

## **ANOTHER WASHOUT SEES NO CHANGE AT THE TOP**

### **Saturday**

#### **North Mymms 84 for 3 off 24.5 overs**

For a second successive weekend the 1s league game was ruined by the weather and has still left them 8 points clear at the top of the HCPL Division 2 East with just 4 weeks left of the season.

In the wind and drizzle Bar skipper Len Cooper won the toss and asked local rivals North Mymms to have first use of the wicket and it wasn't long before Bar broke through. One time target Mark Saxby was well taken by Nick Walker off skipper Len Cooper's bowling for 7 and when Herts skipper Andy Lewis went for 14 caught at slip off Nick Walker the visitors were 45 for 2.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> wicket soon followed on 62 as Nick Walker removed the in-form Rhys Wynne for 31 but by now the rain had started to increase and the conditions were more akin to water polo rather than league cricket. The umpires finally called it a day with Mymms 84 for 3 from just shy of 25 overs.

So this leaves Bar 8 clear at the top with 2 home games and 2 away games left to play. Next they entertain relegation threatened Langleybury at The Walk on Saturday.

To be honest the weather ruined the whole of the cricket calendar for the rest of the boys. Flitwick called the game off almost as soon as Greg Hodge's boys get their kit out of the car, and the 3s, 4s and 5s were all called off without a ball being bowled.

## **BAR FALL SHORT IN EXCITING RUN CHASE**

### **Sunday**

#### **Welwyn Garden City 309 for 7 off 48 overs**

#### **Potters Bar 151 all out in 25 overs**

So Bar finally bow out of the County Cup with a frustrating 9 run defeat to HCPL Division One side Welwyn Garden City at Digswell Park on Sunday. In truth, the 9 run defeat arguably doesn't tell the whole story as close as the final result was, the better side won the game as Bar, particularly in the field were chasing shadows for large parts.

Bar skipper Len Cooper lost the toss and the hosts had first use of a pitch which would be good for batting and they certainly wasted no time in putting bat to ball. Ex-Middlesex and Kent all-rounder Jamie Hewitt and Ben Frazer treated the Bar attack with utter disdain early on with the hard hitting opening pair sprinting to a 50 partnership in just 40 balls as the Bar had no answer.

Frazer was batting like a million dollars as time after time he found the ropes and he rocketed to a 37 ball fifty which contained 2 sixes and 7 fours. At the other end Jamie Hewitt was 'switch hitting' and reverse sweeping his way to an entertaining 36 but his fun was soon brought to an end as he was stumped by Lanka de Silva off of the bowling of Nesan Jeyaratnam. Some would say he was taking the rise, some would say it was excellent batting but I'll leave you to decide. 96 for 1 was soon 113 for 2 as Herts prolific all-rounder Aaron Laraman flashed to a diving Mike

Palmer at slip to go for just a single and Bar had gained a glimmer of control. This should have increased as Aussie import Derek Tate was dropped in soft fashion on just 7 and this was the key for both he and the now imperious Frazer to up the rate even more. The pair brought up a 50 run stand in just 52 balls as the Bar boys were starting to run a little low on ideas.

The 150 came up in the 24<sup>th</sup> over as the total looked to be heading for 320+ as the Bar bowling and fielding was shall we say a little laboured. Still Frazer and Tate powered on but as Ben Frazer entered the 90's his batting became more circumspect and with it he lost his wicket as he was well taken at backward point off Paul McGee for 98. His 77 ball stay contained 13 fours and 3 sixes and gave the hosts a great platform to bat Bar out of the game. 170 for 3 was soon 189 for 4 as Tate was bowled by Paul McGee for 39 but with 18 overs still remaining the total was going to be an imposing one.

This brought in ex-Bar player Nick Lamb and Simon White together and they started to find the gaps in the field as the pair saw past the 200 and they also put on a 50 stand in just 51 balls but as the rain clouds gathered Bar were able to re-group as a 19 minute rain delay meant it would be a 48 over a side contest.

So after the resumption, Welwyn were 242 for 4 with 44 balls remaining of their innings. The 250 came up in the 42<sup>nd</sup> over but a flurry of runs and wickets then ensued. Simon White went for 25 as Greg Hodge held a fine catch at long off, and Ed Tucker edged to Lanka de Silva for 5 and Jamie Southgate went again, taken at long off by Greg Hodge for 13. Salim Hussain took all three wickets to leave the hosts 287 for 7 with an over to go and in truth a decent response after the fireworks of the first 15 overs.

Sadly though for Bar the last over bowled by Adam Norman went the distance as another ex-Bar player Gavin Baker launched 2 sixes and 22 came from it, leaving Bar 310 to win from 48 overs at a rate nearing 6.46 per over. Of the bowlers, Salim Hussain took 3 for 58 from 9 and Paul McGee 2 for 53 from his 10 overs.

With the clouds threatening and the rain imminent Steve Gale and Nesan Jeyaratnam opened up and with some good running saw Bar off to comfortable start. Alas with the rain now pouring down Steve Gale edged behind off Gavin Baker for 4 and Bar were 19 for 1. With that came a prolonged and heavy spell of rain which took the players from the field.

A lengthy delay then ensued as a bowl out was looking on the cards as the farcical rule of the game having to be played on this day due to some pretty draconian rules. The fact that Welwyn Garden City has umpteen cricketers who represent various Minor Counties as well as our extended run in the Evening Standard Cup makes many wonder whether the Herts league want teams and cricketers to actually play at a higher level, thus promoting Hertfordshire cricket? The final itself isn't due to be played for some 5 weeks so it seemed a total panic for little to no reason.

During the rain break there was a particular highlight of watching a man and his good lady try to negotiate their walk home in the rain. The man had popped down to our hosts for a lunchtime drink and was struggling somewhat to put one foot in front of another. He was as pissed as a parrot and I can only assume his lunchtime drink started about Friday. The highlight was he took his shoes and socks off as the idea of having them on was affecting his stagger home.

So after the Umpires had put their heads together and with the minimum requirement for a game being 25 overs in the second innings, Bar were set 161 to win so another 142 from 20 overs at a

rate of over 7 an over. Bar to their credit gave it a real go but the regular loss of wickets always had them behind the 9-ball.

Dave Breeze promoted to three scorched one beautiful cover drive for 4 but was cleaned up attempting another falling to a low catch at short extra off the ex-PBCC man Gavin Baker. 30 for 2 saw a brief partnership between Lanka de Silva and Nesan Jeyaratnam; however the latter was run out attempting a second to third man.

The 50 came up in the 11<sup>th</sup> over as Bar started to accelerate but lost Salim Hussain, who topped an attempted hook off Hewitt for 3 which again, ex-Bar man Dan Blacktopp held with some ease.

For a brief period Bar started to assert themselves with Lanka de Silva and skipper Len Cooper playing nicely but it took a brilliant leg side stumping by Blacktopp off of Simon White to turn the game back in the hosts favour. Lanka had gone for 18, Bar were now 67 for 5 still needing 94 from 72 balls with wickets falling at a regular intervals. But Len Cooper kept Bar in the hunt as he struck Simon White for 16 in an over to tip the balance once more. The equation was now 77 from 66 balls.

However a bout of yes, no, bugger saw the end of Adam Norman run out for 7 and with Len starting to bat like a dream Bar had brought up the 100 in the 17<sup>th</sup> over, for the loss of 6 wickets. Three good overs then saw Bar score 27 to take them to 127 for 6, needing 34 off of 30 balls. Alas the game turning moment. Frazer bowled a full ball to Will van der Maat, who drilled it back to him only for the off-spinner to collect the ball, turn and throw the ball onto the stumps in one motion. A brilliant piece of cricket and Len was left run out by a foot after his 28-ball 46.

With that arguably went Bar's chances as Will van der Maat was caught again by Tate for 11, Mike Palmer picked out long off for 9 and Greg Hodge went clean bowled by Ben Frazer who had a wonderful game, for 3 and Bar had finished 9 short of the revised target.

So fair play to Welwyn. Arguably you could say they deserved the win as 309 would have been a hideously hard total to try and chase down. However to get to 34 needed off 30 balls with 4 wickets in hand with the field well spread is a 'bitter pill to swallow'. In my eyes, they are the benchmark of where we want to be and get to. We are making giant strides and this was Welwyn at their strongest when arguably we were 2 'big game' players shy, so we can be proud of pushing a highly talented side so close.

Next week sees the club enter the last 4 matches of the league season and the 1s will be hoping for a maximum points haul against relegation haunted Langleybury. In the past they have been somewhat of a one-man band with one of the best overseas players in the competition in Shahzad Malik. He's not been present for the last 2 games so here's hoping its three games!

The 2s after the disappointment of a long, pointless and fruitless car journey to Flitwick, travel to play the Depala's from Old Finchleians in a game that they will be eyeing up a 30-point haul as Greg Hodge could be boosted by 4 or 5 players returning from holiday. The 3s entertain mid-table Broxbourne where a win could lift them above the visitors and take them out of the bottom three. The 4s face a long trip to Offley & Stopsley who will give them a stiff test and the 5s who haven't won since the first game of the season entertain Ware 2s, who themselves have little to play for.

So that's it for another week, a big thank you to everyone who travelled over to Welwyn on Sunday to give the boys some good support, just a shame we finished just short

Until next time, have a good week, the future is bright, contrary to popular belief, the futures Potters Bar

Regards  
Fred