get 83 off the last 10 overs to post an impressive 200 for 6 from 52 overs. Bar sadly capitulated again to a sorry 145 all out with just Dean Dass making 30-odd.

The 3s managed to claim a draw in a decent game of cricket against Letchworth's 3<sup>rd</sup> string. The visitors racked up 200 for 7 and in reply the 3s finished on 172 for 8. Michael John took 3 for 58 and Haydn Rogers struck a handsome 55 before losing his wicket.

The 4s managed a much needed win in an exciting encounter at Stevenage against their 3s. The hosts made 137 but Berties army chased them down with 1 ball remaining 9 down. Sadly though it looks like Division 13 cricket for Col Titmuss' boys as they lost for the 10<sup>th</sup> time this season as they could only muster 44 against Letchworth 5s. Fair play to the boys as at one point they had the visitors 5 down for 20 but a couple of boundaries got them home and gave them the points.

## **OVAL DREAM OVER AS BAR ARE SOUNDLY BEATEN**

### **Sunday**

**Potters Bar 95 all out in 26.5 overs**

**Sunbury 96 for 1 in 16.4 overs**

Potters Bar's marvellous run in the Evening Standard Cricket Trophy has finally come to an end after a heavy defeat in the rain at Sunbury on Sunday.

After the mother of all showers en route and continuous rain and drizzle, the game was reduced from a 50-over to a 30-over per side match and with Bar winning the toss, skipper Len Cooper thought it best that Bar try and set a target and then put pressure on the hosts second time around on a used pitch. Alas the plan didn't work as Sunbury bowled and fielded brilliantly although in truth Bar did contribute to their own downfall.

With the game reduced, Bar were clearly caught out as they started off as if it were a Twenty/20 game with some big shots aimed at balls which in truth were simply not there to hit. There are 180 balls available and the target had to be a run a ball as 180 would have really took some beating.

But Bar started off poorly as Adam Norman was first to go as he was bowled "neck n crop" by Roland-Jones for 6, as an expansive drive to a ball which wasn't quite in the slot crashed into his off stump. 6 for 1 saw Nick Walker promoted up the order to put bat to ball and he found Staniers' bowling much to his liking as he clubbed 18 off his second over and Bar were for arguably the only time in the game sat pretty at 28 for 1 off just 4 overs.

Nesan Jeyaratnam though departed as he tried to hit over the top and he lost his middle stump as Roland-Jones now had 2-for and Bar were 30 for 2. It was soon 37 for 3 as Bar new boy Suliman Hussain whipped a ball off his toes and it took a good catch at wide mid-on to account for the debutant and it was 40 for 4 when Nick Walker tried to flick the ball off his hip and he was 'trapped' leg before. Bar's luck was to only get worse as Len Cooper who looked in good touch, got a similar decision by Umpire Edwards, who like his counting to six had an unusual interpretation.

Then disappointingly a slow creep to the end of the innings ensued as Bar scored a few but a regular loss of wicket saw them make a poor and pitiful 95 before succumbing in just 26.5 overs. Jared Norman went stumped for 4 as he lost his balance and Dave Breeze slapped a wide ball straight to short extra cover. Will van der Maat looked good and stuck at it but he was plumb in front for 15 and Dave Pett went for 6 and Paul McGee was brilliantly taken at deep backward square for 2. This left Dave Rock stranded on 9\* and fair play to Sunbury they were excellent in

the field. They fielded with energy and backed up their bowlers who were miserly and never took their foot off the pedal.

So defending just 95 Bar needed to strike early and they couldn't have got a better start. After just 5 balls into his spell Suliman Hussain struck as Max Hall went for the big booming drive and missed and also lost his off pole. 1 for 1 and it should have been 11 for 2 as Stewart Poynter edged a regulation catch to first slip and it was shelled sadly by Jared Norman and this was the cue for the young Irishman to put his foot to the floor and drive Bar out of the Standard.

As the rain clouds were gathering and the next deluge was not far away, Poynter, currently in the Middlesex set-up played quite beautifully. The highlight for me an on drive timed to perfection which disappeared over Hussain's head and over the line for 6. Poynter raced to a 38-ball fifty and Bar's hopes had long gone.

The hosts scampered to a 9 wicket win with a massive 80 balls to spare and deservedly go through to the Semi Final. He and the now contracted Middlesex man Adam London put on 95 in just 90 balls. Poynter ended 62\* in an innings which contained a six and 9 fours. London ended 25\* in a more sedate affair.

So the dream is over for this season but the boys can be mightily proud of what they have achieved in this run. From the first round non-appearance over Old Actonians, the amazing win over Blackheath, the brilliant hundred by Nesan Jeyaratnam over Saffron Walden and the strangling of the much talented High Wycombe. We can really be proud of what we as a club have achieved and hope this has whetted the appetites of all at Potters Bar as to what this club can achieve in the long term.

A word must also go out to the many supporters and well wishers who both travelled to Sunbury and kept in contact with the boys through an array of mobiles. The support as always was much appreciated and the boys were disappointed both for themselves and the people who travelled that they couldn't repeat the performances of the previous rounds. However there is always next year and this run has already given us a bye through to Round 2 next year, providing the sponsorship is there.

Next week sees the last 5 weeks of the season and the 1s have another big weekend in front of them. Saturday they take on local rivals North Mymms, looking to return to winning ways and strengthen their position at the top of the league. Suliman Hussain is set to make his home league debut and the signs from his first outing were certainly encouraging. Sunday sees the much put back County Cup Quarter Final as Bar travel to fierce rivals Welwyn Garden City who have had a great first season in the top league. This will be the benchmark of just how far we have come on from last year and with availability good we will at least be in a position to have a real go. The winners play North Mymms at home on August 17.

The 2s who are on a shocking run of late travel to Flitwick hoping to ram some words down the throat of Mr Gurney who always seems to say his piece against all and sundry in Division 2 without a great deal of thought. We will have to "wait n see" as the hosts have the Indian sign on the boys as they have won the previous 2 encounters and Greg's team will have to be at their best to gain a much needed win which will probably ensure they have Division 2 status next season.

The 3s after travel to Balls Park to play Hertford's 3<sup>rd</sup> string and the 4s have yet another home game, this time against Bayford & Hertford 2s and the 5s despite needing snookers travel to Hemel's 5<sup>th</sup> team.

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

Regards  
Fred