



BRAUNTON II S V BIDEFORD IIS

July 18th 2020

Cricket captains throughout the world hate their phone ringing on the morning of a match – it can only be bad news.. someone's dropping out, someone's ill, someone got injured walking home at 3am last night after a skin full... in the past I usually turned my phone off on match day mornings. Ignorance is bliss, as they say.

Yesterday, I couldn't avoid knowing what was happening, as my own 14 year old son had to pull out due to illness. Vomiting like a trooper, a nasty 24-hour tummy bug. But like a hero to the rescue, Paul Argyle stepped in at the last minute to make sure we arrived in Braunton with 11.

I'm pleased to say I am now back to my normal practice of losing the toss (and therefore can be devoid of any blame should the result go against us, but obviously reap the rewards and glory should we win) and Braunton stuck us in. It was overcast, and the pitch had a greenish tinge. After five overs we hadn't lost a wicket, which was great, but neither had we scored a run. 0-0 off five... To be fair, their bowlers bowled a very good line and length, zipping it around a bit, and Stoner and Weeksy played each ball on its merits, didn't panic, and did their job protecting the rest of us from the new ball.

It wasn't until the 10th over when Tom nicked one to slip, but once again he showed he can apply himself and adapt to different wickets and conditions. One colt was replaced by another, as Fionn joined Weeksy at the crease. While he quite rightly took his time to play himself in, John started to play his shots and upped the tempo. At drinks (after 24 overs) we were something like 80 for 1 (I can't remember exactly, and it's not recorded in the scorebook) but we were looking healthy and a total of 190-200 was on the cards. As Fionn grew in confidence he too looked to put pressure on the bowlers. John reached his 50 with seven fours before he was caught behind for 56.

Robbie North came in at 4 and wasted no time in setting about the bowlers. Fionn's excellent running kept him on his toes, as the two of them really took the bowlers to task. Robbie hit four 4s in his quickfire 32 and Fionn was unfortunately run out for an excellent 60 just after. He had hit the sweetest of sweet full tosses for 6 landing on the clubhouse roof earlier.

I then came in and carried on the good work, hitting two 6s and four 4s in 33. Unfortunately, one of those 6s landed on Richard Hall's Peugeot, smashing its window. To make matters worse, when Richard came out to bat, I ran him out with a ridiculous call that totally sold him down the river. I don't think I'll be on his Christmas card list this year... 😞 We finished on a very respectable 220-8.

After tea, Richard and Olly took the new ball, and both bowled very tidily taking a wicket each in their first over, with batting heroes Fionn and John both snaffling catches. At one point Richard had bowled seven overs and had one for 8. At this point though, the rain started. And it didn't stop. The ball became a bar of soap, it was an almost impossible task for the bowlers to get any kind of grip on the ball. Consequently, their batsman got on top of things so much so that after 28 overs they had reached 203-2. But at the point we all agreed not to carry on. We were all soaked through and had this been a League match we would have stopped about 15 overs before then. No point dwelling on anyone's bowling figures other than Richard (1-22) and Olly (1-24).

Player of the Match: It was great to see young Fionn build an innings. He showed real character and an excellent temperament, accelerating when necessary and putting pressure on the fielders. Weeksy too – great to see him in the runs. Both scored half centuries and both took good catches. So this week it's shared between them.

Bideford 220-8 (Fionn Toland 60, John Weeks 56, Ian Hayter 33, Rob North 32)
Braunton 203-2 RSP