

2018 Season A Division Devon League

Abbotskerswell v Bideford 18th August Away

'Its Deja Vue all over again' Yogi Berra

Overcast skies with the odd sunny moment greeted us at Abbots. Last year we went there and sat through two hours of drizzle and came home, this year we sat through 6 hours of intense cricket and nearly, oh so nearly pulled off a surprise.

For some reason, I know not what, I have always considered Abbots to be a very strong team. As I recall they were in the premier for a while and it was a surprise to me that they had not made a better run at possible promotion this year, so I entered the lion's den with some apprehension

.Steve Bond was back with us for the injured Josh Atkinson. Paul Heard – in an unusual moment of enlightenment regarding the toss – won and Abbots were put in. The opening attack, with Paul still in short run mode – was Steve Bond and Fred King. Steve bowled 4 overs of tidy medium pace – whilst Fred took a wicket with his first ball, caught behind by Ollie Hannam. This brought to the wicket their number 3 who was going to be the bane of Bideford's game – he went on to score 125 not out and bowled some very tidy overs. Notwithstanding this the bowling was very good, giving very few unnecessary runs away – although I have to say that for a while the ground fielding – usually so perfect, did seem to show signs of imperfection. Paul came on a first change and bowled some very tight stuff while Jamie Lathwell took over from Fred. Someone (who knows more than I do i.e. most people) said that you can tell from the way Jamie runs in for his first ball as to whether it is going to be one of those days, and today was one of those days seven over 2 for 19. Martin Stewart bowled 6 very tidy overs before the No 3 decided to have a go, and returned with one wicket while Jack Ford -a again very tidy, picked up 2 – 36 off his 10.

Cameron Atkinson – what a find he has been – came in and bowled the last 8 and took two priceless wickets for 39, which together with a great run out by Ollie meant Abbots were all out for 231 – which meant 5 bowling points for the first time for ages. Comparison showed that Chudleigh had achieved the same. However the last 30 runs seemed to put the target just that little bit far away.

After a marvellous tea, the new batting line was uncovered. Tom Brend opening with Oliver Hannam. Signs of things to come? If so it must be good. A century opening stand of 111 before Tom went for 33 followed immediately by Ollie for 50 (8 fours). Jack Ford and Alex Hannam replaced them. This was now a difficult position with two new batsman on a wicket that was far from perfect and a strike rate that was high but not too high. Jack hit 12 off 29 and was replaced by James who had, I believe been dropped down the order to bring solidity. However with Alex H doing his darnedest but with his timing on this pitch awry. JF had to become the striker which he did for 25v off 32. At 164-4 with Paul Heard coming in to join Alex things were still very much there for the taking. Paul showed fine form in thumping 17 off 11 to take the score 195, when he was taken by one of the finest catches I have ever seen. When luck runs against you. From then on, with very hostile bowling in hand none of the others had time to play themselves in and the innings subsided at 213 (with 46 extra against Bidefords 29). Lost by 18 runs. What a disappointment.

So, I hear you exclaim what is this deja vu rubbish and who is Yogi Berra. Well he was a famous baseball player who is credited with this saying – meaning of course all over again all over again. Well it is I think Deja Vu for various reasons. First an outstanding opening stand was not really taken advantage of – my mind goes back to the match at Paignton where (and with others) we were in a winning position half way through the innings only to lose. Again we had them at 149 – 7 only for the last three wickets to add getting on for 100. This has happened many times also. If we

could just keep the moment going in the middle order, and get the tail-enders out as well as the first 6 batsman in many sides, we would be up with the best of them. In the end we came away with 9, gaining 2 points on Chudleigh and 5 on Ivybridge and Brixham.

One final point I want to make again. At one point in the innings Abbott were becoming becalmed – to which they responded by a succession of quick singles. Four singles in an over is, of course, as many as a boundary. Just a thought.

Two matches left – minimum of what 20/22 points for safety – but we need is two wins – so lets go for it.

First one is somewhere called Westward Ho! Which I believe is on the North Devon coast famous for its Hockins ice cream – perhaps someone will buy me one!

The Quill